

Topic: The Book of Ruth

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Introduction: The Book of Ruth is commonly taken as a picture of Christ (Boaz) and the Church (Ruth) as the Gentile bride of Christ. The Church, the Body of Christ, however, was a mystery, which was kept secret since the world began and not made manifest until revealed through the Apostle Paul:

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 1 Corinthians 2:7-8

Since the Church, the Body of Christ was a secret hid in God, what does the Book of Ruth picture?

Study:

- Chapter 1 – From the Land of Israel to the country of Moab, and return

Elimelech ('My God is King') of Bethlehem-judah (House of Bread)

Naomi ('Pleasant'), wife of Elimelech

Mahlon ('Sick'), son of Elimelech and Naomi

Chilion ('Pining': suffering in decline), son of Elimelech and Naomi

Ephrathites – ('fruitfulness') Ephrath, another name for Bethlehem, the place where the Messiah would be born, Micah 5:2. Jacob's wife Rachel was buried in Bethel ('House of God') on the way to Ephrath after giving birth to her second and final child: Benjamin, Genesis 35:18, 19, 24.

Moab – ('of his father') the land inhabited by the descendants of the son of Lot by his eldest daughter, Genesis 19:36-37

Orpah ('gazelle': a small slender antelope) wife of Chilion, a Moabite woman

Ruth (friend/'friendship'/appearance: 'beauty') wife of Mahlon, a Moabitess. Ruth would become the wife of Boaz, after the death of Mahlon, her first husband. Ruth through Boaz would become grandmother of (King) David.

"It is not forbidden in the Law to a Hebrew to marry a Moabite woman, but a Moabite was forbidden to enter the congregation of the Lord, Deuteronomy 23:3" (George Williams)

Ruth submits to the God of Israel (Ruth 1:16-17) and benefits from the promise made to Abraham (Genesis 12:3).

Naomi petitions for her name to be changed to Mara ('Bitter').

Barley was planted in the autumn and was the first grain ripened for harvesting in April. The events in the Land of Israel cover about 3 months (to the end of wheat harvest (2:23) in June).

- Chapter 2 – In the field of Boaz...Ruth meets Boaz

kinsman = relative

Boaz ('in him is strength'); presented as 'Booz', Matthew 1:5.

Verses 2 and 3 "...Ruth forsook her people and her native land to put her trust under the wing of Jehovah the God of Israel...as a gleaner, she sought her daily bread from the Hand of that Gracious God who had made this provision for the widow and stranger..." Leviticus 19:9-10, Deuteronomy 24:19-22 (George Williams)

2:10-13 Ruth questions, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes...". Boaz responds with reasons for, "...all that thou hast done...". Compare "found grace" with the grace announced by the Apostle Paul, Titus 2:11-14.

- Chapter 3 – At the threshing floor of Boaz...Ruth seeks rest

v.9 Ruth effectively requests of Boaz to redeem her, widow of Mahlon: near kinsman to Boaz, desiring that she be joined to him as the kinsman redeemer. In this redemption plan we see first and foremost in Boaz grace towards Ruth, a Gentile who was faithful in materially supporting her mother in law, not presuming any reward for herself.

v.11 Boaz, "...I will do to thee all that thou requirest..."; a preview of the new testament and covenant which will provide redemption for Gentiles through Israel.

See Deuteronomy 25:5-10 The duty of a near kinsman is that he must not only buy the land of his deceased kinsman, but must also raise up a seed by marrying the widow and producing children.

v.12 a "kinsman" that is nearer than Boaz

- Chapter 4 – The nearer kinsman tested for ability and willingness to redeem

v.1 the nearer kinsman "ho, such a one" appears, and request of him is made.

v.3 Naomi's land is for sale and needs to be redeemed because she has otherwise lost it to debt; she is without ability to redeem it herself.

v.4-8 The nearer kinsman was willing to buy the land but was not willing to take upon himself Ruth the widow and raise up children, lest his own inheritance suffer loss. He said (v.6), "...redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it."

v.9-10 Upon the refusal of the nearer kinsman, Boaz declares to the elders that he is willing and able to perform both duties in order that his kinsman's family be not cut off, buying both the entire estate of Elimelech and his sons and purchasing Ruth as his wife.

The picture of the new displacing the old:

Boaz is a preview of the new covenant enabled by the new testament, being willing and able to redeem. The nearer kinsman is a type of the old covenant enabled by the Law which has the prior claim and its ability to redeem must be tested.

Romans 8:3a "For what the Law could not do..."

See 2Corinthians 3:12-16 Paul speaks of the old testament (the Law) which Israel cannot see past.

Matthew 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

"remission" = release from bondage.

2Corinthians 3:4-6 "...God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament...". Note: Paul is speaking of himself; the Body of Christ is not under the new testament, nor of it an able minister.

Hebrews 9:13-17 "...And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead..."

Conclusion: The Book of Ruth is a future picture of the day when believing Israel (living in complete obedience under the new covenant of the Kingdom enabled by belief in the new testament of His blood) will be able to bring Gentiles seeking redemption into that new covenant:

Zechariah 8:23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days *it shall come to pass*, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard *that God is* with you.