

Books of The Bible

A Survey of Ruth Revisited

Author

The author of the Book of Ruth is unknown but we do know it was written during the time of the judges (Ruth 1:1). Of which of the captivities in Judges we cannot be dogmatic. However, it would appear that it was during the captives of the Moabites for they would have had easy access to that area. They were in captivity eighteen years (Jud. 3:12-14).

One of the ways God disciplined His ancient people was by famine. Using His creation He could cause the burning sun to scorch the developing plants or cause the land to go without rain. Therefore, at the beginning of Ruth we are told of a famine and with the foregoing note it would be my understanding that the events at the beginning of Ruth occurred just between the captivity of Mesopotamia and that of Moab, thus somewhere in that 40 years (Jud. 3:11).

Key Words:

- 1) Rest which occurs 3 times (ch. 1:9; 3:1, 18).
- 2) Redeem (ga'al in Hebrew) is also translated "kinsman" (ch. 2:20; 3:9, 12, 13, 4:1, 3, 8, 14) and "redeem" in the following verses (ch. 4:4, 6).

Evangelically

Ruth found no desire to return to Moab (ch. 1:14-18), and when she turned to be devoted to God (ch. 1:16) it ultimately led her to Boaz with whom she found redemption (ch. 4:7-10).

Aspects of God

Like the history of Esther, the sovereign providential movings of God are evident in several ways:

- a) In His discipline in the deaths of Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion (ch. 1:3, 5)
- b) In His overall directing and control of events such as, when Ruth went to Boaz's field at the end of the year for the barley harvest, and the relationship between Naomi and Boaz.
- c) His restoring grace and mercy of enabling Naomi to return and have the means of future sufficiency (ch. 2:18), and a daughter in law who loved her (ch. 4:15) and held in her arms her little grandson (ch. 4:16). This is the only Biblical book given completely to the history of a woman.
- d) Is gracious even to her that had no rights and was a stranger being a Gentile (Cp. Eph. 2:11-12), and to Boaz (ch. 2:10). This poor heathen from an idolatrous background (ch. 1:15) was brought into the closest relationship with the Lord, for our Lord is the Son of David and Ruth was the great grandmother of David (ch. 4:17).

Biography

Elimelech

- a) There can be no doubt that Elimelech loved his wife and sons and in the reality of a famine facing them, logically the natural thing to do is to go where there is food. Abraham did the same thing when he went down to Egypt (Gen. 12:10).

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Naomi

- a) From my reading of the book of Ruth, Naomi was a woman who was observant of the workings of God. She did not blame the death of her husband and sons on the life in Moab. She knew they had moved without God's directing for God never told them to go to Moab. They were not to associate with the Moabites, He had given them the land of Canaan. Moving out of the purposes of God always brings divine discipline. Therefore, she saw the calamities which befell her as the Almighty dealing very bitterly with her (ch. 1:20) and, "The LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me" (ch. 1:21). Furthermore, she appears to have been quite self sufficient and willing to go to Moab for she says, "I went out full" (ch. 1:21). She did not indicate she was being a submissive wife and had no desire to go to Moab.

Boaz as a shadow of the Lord

- a) His Name:
 - i) The name "Boaz" has an uncertain origin consequently, its meaning is not accurately known. It has been suggested that the Hebrew means "fleetness" and the Greek means "in him is strength". However, since he is never spoken of in the New Testament that interpretation cannot be evaluated.
- b) His Actions:
 - i) Boaz gave Ruth water that she didn't have to draw (ch. 2:9; Jn. 4:10).
 - ii) Boaz purchased Ruth to be his wife (ch. 4:10). How often we read in the New Testament of being redeemed (Lk. 1:68; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:18), that is, "purchased". By the grace of God we were "purchased by the blood of His own" (Acts 20:28).
 - iii) Boaz was more concerned with Ruth's condition than his own reputation (ch. 2:8-9; Phil. 2:7).
 - iv) Boaz offers hope to a stranger (ch. 2:10; Eph. 2:11-12).
 - v) Boaz was not strictly a near kinsman, however, he was a kinsman to Naomi through her marriage to Elimelech (ch. 2:1). It was only by her marriage to one of Naomi and Elimelech's sons that he was distantly related to Ruth. Because this was not a direct blood relationship, he was not her near kinsman. However, grace and love entered the picture and he performed the duty of one who was a kinsman and redeemed her (ch. 4:10). Ruth had no rights on him, she was from Moab (ch. 1:4) and like us, being a Gentile she was not of the covenant to Abraham.
- c) His Wealth:
 - i) Boaz was a mighty man of wealth (ch. 2:1) but in this he is a contrast and comparison to the Lord. He was a comparison due to the fact of being a man of servants and an earthly property, for the Lord had His servants (Heb. 1:14) and property, which is filled with His glory (Psa. 72:19; Isa. 6:3). By contrast, the Lord was rich in moral perfections being sinless and holy (Eph. 3:8).
 - ii) He was the Lord of the Harvest (ch. 2:21), so with the Lord (Matt. 9:38; Lk. 10:2).
- d) Boaz had a history before He came from Bethlehem (ch. 2:4).
 - i) We sometimes sing, "He came from the brightness of glory", and how true that is. The Lord of glory condescended and became incarnate (Phil. 2:5-8) and could say, "I proceeded forth and came from God" (Jn. 8:42) and "came down from Heaven" (Jn. 3:13; 6:38, 41, 51, 58).
- e) Boaz and Ruth:
 - i) It is very clear that Boaz was attracted to Ruth despite her background (ch. 2:8-9). She was not of the same "social class" and had no merit or claim upon him. Several truths emerge from this:
 1. Any kindness shown to Ruth was dependent on God's grace. The law made it clear that

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being a Moabite she was shut out of any relationship (Duet. 23:3), and the only way she could be brought in is by grace. Paul reminds us Gentiles that we were without hope, without God in the world, and strangers from the covenant of grace (Eph. 2:12). We were without strength (Rom. 5:6) to aid ourselves, thus we were void of any merit or claim on God. Now, by grace, we have been “made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:11-13).

2. Boaz had a care for Ruth who when he came along gave her quietness of heart regarding permission to work in his fields, giving protection from the young men and assuring her of refreshing water for to drink. In other words, he showed kindness to her and cared for her. In this we see a foreshadowing of our Lord who cared for those in need and gave to them:
 - a) The quiet confidence of peace.
 - i) To the man let down from the roof, for whom his sickness was the result of sin else the Lord would never have said, “Thy sins are forgiven thee” (Lk. 5:20).
 - ii) To the lady taken in adultery He said, “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (Jn. 8:11).
 - iii) To the disciples He said, “My peace I give unto you” (Jn. 14:27). He said, “Peace be unto you” to the disciples in the upper room who were frightened when He appeared, even though the doors were shut (Jn. 20:26).
 - b) The care He had for the families of ailing and dead ones in comforting them:
 - i) To Martha, “Thy brother shall rise again” (Jn. 11:23)
 - ii) To Jairus, the fact that the Lord went with him, that was an encouragement (Mk. 5:24).
 - iii) When the servant came and told how the child had died, He said to the father, “Be not afraid, only believe” (Mk. 5:36).
 - c) He cared for those He healed after he healed them:
 - i) The demonic clothed and in his right mind to whom the Lord said, “Tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee” (Mk. 5:15-19).
 - ii) When the Lord raised Jairus’ daughter, the Lord commanded them to eat for He knew what it was to be hungry and the need for nourishment. After healing Jairus’ daughter, He “commanded that something should be given her to eat” (Mk. 5:43).
 - d) He cared for folks even when they did not ask:
 - i) Zacchaeus climbed up a tree just wanting to get a glimpse of the Lord. What a surprise when the Lord stopped where he was and spoke to him, inviting Himself to Zacchaeus’ house for tea (Lk. 19:5).
 - ii) The Lord fed the 5000 knowing that if they left without nourishment, they would faint on the route home (Jn. 6:5-13).
 - iii) The widow of Nain was given back her son. What a comfort for that widow, for she had no other means of support (Lk. 7:15).
 - e) Boaz was from the tribe of Judah (Matt. 1:3-5), as was also our Lord (Matt. 1:16, Lk. 3:33, Rev. 5:5).

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Triads in Ruth

Three groups of people	Those of Bethlehem (ch. 1:19-20)	The harvesters (ch. 2:3)	The witnesses (ch. 4:9)
Three people die	Elimelech (ch. 1:3)	Mahon (ch. 1:5)	Chilion (ch. 1:5)
Boaz calls Ruth by three names	Damsel (ch. 2:5)	My Daughter (ch. 2:8)	Virtuous woman (ch. 3:11)
Three woman begin the return	Naomi (ch. 1:6, 11)	Orpah (ch. 1:6, 14)	Ruth (ch. 1:6, 14)
Kindness (chesed in Hebrew) is mentioned three times	(ch. 1:8)	(ch. 2:20)	(ch. 3:10)

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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