

The Book of Judges
THE MARVELOUS ROMANCE OF RUTH AND BOAZ
March 29, 2017
Session 10

1 Although we have concluded our study of the time of the JUDGES, a nearly-400 year
2 time of peril, apostasy and defeat, tucked into that story is the tiny BOOK OF RUTH we
3 find one of the most romantic stories of all time. (The Book of Ruth is in your Bible
4 between the Books of Judges and I Samuel.)
5

6 **Ruth 1:1 Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a**
7 **famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the**
8 **country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.**

9
10 There is also made reference to Ruth in the Gospel of Matthew in chapter one, a vital
11 chapter which has contains much of the genealogy of Jesus.
12

13 In the first chapter of Matthew:

14
15 **Matthew 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of**
16 **Abraham. 5-6 And Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab; and Boaz begat Obed of Ruth;**
17 **and Obed begat Jesse; [6] And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat**
18 **Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;**
19

20 So...in this study of Ruth, we are learning about the great grandmother of David....and
21 even more importantly, the great (x many) grandmother of Jesus Himself!
22

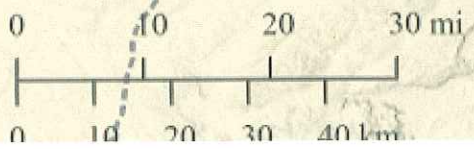
23 **Bethlehem lies about five or six miles south of present-day Jerusalem.** In the days of
24 Ruth, Jerusalem was just a small wide-spot in the hills of Judea, nothing more. The
25 story opens in some of spiritually-darkest days in Jewish history. As we saw in Judges,
26 the people began by faithfully serving God but then they turned to idolatry and moral
27 corruption. Now....added to all this....came a lengthy drought, resulting in a major
28 shortage of food in the land.
29

30 The name "Bethlehem" literally means "the house of bread." But there was precious
31 little of it when Elimelech decided decided to take his wife Naomi and their two boys,
32 Mahlon and Chilion, to Moab - a country just east of the Dead Sea. Today it would not
33 be much of a journey, but then it was a major move.
34

35 **Ruth 1:2 And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi,**

Area of primary Israelite settlement

Judge Judge during settlement period



1 **and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah.**
2 **And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.**

3
4 **On the preceding page is a full map of the land during Ruth's lifetime. You will find Bethlehem in the lower center of the map and the land of Moab on the east (right) side of the Dead Sea.**

5
6 Elimenech's name meant "My God is King." Naomi's name meant "pleasant." But, as
7 we will see, circumstances of her life made her bitter in her older age. This couple had
8 two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Their names indicated that neither was a healthy child
9 and they both died sometime after their marriages to two Moabite women, Orpah and
10 Ruth.

11
12 The family lived in Moab for quite a few years – long enough that the boys grew up and
13 married and then they both died, as had Elimelech some years earlier. Ruth 1:3-5
14 **And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. [4] And**
15 **they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and**
16 **the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. [5] And Mahlon**
17 **and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her**
18 **husband.**

19
20 Some Bible commentators soundly berate Elimelech for moving from Bethlehem to
21 Moab. I do not. As a husband and breadwinner I commend him for wanting to take
22 care of his wife and sons. In those days it must have been a very difficult thing to move
23 from one country to another.

24
25 But now, years later, Naomi, Orpah and Ruth are all widows. What to do? Naomi
26 learned that the famine had ended and she decided to take her daughters-in-law back to
27 Bethlehem:

28
29 Ruth 1:6-7 **Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from**
30 **the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord**
31 **had visited his people in giving them bread. [7] Wherefore she went forth out of the**
32 **place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the**
33 **way to return unto the land of Judah.**

34
35 But Naomi had an interesting "change of heart" as she began her leaving Moab. *Now*
36 *Naomi is going to talk to her daughters-in-law just like a Dutch uncle. She's going to*
37 *tell them what the situation is going to be when they go to Bethlehem. Israelites had*

1 *no dealings with each other. Now Naomi tells them something that because they are*
2 *Moabites it's going to cost them something to go with her to Bethlehem. They'd never*
3 *be able to marry again and these were young women. It would mean perpetual*
4 *widowhood and poverty for them because she had lost all of her property.*

5 THRU THE BIBLE / VOLUME II / J VERNON MCGEE / NELSON PUBL / PAGE 92

6
7 Ruth 1:8-14 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her
8 mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and
9 with me. [9] The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of
10 her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. [10]
11 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. [11] And
12 Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any
13 more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? [12] Turn again, my
14 daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have
15 hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; [13]
16 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having
17 husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand
18 of the Lord is gone out against me. [14] And they lifted up their voice, and wept
19 again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

20
21 Ruth now will make a decision that will impact the rest of history. One commentator has
22 observed that THE DECISION WILL BE MADE HERE THAT WILL DETERMINE
23 FOR SURE THAT JESUS WOULD BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM. Every decision that
24 you and I make has importance, often of tremendous impact. For that reason alone we
25 should ask God for direction. Orpah decided to stay in Moab and she was never heard
26 from again as far as I know. But Ruth made a decision that would forever immortalize
27 her:

28
29 Ruth 1:16-17 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from
30 following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will
31 lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: [17] Where thou diest,
32 will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought
33 but death part thee and me.

34
35 These verses comprise one of history's most well-known phrases: "Whither thou goest, I
36 will go!"

37
38 In 1955 - or close to that time - the famed guitarist Les Paul and his wife Mary Ford
39 recorded a song that made it to the top of the charts for several months in a row. The
40 lyrics were:

1 Whither thou goest, I will go; Wherever thou lodgest, I will lodge.
2 Thy people shall be my people, my Love;
3 Whither thou goest, I will go.
4 For as in that story long ago, the famed sweet old story now is so.
5 Thy people shall be my people, my Love;
6 Whither thou goest, I will go.

- 7
- 8 1. Ruth told her mother-in-law Naomi that she would go with her.
- 9 2. She committed to living where Naomi lived.
- 10 3. Ruth forsook her idolatrous nation to identify with God's people.
- 11 4. Ruth made the Creator God, the living real God, her own One to worship.
- 12 5. She told Naomi her vow would be lasting: "Where you die, there I will die also."
- 13 6. Ruth made her vow for time and eternity – no turning back!
- 14

15 I would submit to you today that Ruth's decision was not a split-moment emotional one,
16 but rather something she had carefully thought out. Something in her heart and mind was
17 drawing her to the land of Israel, to Bethlehem, to God's fabulous plan for her life.

18

19 In Ruth 1:17 she vowed to be faithful to Naomi and her land all of her life - "til death
20 parts us." That's the vow we make at the marriage altar. It is a sacred commitment.

21

22 Ruth's decision, her dedication, was not without almost immediate cost. She believed
23 she was accepting poverty, when in truth she became wealthy. She believed she would
24 now be a life-long widow, when in fact, she would soon marry a great man. She was
25 willing to accept all these issues in order to go with Naomi and stand for the one and only
26 true God. Finally, Naomi stopped trying to dissuade her: Ruth 1:18 **When she saw
27 that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.**

28

29 It is a tribute to both of these women....Naomi for her belief in her daughter-in-law and
30 Ruth for her steadfast commitment.

31

32 **Ruth 1:19 So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass,
33 when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and
34 they said, Is this Naomi?**

35

36 NAOMI'S DEPRESSED STATE

37

38 There is a difference in being depressed and simply being melancholy. It is my
39 impression that many creative people are melancholy. I think Paul was melancholy at
40 times. Nothing wrong with that as long as it doesn't become such a strong factor that it

1 reduces your faithfulness to God and your basic outlook on life. But Naomi was not
2 melancholy – she was just depressed. She had lost her life-long husband Elimelech to
3 death; her two sons had also passed away over in Moab. One of her daughters-in-law,
4 Orpah, had stayed in Moab and, as far as we know, the two women never met again.
5 But she had Ruth with her. Naomi had no idea the role she was going to play in the plan
6 of God for the entire world - the Savior, the Messiah, would come through her family.
7

8 Ruth 1:20-21

9 **And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath**
10 **dealt very bitterly with me. [21] I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home**
11 **again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me,**
12 **and the Almighty hath afflicted me?**
13

14 Naomi's lament: "When I left Bethlehem years ago, I left 'full.' I had a husband; I had
15 two great sons. And it's all God's fault! The Almighty has dealt very bitterly with
16 me."
17

18

How often we mistake God's leading in our lives. What we initially consider negative is, in fact, eternally positive. But we, as humans, do not see the future, do we? We live in the "now" and sometimes that "now" is tough. At least we consider it so. The Lord had NOT dealt bitterly with Naomi in reality; the truth is God has blessed this woman so well that centuries later we still speak of her. We don't say much about Elimelech or Mahlon or Chilion or Orpah. But do we ever talk about Naomi and Ruth!

19
20 Ruth 1:22 **So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with**
21 **her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the**
22 **beginning of barley harvest.**
23

24 *They came to Bethlehem....* 1100 years later, another couple would come to that little
25 town, Joseph and Mary, and from Mary would come the CHRIST, born in the stable.
26 Naomi had no idea what God had planned for her progeny.
27

28 How interesting that the author of this little book (the Holy Spirit perhaps through
29 Samuel) noted that it was harvest time. That fact would play in a huge way when Ruth
30 would find help from a local farmer named Boaz.
31

32 Bethlehem, in those days was just a "wide spot" in the road. Today it is a bustling city
33 of about 25,000 people (just six miles south of Jerusalem). I have had the privilege of

1 being in Bethlehem at least fifty times and have great Palestinian friends there.
2 Bethlehem is mentioned 44 times in the Old Testament and is properly called “Bethlehem
3 of Judea,” from the tribe of the Jews to which it belonged (Judah). The town is
4 mentioned in the Bible for the first time when referring to Rachel, Jacob’s wife, who died
5 there while giving birth to Benjamin. Rachel’s tomb is located on the north side of the
6 town.

7
8 One of the great stories of Bethlehem is that of having been the birthplace of David who
9 was crowned King of Israel there in place of Saul. Somewhere in that bowl-shaped
10 valley just east of town is where the prophet Samuel encountered young David and God
11 told him to anoint the young man as Israel’s next king. For this reason, Bethlehem is
12 still known as “the city of David.” But its true greatness lies in being the town from
13 where Jesus, the Messiah and Savior, became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and
14 truth (John 1).

15
16 1100 years later, one night shepherds would be watching over their flocks of sheep and
17 goats when - suddenly! - the sky was filled with angels declaring the greatest news of
18 time and eternity: Luke 2:8-20 **And there were in the same country shepherds**
19 **abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. [9] And, lo, the angel of**
20 **the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and**
21 **they were sore afraid. [10] And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I**
22 **bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. [11] For unto you is**
23 **born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. [12] And this**
24 **shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying**
25 **in a manger. [13] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly**
26 **host praising God, and saying, [14] Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,**
27 **good will toward men. [15] And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from**
28 **them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto**
29 **Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made**
30 **known unto us. [16] And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and**
31 **the babe lying in a manger. [17] And when they had seen it, they made known**
32 **abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. [18] And all they that**
33 **heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. [19] But**
34 **Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. [20] And the shepherds**
35 **returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and**
36 **seen, as it was told unto them.**

37
38 Yes, Bethlehem - quite the place where widow Naomi brought her daughter-in-law Ruth,
39 with no concept whatsoever of the world-changing drama about to unfold around her.
40 Thus the setting is arranged for what would become the greatest story ever told!

Chapter Two
Boaz, the Kinsman Redeemer

Ruth 2:1 **And Naomi had a kinsman (a relative) of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.**

Historical commentaries teach us that Boaz was not only wealthy, but a man of great influence and power. He will become the hero in this story and is actually a “type” of Jesus, who is closer to us than a brother, scripture says, and our Redeemer.

Ruth 2:2-3 **And Ruth the Moabite said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. [3] And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.**

“Gleaners” were poor people who by God’s laws were allowed to go into harvest fields after the owner’s people had reaped most of the corn or grain. They would salvage what was left in the corners of the harvest field: Deut. 24:19 **When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.**

Remember that farmers in that long-ago time did not have the huge machines used today to harvest fields. The reaping was done by hand and it was not very efficient. As much as 30% of a crop could be left. “Well....why didn’t they go back and get the other near-third of the harvest?” Because God forbade it. Now the poor were allowed to come into the field and “glean” the remnant. This is why the poor young widow Ruth was permitted to come to this particular field to get whatever grain or corn she could still find.

Verse 3 tells us that Ruth’s “hap” was to light on Boaz’s field. But really there was nothing “happenstance” about it. God directed her to that particular field, although at the time she must have had no idea why. One writer has summarized: *If she went to the wrong field, there would be no wise men coming to Bethlehem centuries later. And you can tell the shepherds to stay in their fields because He won’t be born in Bethlehem. It was vital that she go to the right field!* And the Holy Spirit directed her precisely where God wanted her to go. Is that not still true? That we must be directed by God’s Spirit in our lives? I have no question whatsoever that a little over 30 years ago God directed our family to Ft. Myers. I didn’t choose the locale; God did and has proved that fact over and over in the past three decades.

1 Remember Joseph's counsel to his crest-fallen brothers (when they learned he was now
2 the second most powerful man in the world): Genesis 50:20 **But as for you, ye**
3 **thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this**
4 **day, to save much people alive.**

5
6 Now....we are going to let Ruth get some "gleaning" done and next week pick up the
7 story when she meets Boaz for the first time. I know of no greater love story than this
8 one!

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