

A Tale of Two Converts (Go To Meeting)

Michael Heiss—December 25, 2020

This is my first opportunity to speak to you through this medium, so I think of this as my ‘maiden voyage.’ When I think of a ‘maiden voyage’ the Titanic comes to mind. Let’s hope we do a little better than that.

We’re going to look at the lives of two individuals in the Old Testament: one man and one woman, but growing up in the pagan world full of many gods; yet, somehow they came to know, acknowledge and worship the God of Israel. A truly amazing tale!

Before we actually get started, we need to understand the basic concept that pervaded the pagan world: ‘God,’ land and people. In the ancient world, you were part of a people. You were born into a family, became part of an extended family—a village, city-state or might empire—and you had a particular locale. You were located on the mountains, in the valleys, and you worshipped that one ‘god’ and all the auxiliary ones as you wished.

It didn’t really matter what you did, but ‘God’ was limited to that locale, *and the idea or concept of a God Who was universal, Who governed the universe by Himself was unheard of!* With that, let’s start out with our first convert, a man:

NAAMAN:

He was a mighty and valiant man, a man whom God used to save the nation of Syria. In 2-Kings 5 we find that Naaman was commander of the army, the general, and God used him to save Syria, gave them deliverance.

There was only one problem, he was a leper! There is leprosy and there’s leprosy. There’s leprosy all the way from skin discoloration clear down to the dreaded Henson’s Disease, which is a killer. For those who want more knowledge of it, if you ever get a chance to go the Hawaiian Islands, go to the Island of Molokai, where you can see the remnant of a leper village and read about the Catholic priest who ministered there.

There are only two ways that you can get there, when you get on the island you can fly down and land by plane, or you can take the mule ride down, which is fascinating. I did that.

At any rate, Naaman is a leper and it so happens that one of the girls from Israel had been captured and was a servant to him. As you read in the first verses, she was saying to Naaman’s wife:

2-Kings 5:3: “And she said to her mistress, **I wish my lord were with the prophet in Samaria, for he would heal him** of his leprosy!”

Naaman thought that was great, so he goes to the king and the kings, says, ‘I’ll write a letter to the king of Israel and send you.’ Now, you can’t go empty handed.

Verse 5: “And the king of Syria said, ‘Go now, and **I will send a letter to the king of Israel.**’ And he departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing.”

Finally, he gets down to Israel and the king of Israel is distraught, out of his mind. He goes berserk and rends his clothes, because look at what the letter says:

Verse 6: “And he [Naaman] came in *with* the letter to the king of Israel, saying, ‘And now when this letter has come to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you. And **you shall heal him** of his leprosy.’” What?

Verse 7: “...‘**Am I God, to kill and to make alive**, that this *man* sends to me to recover a man from his leprosy?’”

He rent his clothes—as we say, ‘losing it’—and was in such an uproar that word does get to Elisha the prophet. Elisha responds and says, ‘Oh king, don’t fret yourself, stop tearing your clothes.’

Verse 8: “...**Let him now come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.**”

In fact, Naaman is going to find out that there’s more than a prophet in Israel. There is a GOD in Israel! In fact, there is the **only God** in Israel. This God is going to act. The king of Israel sends word to Naaman and gives him directions and Naaman winds up at the door of Elisha. But Elisha doesn’t even come out to greet him.

As we have kiddingly said, ‘Every commander or person in authority has a *chief flunky!*’ so, he sends out his servant, the ‘chief flunky.’ What does he say:

Verse 10: “...**Go and wash in Jordan seven times**, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and **you shall be clean.**”

But as a commander in chief, you don’t say that to him. Naaman is furious, in a rage!

Verse 11: "...Behold, I [Naaman] said within myself, 'He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God...'—*in some dramatic fashion!*

Naaman's about had it! Verse 12: "'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, **better than all the waters of Israel?** May I not wash in them, and be clean?' And he turned and went away in a rage."

He had a point! There really are better rivers in Syria. In fact if you take a look at the Jordan River sometime, either travelogue or be there, you will quickly see that the Jordan River is not exactly the 'queen of rivers.' But if you remember, years and years ago there was a very beautiful song put out in the 60s:

Michael rode the boat ashore! Hallelujah! The River Jordan is chilly and cold, chills the body but not the soul. Hallelujah!

Beautiful song!

Naaman said, 'Enough, I'm headed out of here.' But his group said—at least cooler headed prevailed.

Verse 13: "And his servants came near and spoke to him and said, 'My father, **if the prophet had told you to do a great thing, would you not have done it?**....'"

Put yourself in the picture here. Naaman is slowly cooling off, and he says, 'Yes, I suppose.' All the prophet asked is that you dip yourself seven times in the Jordan River, is that so much? Naaman relents and heads to the Jordan. He gets there and takes a look. I can just picture him looking at the Jordan River thinking to himself,

'I am going to dip seven times in that!?' I'm here! What can it hurt, Oh well, I guess I'll do it!

Remember, this is *not* based on faith! This is not, as Jesus said, 'Be it unto you according to your faith.' Faith and belief has absolutely nothing to do with this. All you have to do, Naaman, is ***dip yourself seven times in that river and the power of God will heal you! Period! That's it!*** Do it!

He does, and finally he's ready for the seventh time. He doesn't know what's going to happen, but he dipped himself the seventh time and comes up and if only we had a camera to see the look on the faces of all his entourage and Naaman.

Lo and behold, his skin is white and clean as a child's. *He has been healed!* Naaman is absolutely stunned! Now he has a decision to make. Does he go

back to the king and say, 'Hey, king, look at me! It worked! I'm back! I'm healed!'"?

No! Naaman is a mighty man, and he is also a just man, honorable man. He knows that he owes it to the prophet to come back and thank him. So, back he goes. This time the prophet does come out and talk to Naaman. We find this:

Verse 15: "And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company. And he came and stood before him. And he said, 'Behold, now **I know that there is no God on all the earth, but in Israel.** So accept now a present from your servant.'"

- what a turn around
- what a change of thought

I like movies, but I don't see them anymore because they aren't worth watching. One of my favorite movies of old was *The Ten Commandments!* I'm sure many of you have seen it.

It stars two of my favorite actors: Charlton Heston and Yul Brenner. If you remember, at the end of that movie, Cecil B. DeMille took a little license and has Pharaoh surviving the Red Sea. But after that debacle, Pharaoh (Yul Brenner) comes back and he says, 'Moses, God is God!' *Right on!*

Naaman in effect is saying Elisha's God *is* God! So, Naaman urges Elisha to take a gift, but Elisha is not going to do it. **You don't take credit, you don't take payment for something God did!** God's prophets didn't do that!

But then Naaman has two requests, and this is what is so fascinating about this whole episode.

Verse 18: "In this thing may the LORD pardon your servant..."

Naaman is aide to his king and master, the king goes into his house of this god to worship. Naaman is not about the worship that god, but he has to go into this pagan house of worship, and in fact, he had to kneel down assisting his king. Notice what he says:

"...may the LORD pardon your servant in this thing" (v 18).

Do we understand what he's saying. He is saying that he—Naaman—commander of all the armies of Syria, is considering himself the servant of the prophet of Israel.

Generals have pretty big egos! You don't get to be a general of the armies or admiral of the navy without it. You just have to have an ego like that. You have to put on airs and take command! If you know anything about military commanders, that's the way they are. I love history and I've followed the careers and read about them. Douglas

MacArthur had an ego ‘out to here.’ So did George Patton. He was the best commander the allies every had! Field Marshall Montgomery, commander of the eighth army of Britain had an ego like that!

Naaman had a ego, too. But his ego is gone! He considers himself a servant of the prophet of God! This is humility! He says, ‘Pardon me!’ What does Elisha say?

Verse 19: “And he said to him, ‘Go in peace.’....”—*meaning it’s okay*, you can do that, because you are not worshipping that god, you are simply assisting your king! But then Naaman has another request. This one is:

Verse 17: “And Naaman said, ‘Please, shall there not then be given to your servant two mules’ burden of earth?...’”—*laden with dirt, Israelite soil that he can take back to Syria!*

Why does he want to do that? Remember what we said at the beginning: ‘God,’ land, people! Naaman knows that the God of Israel operates in Israel, but does not operate in Syria.

Therefore, he wants to take soil from Israel, bring it back to Syria so he can have ‘little Israel’ in Syria. He’s going to setup an altar there, maybe somewhere near his house; because:

Verse 17: “...For your servant will **from now on offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice to other gods**, but to the LORD.”

He’s going to setup this altar on the soil of Israel, therefore, the God of Israel can respond and hear.

Remember he’s still under the old school! He doesn’t realize what King David realized. David said, ‘If I flee to the heavens, You are there! If I’m in Sheol, You are there. I can’t get away from You.’

Jonah tried to run away; sailed away on a ship heading out into the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. God yanked him back!

Can’t get away from God! Naaman did not know that this awesome Being, this mighty El Shaddai can operate anywhere at anytime under any circumstances! There are no limitations to the power of this God! But Naaman didn’t know that. He only knows that in Israel does this God operates. If Naaman can bring this soil back to Syria, then the God of Israel can hear, because he will be on Israelitish soil.

That’s the way we end it. Naaman promised and swore that he would worship no other God. What an amazing feat!

RUTH:

Now we come to our second convert and her story is even more amazing than Naaman. This is an incredible woman born in a foreign country, a country that, in a sense, God almost hated and swore that no person from this country could ever come into Israel for ten generation.

- she was no queen like Esther
- she was no judge like Deborah
- she was no prophetess like Huldah in the days of Josiah
- she was no prophetess like Anna during the days of Jesus

She was a simple handmaid who became a widow and came to the land of Israel with such determination, repudiating her entire past life. God put her name up in lights.

If you want to know how, all you have to do is pick up a Bible and open up to the table of contents and read the books and their you will find her name. There were only two women who had a book of the Bible named after them, and she’s one of them.

Not only that, look at the genealogy leading to King David, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Son of God. Her name is there, too: ***Ruth the Moabite!*** She was honored as few women have been. Let’s take a look at this incredible woman:

Her story takes place in the period of Judges, (Ruth 1). We know that this between the death of Joshua and the elders, and before the rise of Samuel. There’s famine in the land, which is nothing new. There’s was famine in the days of Abraham, in the days of Isaac. Abraham went to Egypt. Isaac did not because God told not to. Of course the great famine that would have wiped out who knows how many millions of people, had God not sent Joseph to save the world.

The famine was pretty bad and a man named Elimelech with his wife Naomi and their two sons go off to Moab. A tragedy strikes, Elimelech dies. We’re not told of what, all we know is that he dies.

The two sons find decent Moabitish women and they’re there in the land ten years, but both of them die, from what we don’t know. We are on a NTK basis—need to know. God just gives us the barest of details.

There is Naomi and she’s left by herself. She has two daughters-in-law, but her whole blood family is gone. So, she’s going back to Bethlehem, from Israel where she came from, because she hears that the famine is over.

Her two daughters-in-law want to go with her. This is incredulous! Two Moabite women wanting to go to Israel with her!

- What kind of woman was Naomi?
- What kind of pull did she have?
- What was her personality like?

She must have been some woman that these daughters-in-law really loved her. But Naomi says, ‘No! No! Don’t come with me. Go back to your families and have a life.’ I can’t give you anything, I don’t have anything to give you.’

Ruth 1:12—*Naomi says*: “Turn again, my daughters, go. For I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, ‘I have hope,’ if I should have a husband also tonight, and should also bear sons.”

Would you wait until they grew up? *Get a life!* One of them agrees and kisses Naomi and goes back. Ruth has none of it! She just stands there and clings to Naomi. What is the upshot of it all? *See what she says*:

Verse 17: “**Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried.** May the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if anything* but death parts you and me.”

What a declaration of loyalty! Fiercely determined! She’s not budging! You can’t get her to go back. Why? *Once again*: God, land, people! What else did Ruth say:

Verse 16: “And Ruth said, ‘Do not beg me to leave you, to return from following after you. For where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried....’” (vs 16-17).

Her land, the new land of Israel, will become her land. Then she come up with this dramatic, electrifying statement. I don’t know of any statement as powerful as this anywhere else in the Bible.

Verse 16: “**For where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.**”

What more powerful declaration do you have than that. She is going to go sight unseen, like Abraham when God said, ‘Abram, get up and leave you father’s house, go to a land that I [God] will show you.’ Abram did, sight unseen!

Ruth is going sight unseen pledging loyalty to a land that she’s never been to, to a people she’s never seen, and to a God that she doesn’t know much about, but is about to. At the same time, it is in essence a complete and total rejection and

repudiation of her entire former life. She is repudiating the land of Moab, the people of Moab and the gods of Moab.

Didn’t Jesus say, ‘He who is not willing to leave father, mother, sister, brother, forsake all that he has in order to come to Me...’ *Yes, Ruth was forsaking all that she had!*

She was in the process of doing what Paul said, ‘Crucify the old man,’ and leave him behind. So, she does, and what can Naomi say? *She’s stunned!* ‘Okay, come on, girl, let’s go to the land of Israel.’ They do!

Verse 22: “So, Naomi returned; and Ruth, the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, was with her, returning out of the fields of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem **at the beginning of barley harvest.**”

This tells us something. This is right after Passover, because the barley season began right at the Passover time—March/April—going to May/June till the wheat harvest. We have to understand how Hebrew prose and the short story in order to understand this.

Ruth 2:1: “And Naomi *had* a kinsman of her husband’s, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech. And his name was Boaz.”

Why are we told this? *The way the Hebrew short stories are constructed is that this tells us that we are going to meet up with this man again!* He is going to play a prominent role in this story. Ruth doesn’t know it, Naomi doesn’t know it, yet. But we know it, because the author is telling us; he’s cluing us in.

This is how the short stories were created. All the facts are true, it’s God’s Word; there’s nothing false in here. But you construct a story in such a way that it fits the literary times.

Verse 2: And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, ‘Let me now go to the field and glean ears of grain...’—*because they need food. She says, ..let me...*”

She doesn’t say, ‘Look, Naomi, we’re running out of food here and I’m going to go to this field somewhere and I’m going to get food and come back and show you ---. No! She asks permission, just the Naaman asked permission of Elisha. Ruth is humble and meek! She is loyal to her mother-in-law. She says,

“...‘Let me now go to the field and glean ears of grain after *him* in whose sight I shall find grace.’ And she said to her, ‘Go, my daughter.’ And she went. And she came and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come upon a part of the field of Boaz... [we knew that we were

going to run into Boaz, the whole tip off was in v 1] ..who *was* of the kindred of Elimelech” (vs 2-3).

Verse 4: “And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, ‘The LORD *be* with you.’ And they answered him, ‘The LORD bless you.’ And Boaz said to his servant who was set over the reapers, ‘Whose young woman *is* this?’ And the servant who was set over the reapers answered and said, ‘It *is* the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab.’” (vs 4-6).

You have to understand something else in the Hebrew language. This happened and that happened, and then that happened, so you get a sequence, ***but the time intervals you don’t get!***

Verse 7: “And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ So, she came, and has continued from the morning until now, although **she rested a little in the house.**”

Verse 8: “And Boaz said to Ruth, ‘Will you not listen, my daughter? Do not go to glean in another field, neither go away from here, but stay here close by my maidens.

Sometimes the time intervals can be five minutes, five months, five years. Remember the story of Isaac who prayed to God for a child, because Rebekah was barren. It says that he was 40-years-old when he took Rebekah to wife. Well, when his twin sons were born, he was 60-years-old. How many years intervened between that this happened and then the children were born, probably almost 20 years.

Boaz had been talking to others, and he says to Ruth, v 8: “And Boaz said to Ruth, ‘Will you not listen, my daughter? Do not go to glean in another field, neither go away from here, but stay here close by my maidens. *Let* your eyes *be* on the field that they reap, and follow after them. Have I not commanded the young men that they shall not touch you?...” (vs 8-9).

In other words, Boaz read them ‘the riot act’! ‘Don’t judge her, hands off! No hanky-panky in my field.’

“...And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink of that which the young men have drawn” (v 9).

Then come the most poignant verse in the entire book of Ruth, truly it is:

Verse 10: “Then she fell on her face and bowed herself to the ground, and said to him, ‘Why have I found grace in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I *am* a foreigner?’”

What’s so moving about that; she’s thankful and all that. This is a foreigner, which is not a normal word for foreigner or sojourner. That is ‘ger’; Abram was a foreigner or stranger in the land of ---, but this is a different word. This word has the meaning of *low life, worthless foreigner, filthy foreigner, unworthy, unacceptable, beneath you!*

It’s saying that she is considering herself beneath everyone else, unfit to be accepted by Israel. Yet, she said, “...I found grace in your eyes...” Why have you done this?

She’s moved; she is absolutely just on her knees in thankfulness. But Boaz gives an answer:

Verse 11: “And Boaz answered and said to her, ‘It has been fully shown to me all that you have done to [for] your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and **you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth...**” –God, land, people; this theme is throughout the Bible if you look for it.

“...and have come to a people whom you did not know before now” (v 11)—*a land and people sight unseen, willing to worship the God of Israel!*

Verse 12: “May the LORD repay your work, and may a full reward be given you from the LORD God of Israel, under Whose wings you have come to seek refuge.”

Yes, God is going to reward her. She doesn’t know it, yet; Boaz doesn’t know it, yet, either! But it is going to happen!

Verse 13: “Then she said, ‘Let me find favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me; for you have spoken kindly to your handmaid, though I am not like one of your handmaidens.’”

In other words, ‘I am not of your blood. I am not a natural born Israelite. I am not a born handmaiden of yours. Yet, you are treating me as one.’ She is really deeply moved by it.

She works that day and Boaz gives her plenty of the stuff to take home to Naomi. He tells the men in the field to drop some stuff and do not deride her; let her glean, let her take on all that she can.

She comes home to her mother-in-law, and Naomi ask her, ‘Where did you go? What field did you work in?’ When she finds out that it’s Boaz, notice what she says:

Ruth 2:20: “And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, **Blessed is he of the LORD, Who has not left off His kindness...**”

Naomi feels a little better, because when she

first came back she said not to call her Naomi.

Ruth 1:20: “And she said to them, ‘Do not call me Naomi, call me Mara. For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.’”

Naomi knew that God’s hand was there. She didn’t know why; she wasn’t accusing God; she knew that this was the work of God. Mara, by the way, is the same word that you find in Exo. 15, remember the bitter waters? *Same word!* She felt bitter.

When she asked her daughters-in-law back in Moab, she says:

Ruth 1:13: “...No, my daughters, for it makes me very sad for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me.”

She knows that the ‘deck is kind of stacked against her’; but now it’s changing. When she said:

Ruth 2:20: “...**the LORD, Who has not left off His kindness to the living and to the dead.**’ And Naomi said to her, ‘**The man is near of kin to us, he is one of our closest kinsmen.**’”

Verse 22: “And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth, ‘Good, my daughter...’”—*do what he says!*

Ruth 3—here our plot thickens! God’s plan is in effect beginning to take shape. Notice what Naomi says talking to Ruth:

Ruth 3:1: “And her mother-in-law Naomi said to her, ‘My daughter, shall I not seek rest for you so that it may be well with you? And now *is* not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens you *worked*? Behold, **he winnows barley tonight in the threshing floor**” (vs 1-2).

Verse 3: “...But do not make yourself known to the man **until he has finished eating and drinking**”—*and he’s going to be merry!*

What does Solomon say, ‘Wine makes the heart merry’?

Verse 3: “Therefore, wash yourself, and anoint yourself, and put your clothing... [your good clothes and look nice and good] ...upon you, and go down to the threshing floor. But **do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.** And when he lies down, you mark the place where he lies, and you shall go in and uncover his feet and lie down. And he will tell you what you shall do” (vs 3-4).

Verse 5: “And she [Ruth] said to her [Naomi], ‘All that you say, I will do.’ And she went down to the threshing floor **and did according to all that her mother-in-law had told her**” (vs 5-6).

Ruth is obedient! This is a rare relationship: daughter-in-law, mom. This is not the usual case. This is a remarkable woman, this Ruth, she really is.

Verse 7: “And when Boaz had eaten and had drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. And she came softly... [today she would be sneaking under they covers with him] ...and uncovered his feet, and lay down. And it came to pass at midnight, the man was startled and turned himself...” (vs 7-8).

Who’s there? Who is this?

“...And, behold, a woman lay at his feet. And he said, ‘Who *are* you?’ And she answered, ‘I *am* your handmaid Ruth. And you shall spread your skirt over your handmaid, for you *are* a **kinsman-redeemer**’” (vs 8-9).

The Hebrew word means *avenger* or *redeemer*. It’s was when the cities of refuge were established and you accidentally might have killed somebody, you would run away to one of those cities of refuge and make sure that the guy didn’t catch up to you. Because the person, the kinsman who was going to catch up with you and kill you had the right to do it because you killed his brother, grandfather, whoever; he was known as the *avenger*.

In this case, it in the form of redeemer. He is the one who is supposed to redeem the property of Ruth and Naomi and provide seed for the son of Elimelech, the one who died.

Verse 10: “And he said, ‘Blessed *be* you of the LORD, my daughter....’”

It’s not how you start the race that counts, but how you finish the race! We’re going to see a contrast between Ruth and Solomon in the genealogy before we’re through. What a contrast.

“...You have shown more kindness in the end than at the beginning, in that you did not follow young men, whether poor or rich” (v 10).

She didn’t ‘play the field’ She didn’t go out and make herself ‘available’ for who knows what with the young men of the town. She stayed faithful and loyal to her mother-in-law.

Verse 11: “And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do to you all that you ask. For all the men in the city of my people know that you *are* a woman of virtue.”

Again and again we see this praise of Ruth coming from the people who know her! Prov. 31 comes to mind, the *virtuous woman!* That’s Ruth! She fits the bill! Incredible!

Verse 12: “And now it is true that I *am* your kinsman redeemer. But there is also a kinsman

nearer than I.” *So, somebody else has the right of first refusal!*

Verse 13: “Stay tonight, and it shall be that in the morning if he will redeem you—good, he will redeem. But if he does not delight to redeem you, as the LORD lives, then I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning.’ And she lay at his feet until the morning. And she rose up before one could discern another. And he said, ‘Do not let it be known that a woman came to the floor.’ Also, he said, ‘Bring the shawl that is upon you, and hold it.’ And when she held it, he measured six *measures* of barley and laid it on her. Then she went to the city. And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, ‘Is that you, my daughter?’ And she told her all that the man had done to her” (vs 13-16).

Ruth told Naomi all that happened and all that Boaz told her.

Verse 18: “Then she said, ‘Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will fall. For the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter today.’”

Ruth 4:1: “And Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the near kinsman of whom Boaz spoke came by. And he said *to him*, ‘Such a one!....’”

He has a name, doesn’t he? *Sure he’s got a name! They used his name but it’s not here! Why? There’s a reason why it’s not there!* God snubbed him, because that man snubbed Ruth and God first.

Verse 2: “And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, ‘Come sit down here.’ And they sat down. And he said to the near kinsman, ‘Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sells a parcel of land which *was* our brother Elimelech’s. And I thought to disclose it to you, saying, ‘Buy *it* before those who live here, and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem, redeem *it*. But if you will not redeem, tell me so that I may know. For there is none to redeem besides you—and I am after you.’” **And he said, ‘I will redeem’**” (vs 2-4).

Okay, good! But you see that this is a package deal. Boaz now ‘drops the other shoe.’

Verse 5: “And Boaz said, ‘In the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you acquire Ruth of Moab, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.’ And the kinsman said, ‘I cannot redeem for myself... [under those circumstances] ...**lest I mar my own inheritance....**’” (vs 5-6)—*by following through with God’s instructions* to raise up seed for the dead, your kinsman?

God never required it! He didn’t say you had

to! God said that you could back out if wanted to, but you had to go through the ceremony to back out.

“...You take my right of redemption to yourself, for I cannot redeem it” (v 6).

He wasn’t going to mar his inheritance with a Moabite woman! So, he snubbed **Boaz and Ruth and God** Who set the law down in the first place.

Verse 9: “And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, ‘You *are* witnesses this day that I have bought all that *was* Elimelech’s, and all that was Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, from the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth of Moab, the wife of Mahlon, I have acquired to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead on his inheritance, so that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his place. You *are* witnesses this day.’ And all the people in the gate, and the elders, said, ‘We *are* witnesses....’” (vs 9-11).

And once again the people sing the praises of Ruth!

“...May the LORD make the woman who has come into your house like Rachel and like Leah, for these two built the house of Israel. And may you do worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem. And let your house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give you of this young woman.’ And Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And when he went in to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive. And she bore a son” (vs 11-13).

Verse 14: “And the women said to Naomi, ‘Blessed *be* the LORD, who has not left you this day without a kinsman redeemer, so that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be to you as a restorer of life, and a nourisher of your old age. For your daughter-in-law **who loves you** has borne him, **she who is better to you than seven sons**’” (vs 14-15).

This is monumental! In civilizations a son meant everything. A firstborn son especially. Sons to till the land or do this and that and help with the goings on. What do the women say? **Ruth is worth to you more than seven sons!** What a tribute!

Verse 16: “And Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse to it.”

Here’s happiness! This is almost like a storybook finish! This story does have a happy ending. Now all the anguish, all the sorrow, all the feelings of maybe bitterness are now gone! They really are. Naomi has a grandson by marriage.

We then come to the end of the story of

itself, but we have a postscript!

Verse 18: “And these *are* the generations of Pharez. Pharez begat Hezron, And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed... [through Ruth] ...And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat **David**” (vs 18-22).

What do we say of David, Moabite blood was flowing through his veins. Moab didn't matter that much to God. If you were priest, that was true.

- What was important to God when all is said and done?
- How many times have read Isa. 66?

Isaiah 66:2: “**For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,**” says the LORD. **‘But to this one I will look, to him...** [or her] **...who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word.**”

That was Ruth! God looked to Ruth! Now let us look at a strange comparison: the genealogies in Matthew and Luke.

Matthew has his chronology constructed, which he skipped a little here and there, but everything here is correct. He did do some maneuverings with the names, dates and so forth.

Matthew 1:2: “Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob...”—*but dropping on down:*

Verse 5: “And Salmon begat Boaz **of Rachab**; and Boaz begat Obed **of Ruth**...”—*two women!*

Verse 3: and Judah begat Phares and Zara of **Thamar**...”

Three women are mentioned by name, and Ruth is one of them.

Verse 6: “And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of **the one who had been wife of Uriah**.”

God didn't even mention *Bathsheba's name!* It shows you that He disapproved of what Bathsheba did. He also disapproved of what David did, too, but David repented bitterly! We don't know how much Bathsheba repented. But her name isn't even mentioned there.

Luke 3 is the bloodline, the actual bloodline of Jesus, and of course going on down through David.

Luke 3:31: “*The son of Meleas, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, **the son of Nathan**, the son of David.*”

God bypassed Solomon because he was not going to have Solomon in that bloodline after Solomon did what he did. **Solomon turned his back on God! God in turn turned His back on Solomon!**

David warned Solomon about that! But Solomon did it anyway! Human nature is human nature!

Remember once again, **It doesn't matter how you begin the race, but how you end it!**

So, we might say in this genealogy we have in essence a mighty king scorned by the simple handmaid from Moab! She was honored by the God of heaven! He is the One Who counts!

In my concluding remark it's more of a suggestion, I have a request/suggestion:

If you can, to the extent you can, over the next few days, weeks or months that you go through this book of Ruth slowly and carefully. Reading it line by line. It's a simple, easy read. There are only four chapters.

It's not like Isaiah with 66 chapters or Jeremiah with 52, that's heavy stuff with prophecy, chronology and history.

If you do that—read Ruth—it's my belief that you will come away with a much fuller appreciation of this Moabite woman named Ruth!

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2 Kings 5:3, 5-8, 10-15, 18-19. 17
- 2) Ruth 1:12, 17, 16-17, 16, 22
- 3) Ruth 2:1-13
- 4) Ruth 2:20
- 5) Ruth 1:20, 13
- 6) Ruth 2:20, 22
- 7) Ruth 3:1-16, 18
- 8) Ruth 4:1-6, 9-16, 18-22
- 9) Isaiah 66:2
- 10) Matthew 1:2, 5, 3, 6
- 11) Luke 3:31

Scripture referenced, not quoted:

- Exodus 15
- Proverbs 31

MH:bo
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