

Online Grace Bible School

With

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**Online Grace Bible School
Phase 6
The Book Of Ruth**

1) New Beginnings

- ✓ The book of Ruth is a beautiful picture of God's love, not only for the Jews but also the Gentiles. It is the only book in the OT named after a Gentile.
- ✓ It is set against a farming background at the time of the Judges, the narrative revolving around a series of agricultural events. It is difficult to understand this book without understanding these events because every event of agricultural importance to this farming people has spiritual significance to us.
- ✓ It begins with a famine in the land. What kind of agricultural event is a famine? It is a disaster.
- ✓ There was a famine because the Israelites worshipped Canaanite gods. See also Judges 21:25.
- ✓ Baal was the male fertility god and Ashtoreth the female counterpart. They believed that this kind of practice would ensure fertility for crops, herds, and themselves, Deut.28:1&15, 18, 38-40.

- ✓ Elimelech was born in Bethlehem, 'House of Bread' Yet it was now a place of famine.
- ✓ Elimelech means 'My God is King' which is ironic because Elimelech did that which is right in his own eyes.
- ✓ He is seen in contrast to Boaz. He was a symbol of weakness; Boaz was a symbol of strength.
- ✓ 1:2. He and Naomi had 2 sons: Mahlon 'to be sick' and Chilion, 'wasting away; to come to a complete end'

- ✓ 1:3-6. Ten years of fruitlessness and then Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion all died.
- ✓ Naomi heard that God had visited His people by giving them bread. Yet there was bread in Moab.
- ✓ A famine in the land caused Naomi to leave Israel, but a famine in her heart makes her want to return.
- ✓ Ruth 1:8-10. Naomi tells both her daughters-in-law to return to their home of Moab. She has nothing to offer them Ruth 1:14-15. Only Ruth stayed with Naomi. Orpah turned back.
- ✓ Orpah represents an awakened soul and Ruth a regenerated soul. Both are works of the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ An awakened soul is aware of their sinful state and that Christ is the answer to their spiritual need.
- ✓ Regeneration occurs when one trusts in Christ. Judas was awakened, not regenerated, Jn.6:64; 13:11-12.
- ✓ Like Judas Orpah went to her own place 1:8,12, 15; Acts 1:25. And like Judas she went back with a kiss.
- ✓ 1:14. Ruth clung to Naomi. This was more than loyalty. Same word as in Gen.2:24; Psa.119:31; Josh.23:8.

- ✓ So Naomi returned to the land of Israel. She said to the locals, 'Don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara. I went out full, (i.e. with husband and sons) but came back empty'. Yet she came back with Ruth. Mara = bitter.

- ✓ 1:22. They returned to Bethlehem, the house of bread at the beginning of barley harvest.
- ✓ Barley was the first crop to be ripened for the Spring harvest, before the wheat. Having left the rebellion and death depicted by Moab, the barley harvest represents the new life that redemption brings.
- ✓ This feast was in the month Abib meaning 'ear' because the corn was in the ear, formed but not ripe.
- ✓ It was the very first of the very first harvest. Each Israelite family was to go to the fields, cut enough yellow stalks to bind into a sheaf and bring it to the priest who was to wave it before the Lord.
- ✓ Abib is the month when Israel came out of Egypt, just after the Passover.
- ✓ It is the harvest that follows the shed blood.
- ✓ This feast is a picture of Christ, the first to rise from the dead, 1 Cor.15:20. He rose the third day after the Passover, the same day the firstfruits were offered.
- ✓ This was the first day of the week and has become our Sabbath ever since (we are not working towards rest, but from it). He is the firstfruits of the new creation.
- ✓ The firstfruits of the barley harvest were cut from the earth with a sickle, signifying a cutting off from the old; then raised before the Lord, signifying His resurrection that accomplished this. He is '*the firstborn from the dead*' (Col.1:18). The firstborn of a new creation. The firstfruits guarantee the rest of the crop.
- ✓ The harvest will be of the same nature as the firstfruits. Christ is the firstfruits of the new creation in the same way that Adam is the firstfruits of the human race. There are only two kinds of people in this world – 'in Adam people' and 'in Christ' people. The barley harvest emphasizes our true identity.
- ✓ See the abundance of the barley loaf (2 Kings 44:2-4; feeding of 5,000). Where sin abounds His grace abounds much more. We begin to see His favour and abundance on Ruth and Naomi from this point.

2) Divine Happenings

- ✓ *'There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz'* (Ruth 2:1). Naomi had a relative on her husband's side who had the power to redeem.
- ✓ Every 50 years in the Year of Jubilee everyone received their inheritance back. But there was a law of redemption. If a near relative was able and willing he could redeem their land and return it to them.
- ✓ Boaz is introduced but has not yet appeared just like the prophecies of Jesus in OT. He was a man of great wealth. His name means 'strength'. He is able to meet their needs, but is he *aware* and is he *willing*?
- ✓ See Ruth 2:2. Reaping in the fields was a privilege given to the poor, Lev.23:22; Deut.24:19.
- ✓ *'Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech'* (Ruth 2:3). Hebrew: 'And her chance chanced upon the allotted portion of the field belonging to Boaz'. Some translate it 'As luck would have it...' Was it luck? Chance? The meaning of this word is illustrated in 1 Sam.6:9. What happened was not bad luck, or some random happening. It was the hand of God. So too with Ruth. 'As it turned out...' (NIV).
- ✓ They are in Christ, in the barley harvest, in the Passover Lamb. All things work for good, Rom.8:28. There are no coincidences, only divine happenings.
- ✓ This 'chance' meeting determined her marriage, her wealth, her happiness her security, her lineage.
- ✓ 2:5-7. Ruth saw Boaz talking with the foreman about her and wondered whether this was good or bad.
- ✓ Boaz said, *'You will listen my daughter, will you not?'* (Ruth 2:8). 'I am going to make you such an offer that you will think you didn't hear it right. Stay in this field, follow the girls so you don't wander into other fields, the men won't touch you. When you are thirsty drink from the water provided for the reapers.'
- ✓ Companionship, protection and refreshment. One condition: stay in Boaz's field, i.e. look to him. Don't go into other fields, even if they look good. Stay in grace!
- ✓ Ruth 2:10-12. Ruth never asks why all the *hard things* have happened to her. She asks why she has found grace. Her journey of faith had been '*fully reported*'. The Lord knows those who are His.
- ✓ 'Why have I found favour?' (the word means grace, favour, kindness, mercy). And all this to a foreigner!
- ✓ Because you have come to trust under the shadow of His wings. She is seen here as a defenseless young bird tucked under the shelter of the strong protective wings of the Almighty, Psa.91:1, 4.
- ✓ 2:14-16. In response to this faith Boaz made provision in abundance. He invited Ruth to have lunch with him. More grace. And intimacy. 'Dip your bread in the vinegar.' Partake of the sacrificial work of Christ.
- ✓ Then he arranges for her to glean among the sheaves and for gleanings to be deliberately dropped for her to pick up. Grace goes beyond Law.
- ✓ 2:17-20. She gleaned an amazing amount, enough for about 10 days' supply. Naomi saw the magnitude of the load and was amazed. Then Ruth told Naomi *'the man's name is Boaz'*.
- ✓ 'He is a near kinsman to us', *goel* = Kinsman-redeemer. Used first time here. It means to re-deem, to re-purchase or buy back. If an Israelite fell into poverty he had to sell himself. He had to sell his services, his labor, and his life to another. And to whoever he sold himself, that one became his master.
- ✓ A kinsman could redeem.
- ✓ We sold ourselves into sin. And that stranger who possessed us was the devil himself. '*...and that they may recover themselves from the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will*' (2 Tim. 2:26).
- ✓ We became the servants, the slaves, the captives of the devil whether we liked it or not, and he owned us, until Jesus came and bought us back, *redeemed* us. Truly He is our *kinsman*! He is our Boaz, the 'mighty man of wealth' from Bethlehem and 'in Him is strength' to reinstate to us our lost inheritance.
- ✓ She saw God's hand and was in awe. Compare 1:20-21 with '*Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!"*' (Ruth 2:20).
- ✓ '*And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field"*' (Ruth 2:22).

3) Separating the Chaff from the Wheat

Naomi and Ruth are a type of Jew and Gentile in need of redemption. Boaz is a type of Christ.

Naomi 3:1-5.

- ✓ In 2:20 Naomi awakens to the kindness of God. Her hope is centered in Boaz the kinsman redeemer.
- ✓ She has a plan for Ruth and her security. Salvation is of the Jews.
- ✓ The kinsman redeemer had a specific role in Israel's family life. He was responsible to: 1) Buy a relative Israelite out of slavery (Lev.25:48); 2) Buy back family land that had been forfeited (Lev.25:25); 3) Carry on the family name by marrying a childless widow (Deut.25:5-10).
- ✓ Over the period of the harvests Ruth and Boaz would have got to know each other well and become attracted to each other.
- ✓ Since Boaz was a generation older than Ruth he would not have made his feelings known or proposed marriage and certainly would not have forced himself upon her.
- ✓ So Naomi has a plan for Ruth to place herself at the feet of Boaz and 'wait and see what he will do'.
- ✓ Ruth 3:3. She is to wash, anoint and clothe herself. See 1 Cor.6:11. 1) Washed is a picture of regeneration (Titus 3:5); 2) Anointed is a picture of being sanctified or set apart by the Spirit, (Rom.15:16; Pet.1:2); 3) Clothed speaks of the robe of righteousness (Isa.61:10; Zech.3:3-4; Rev.19:13).
- ✓ 3:4-7. Boaz lay alongside the pile of grain to protect it, depicting Christ resting in the satisfaction of His work of justification, regeneration and sanctification, Isa.53:11.

Ruth. 3:6-9.

- ✓ He was startled when he realized someone was there, Ruth 3:9. Ga'al - lit. the one who can redeem us.
- ✓ 'Wing' *kanaph* = the end of your wing or edge, hem, border of your skirt (KJV).
- ✓ This was the emblem of rank or authority in Israel, like the stripes on the sleeve of a military officer, Ezek. 16:8; Psa.57:1; Psa.91:1,4.

Boaz. 3:10-13.

- ✓ 'So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest' (Ruth 2:23). Threshing follows the harvest. It was the dry season when the barley was threshed.
- ✓ A picture of sanctification, 1 Cor.1:30. We are being conformed to the image of Christ Rom.8:29.
- ✓ It's not just positional; it's also practical. But He is our sanctification, Eph.5:25-26.
- ✓ Heb.12:10-11. Chastening is what is illustrated here. The harvesters threshed the whole harvest of barley until not one grain remained that had not been threshed with the flail. The purpose is to separate the chaff from the grain. The chaff clings to the seed so tightly that nothing but the flail can separate it.
- ✓ The farmer usually remained all night on the threshing-floor in harvest-time for the protection of his valuable grain and for the winnowing. Until the winnowing it is all loose mixture.
- ✓ There can be no mixture, only pure grain. The threshing floor was on an elevated rock where it could get the full effect of the wind. The grain would be lifted in the air with a fork and the wind would blow away the loosened husks. Finally, all that remained was a pile of golden grain, pure seed.
- ✓ Chaff symbolizes that which is light, the flesh. Flesh clings to the believer. He separates the chaff from the grain, the superficial from the real, the hype from the substance, Matt.3:11-12.
- ✓ It is His work. But what if we are unresponsive? 1 Cor.3:12-15. It will be burned, together with any reward we would have had from it.
- ✓ This will take place at the end of the wheat harvest, at the end of the age. 'The harvest is the end of the age.' The fields which were full of corn will then be empty. There will be no more workers because there is no more work. Notice the difference between: 1) Jn.19:30. 'It is finished' i.e. all that needs to be done to effect our salvation was accomplished on the cross; 2) Rev.21:6. 'And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End' i.e. the outworking of the finished work in conforming us to the image of Christ. *Ginomai* = it has come into being; it has been brought to pass.

4) A Redeemer Who Gives Life

The term 'kinsman-redeemer' occurs 13 times in Ruth with 20 occurrences of the verb, 'to redeem' (Heb. = *ga'al*). Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, is a type of Christ our redeemer. By law, the kinsman-redeemer must:

- ✓ Be related by blood to those he redeems. The nearest blood relation had the right of redemption. If this person was unable, then the relative next in line could redeem, Ruth 2:1; Heb.2:14-15.
- ✓ Be able to pay the redemption price. Ruth 2:1; 1 Pet.1:18-19.
- ✓ Be willing to redeem. Ruth 3:11; Jn.10:15&18.

- ✓ Ruth 3:10. Ruth's former kindness was leaving home and nation to stick with Naomi in her old age and work at gleaning to support them both. But now she rejected the idea of younger men, choosing an older father-figure who was a kinsman to raise up children to her late husband Mahlon.
- ✓ But then came a surprise, Ruth 3:12-13. There is one nearer than he who has first right of refusal. In the morning Boaz will challenge the next of kin with his responsibility.
- ✓ Ruth 4:1. Boaz went up to the gate of the town and sat there until the nearest kinsman came in from the fields. His name is never given. He is referred to as 'friend'. In Hebrew it is *peloni almoni*. It just means 'so and so' or 'a certain someone.' He's impersonal, anonymous. He is a kind of non-person.
- ✓ He represents the law, i.e. the legal difficulties in the way of redemption. The law is the nearer kinsman. The law comes first; Moses before Jesus. He has no personality, feeling or concern for Ruth and Naomi, (John 1:17). This is in complete contrast to Boaz who loves Ruth.
- ✓ We came into this world like Ruth and Naomi. Our inheritance was lost and we were in hopeless bondage. We could not redeem ourselves from sin, nor from the power of the devil. The law offered no help and no hope. It told us what we should have done and failed to do, but offered no help. Like Ruth we needed a redeemer to redeem from slavery, restore our inheritance and raise up a seed.

- ✓ Ruth 4:2. Boaz makes sure that there is a full complement of witnesses to the transaction about to take place. Ten elders = 10 commandments. What is at issue is that of Boaz's right to redeem his people. But he must do it in accordance with the law. Christ did not ignore the law. He honored it, then fulfilled it.
- ✓ 4:3-8. 'You have first right of redemption.' The man sees the advantage of increased crops, so agrees.
- ✓ But then he is sprung with a surprise: 'You must agree to marry Ruth, and raise up seed to her late husband through her, which seed will then become the rightful heir.' This would mean not only more to provide for in this lifetime, but more to divide the whole inheritance amongst when he died. Thus, his inheritance would be fragmented into smaller portions.
- ✓ Raising seed to the widow of a relative was a serious thing, Gen.38:6-10. Ruth 4:6. He decides against it.
- ✓ He doesn't love Ruth, as Boaz does, or nothing would stop him.
- ✓ God's Son to lay down his life and bring many sons to glory to be joint-heirs, Rev.5:9-10. This is the heart of a true redeemer.

- ✓ Ruth 4:7-8. The taking off of the shoe sealed the deal. It was a symbol of public disgrace. He was not worthy to walk upon the land or own it; that privilege was given to the one who received the shoe.
- ✓ The nearest kinsman has the right but not the power to redeem and give life, Rom.8:3-4.
- ✓ The law stumbled over the raising up of seed, Rom.7:4.

- ✓ Ruth 4:11-12. Rachel, Leah and Tamar, though imperfect, built the house of Israel. That's what they would like to see happen with Ruth.
- ✓ Ruth 4:13. Ruth was married to Mahlon something like 10 years. And she didn't have a single child. As soon as she was married to Boaz she was fruitful, Rom.7:4-6. The Lord gave her the ability to conceive.

- ✓ 4:18-22. Why are 10 generations listed? See Deut.23:2. The book of Ruth was proof to the Israelites at the time of King David that he could legitimately be their king.