

Ruth Series - Part One
September 17th, 2006

The Foundation

1). In relation to the message of the scoffers, which we dealt with in our study of ‘The Promise of His Coming’, the Apostle Peter draws attention to the coming Seventh Day, the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

a). And particularly, within the scope of the Seventh Day, he draws attention to the coming destruction of the existing heavens and earth and their replacement with a new heavens and a new earth at the beginning of the endless ages of eternity.

b). Knowing that the Seventh Day is coming, with everything associated with that for Christians in terms of judgment and reward or loss, and knowing that the existing heavens and earth will be destroyed he asks the following question –

c). *2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 ¶ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?*

d). ‘What manner of persons ought we to be in holy conduct and godliness?’

e). This is a particularly pertinent question and one we should take very seriously. It is of course a question that cannot be answered in one or two words – but to give the most succinct overview of the successful Christian life, showing what holy conduct and godliness looks like, we need only turn to the Book of Ruth.

2). And a study of the Book of Ruth, if the Lord permits, is exactly what we will do over the next month or so.

3). So let us begin by laying some foundation.

4). *Ru 1:1 ¶ Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went*

to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. 2 The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion-Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. 3 Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. 4 Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. 5 Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

5). The setting for Ruth is ‘the days when the judges ruled’ – a time beginning after the death of Joshua characterized on Israel's part by disobedience, followed by judgment, followed by repentance and deliverance by the hand of a Judge and back to disobedience – forming a cycle of action and reaction.

a). *Jg 2:10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel. 11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals;*

b). *Jg 2:18 And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. 19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.*

c). *Jg 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*

6). Elimelech and his family leaving Bethlehem for Moab, because there was a famine in the land is a clear indication of one of the periods of God's judgment upon the nation – in complete accord with that which God made clear to them in Leviticus should they choose disobedience rather than obedience - *Le 26:38 You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. 39 And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away. 40 ¶ 'But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me,*

41 and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt- 42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land. 43 The land also shall be left empty by them, and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them; they will accept their guilt, because they despised My judgments and because their soul abhorred My statutes. 44 Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God.

7). Because the focus of Ruth is the Church, we would realize that the picture of Elimelech's family in a Gentile land in a time of famine is a picture of Israel dispersed among the Gentile nations, in fulfillment of the curses God spoke of in Leviticus, brought to its zenith by the crucifixion of their Messiah - Mt 27:25 *And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."*

a). Even though God knew that they would reject the One sent to them He still sent a deliverer in the person of His Son.

8). We will of course remember that at this time Israel was set aside and the Church came into being to receive that which Israel had rejected.

a). Mt 21:43 *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

b). The setting aside of Israel we can see in the death of Elimelech.

c). Elimelech = Hebrew – *Eliymelek* = God of the King – the Almighty King

d). Although the nation of Israel remains intact, even today, it is separated from God in a place of death, waiting to be brought back to life on the third day from the Cross – which is the seventh day from the restoration begun in Genesis – pictured for us in the resurrection of Lazarus – Jesus coming to him after two days - Joh 11:6 *So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. 7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."*

e). Lazarus having been in the tomb for four days – symbolizes the 4000 years from Abraham to the Millennial Kingdom.

9). We note that it is only after Elimelech's death that the two sons take wives from amongst the Gentiles. It is only after Israel has been set aside

that - Ac 15:14 *"Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.*

a). It is the same picture we have seen in previous weeks with regards to Joseph and Moses, who both take Gentile brides having been rejected by their brethren.

i/ The death of Sarah before a bride is found for Isaac presents the same thing from a different standpoint.

10). With the death of the two sons, after a period of ten years – ten being a number of completion, we have a total of three deaths denoting the completion of God's judgment against the nation within a complete period of time. Exactly what we find completed during Daniel's seventieth week, the time of Jacob's trouble, the Great Tribulation.

a). Mahlon = Hebrew – *Machlown* = sick

b). Chilion + Hebrew – *Kilyown* = consumptive, failing

c). Both of which speak of the spiritual condition of Israel

d). Isa 1:5b...*The whole head is sick, And the whole heart faints.*

6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, There is no soundness in it, But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment.

11). Despite the completeness of God's judgment against the nation, a remnant of the nation will still remain, and remains God's delight and special treasure, pictured for us in Naomi.

a). Naomi = Hebrew – *Noomiy* = delight

b). Ps 135:4 *For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His special treasure.*

c). Isa 10:22 *For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, A remnant of them will return; The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness.*

12). And continuing within the typological detail of the first five verses of the Book of Ruth, we have Ruth herself and Orpah who become members of a Jewish family by marriage, and remain members of that family even after their husbands' death.

a). This pictures for us the Church, which becomes part of a Jewish family as a result of the death of a Son.

b). The two women, like the wise and foolish virgins point to two types of Christian that comprise the Church – those who are prepared for the Bridegroom’s coming and those who are not.

c). Ruth = Hebrew – *Ruwth* = female associate, one added to another

d). Orpah = Hebrew – *Orpah* = stiffnecked

13). Continuing in Ruth v6 - Ru 1:6 ¶ *Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. 7 Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.*

a). What we see here is the beginning of a journey back to Bethlehem that will bring a separation between Ruth and Orpah, culminating in the marriage of Ruth to Boaz. A journey that takes place with both Naomi and Ruth in close relationship.

b). And this is the way that it must be, as within the timeframe of history and prophecy the preordained destiny of Israel and the Church moves inextricably together towards the Seventh Day.

c). Although Israel is at present estranged from God all events are moving towards reconciliation and rulership.

d). Similarly, all events in respect of the Church are moving towards judgment and rulership.

e). The concluding point for both Israel and the Church is the Millennial Kingdom – with Christ ruling with His coheirs from His throne in the New Jerusalem, in the heavens – and from the throne of His father David, with Israel from the earthly Jerusalem following the redemption of the inheritance.

f). They are returning to Bethlehem the city of David the king – the house of bread – And Christ of course is the Bread of Life, the greater Son of David, who is King of Kings – This signifies for Israel, the restoration of family relationship following repentance. And for the Church, adoption as firstborn sons, based on faithfulness during the journey.

g). Heb 3:6 *but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*

14). It would be good for us to recognize just how important the role of Naomi is to the successful conclusion to Ruth’s story.

a). We need to be fully aware of just how significant Israel is, whom Naomi typifies, to the Christian.

b). Joh 4:22 *"You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews."*

c). The fulfillment of God's plan to bless the nations has been set to come through the lineage of Seth – through Shem to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Jacob's twelve sons.

d). God Himself as Messiah comes as a Jewish man – Jon 2:9.... *Salvation is of the LORD."*

e). Ac 4:12 *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

f). It is only our positional standing in Christ that makes us Abraham's seed, and heirs of the promises God made to him - Ga 3:29 *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

14). Many Christians regard Israel from a negative perspective, wrongly believing that the Church has replaced the nation in entirety, but we would do well to note God's perspective on the matter

a). Ro 11:15 *For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? 25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will*

turn away ungodliness from Jacob; 27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."

b). We should thank God that it was given to the Jews to slay the Passover Lamb – for His death and shed blood has provided all that is necessary for the complete redemption of Man – Spirit, Soul and Body. Making possible the redemption of the inheritance, bringing about the change in the present system of rulership that God had always envisioned. And this will happen with the nation of Israel fully restored – 'grafted into their own olive tree' – in the land at the head of the nations. Bringing to fulfillment God's promise to Abraham - Ge 26:4 *"And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;*

15). Not only would we see Naomi representing the nation of Israel as a nation, but we would also see her as representing that which has come through the nation for us – the scriptures - Heb 1:1 ¶ *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

d). The Bible is a Jewish book, written by Jewish hands, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, through which we have God's complete revelation to Man

i/ Ro 3:1 ¶ *What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.*

e). And as we have said already – Joh 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,*

f). The Word became Jewish flesh.

g). And it is only this implanted Jewish word that can do that recorded in - Jas 1:21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

h). And we must have the same tenacity and voracity as Ruth with respect to the word - Ru 1:14b.....*but Ruth clung to her.*

16). If we are ever going to find ourselves fully prepared to meet with Christ at His Judgment Seat, in the antitype of Boaz's threshing floor, it will only be by our wholeheartedly clinging to the scriptures and wholeheartedly following their instructions, in the antitype of Ruth clinging to Naomi.

a). Ru 1:16 *But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. 17 Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me."*

b). Ru 3:5 *And she said to her, "All that you say to me I will do."*

17). It is by faith alone that we will find ourselves in the antitype of Ruth

a). Ro 4:13 *For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

b). And faith can only be brought to its goal by believing and acting upon that which God has said. There is no such thing as faith apart from the word of God. And God has said all He needs to say in the scriptures – hence the scriptures, which Naomi typifies, are our guide and our teacher.

c). If we have the same mind as Ruth – 'All that you say to me I will do', then we can confidently expect that recorded in - 1Pe 1:9 *receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

d). And we can confidently look for the words from our saviour that Boaz speaks to Ruth - Ru 3:11 *"And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman.*