

Sunday December 2nd 2007
Laying the Foundations
The Picture of Marriage
Part Three – The Bride Taken From the Gentiles

1). We have seen in our previous sessions that the picture of marriage within scripture is there to teach us enormous spiritual truth about Christ and His Bride.

a). We have seen that the picture has been in scripture from scripture's beginning in Genesis and is an indispensable part of God's revelation to Man concerning the plans and purposes He has for His Son and those who would be His joint heirs. Plans and purposes that were set in the distance of eternity past, that are looking to a future fulfillment in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

b). We have seen that God gives us His revelation concerning marriage in accordance with that written in - Isa 28:10 *For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.*"

c). As a result we have seen that the Bride of Christ will be taken from the Body of Christ – being a part of His body, but not all of His body.

d). That the Bride of Christ will be taken from the family of God – Christians from this present dispensation only – and that the Holy Spirit is at present searching amongst the eternally saved – us even now – to see who will go with Him on the journey to meet with the Bridegroom.

2). And this brings us to the next part of the picture, the Bride being taken from the Gentiles.

a). From the beginning of God's dealings with Abraham His focus was on one particular group of people, the physical descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob and Jacob's twelve sons – the nation of Israel.

b). And the promises of God in respect to both the earthly and the heavenly parts of God's Kingdom are given exclusively to those who are of this lineage – hence the Bride from the Body of Christ, Christ being a Jew by birth, and the Bride from the family – Abraham's family alone.

c). Now because Israel refused the offer of the Heavenly part of the Kingdom at Christ's first coming - Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

i/ 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.*

d). The Kingdom of the Heavens would now be given to a new nation, but this nation could only be of the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob.

e). Christ of course as we have noted is of the seed of Abraham by birth and anyone who puts faith in Christ's finished work on the cross receiving eternal salvation has a positional standing 'in Christ' – we become part of Christ's body and Christ, through birth is a Jew - Ga 3:29 *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

f). In fact whether in our natural birth we are born a Jew or a Gentile, if we are eternally saved we become a Christian - Ga 3:28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

g). From God's perspective we are a new creation in Christ, part of the one new man – no longer a Jew or a Gentile.

3). As the Church began, as seen in the Book of Acts, it was drawn predominately from the Jews. As time went on however, more and more the Church was drawn from the Gentile nations, until today the Church is predominately Gentile in its makeup. And so the Bride of Christ, taken from the Body and taken from the family will be predominately those who were born Gentile.

4). And this is exactly what we see in scripture.

a). Joseph, Jacob's beloved son, who is a type of Christ, is rejected by his brothers and carried away to Egypt. While in Egypt he is taken from prison and exalted to a position of power second only to Pharaoh.

b). Joseph then takes a Gentile bride - Ge 41:45 *And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah. [Savior of the world] And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On.*

c). It is after taking a Gentile bride that Joseph is recognized by his brothers at their second meeting and Joseph saves them from the famine and blesses them.

d). Moses, who is a type of Christ, is also rejected by his brethren and goes to a far country where he takes a Gentile bride - Ex 2:21 *Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses.*

e). Having taken a gentile bride, Moses in response to the command of God returns to his brethren, Israel and leads them out of bondage to the land of promise.

f). And all this of course points to Christ who has been rejected by His brethren, the nation of Israel, and has now gone to ‘a far country’.

g). And because of that contained in the type He must take a gentile bride before returning to His brethren a second time as their deliverer.

h). In understanding the events of the last days we cannot help but see that the next event on God’s calendar is the rapture/resurrection of the church, that the Bride might be identified, before Christ deals with His brethren a second time, during and concluding the Tribulation.

5). Now we have already begun to realize from our foundation in Genesis 1+2 that not all Christians will be a part of the Bride of Christ. And there is one place in scripture that we can go that gives us the most complete picture of what the successful Christian will look like – it is the Book of Ruth.

6). And isn’t it interesting to see that the one single book in the Bible that gives the clearest picture of those who will successfully be a part of the Bride of Christ is located in the OT and is one of only two books being named after a woman?

7). 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 [literally – ‘fields’] of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.*

a) The setting for the Book of Ruth is ‘in the days when the judges rule’ – this is a time in Israel’s history when the nation was at one moment in a place of repentance and the next in sin again. This resulted in a downward spiral of sin that had the ultimate conclusion for the nation of captivity.

b). This is a situation that reached its lowest point some 30 years after the crucifixion of Christ in 70AD when the nation of Israel as a national entity ceased to exist until 1948. And even though the nation of Israel is in the land once again, since 1948, the nation is there in disobedience and not repentance and will be removed from the land again during the Tribulation.

c). Israel then for the whole of this dispensation has been scattered amongst the Gentile nations, separated from the land, without spiritual food. And this is what we find at the beginning of Ruth.

d). The spiritual condition of the nation is given to us in the names of Elimelech’s two sons

e). Mahlon = sick + weak

f). Chilion = failing + pining

g). Isa 1:5 *Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. 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.*

8). Ru 1:3 *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.*

a). In Elimelech's death we can see the setting aside of the nation of Israel and then in the marriage of the two sons to Gentile women, Orpah and Ruth we can see the church provoking Israel to repentance.

b). And then in the death of Mahlon and Chilion after about 10 years, after a complete period of time, there is left just the two Gentile women and Naomi.

i/ In the deaths of Mahlon and Chilion we see the final rejection of national repentance on the part of Israel with regards to the Kingdom as recorded in Acts Chapter 28 – now leaving the church alone as the focus of God's attention.

c). Now let us note that being Moabites both Orpah and Ruth were Gentiles. They both married into a Jewish family, thereby becoming a part of that family. And even though their husbands died this would not alter their standing as family members.

d). And in all of this we would see Christians who become part of the family of God through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, who remain a part of that family regardless of their actions following their eternal salvation.

e). And here with Orpah and Ruth we have a picture of the unsuccessful and successful Christian respectively. Even their names demonstrate this.

f). Orpah = stiff necked

g). Ruth = a female associate – one + another (as in a mate)

9). 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). And here in v6 we see Naomi and Orpah and Ruth at the beginning of a journey leading to Bethlehem, the House of Bread.

b). And note that we are now looking at events that take place after Orpah and Ruth have become members of the family, after their husbands have died – picturing for us the dispensation of the Church – after the setting aside of Israel, and particularly for us as individuals, events that take place after we are eternally saved. And we must see this along side what we have already learnt about the Bride taken from the Body and the Holy Spirit's search for the Bride amongst the family.

10). Let's set in place one more piece of typology, one more picture – Naomi is a type, a picture of Israel and more especially that which was given to Israel – the word of God - 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.*

a). Let's make sure we understand the intimate relationship we as Christians have with Israel – all of scripture both OT and NT is penned by the hands of Jewish writers – in other words, without Israel we would have no scriptures.

b). And so in seeing the relationship between Ruth and Naomi both on the journey to Bethlehem, working in the harvest and preparing to meet Boaz on his threshing floor we see the importance of the word of God to us in our Christian journey, our work in the harvest and our preparation to meet Christ at His threshing floor, the JSOC.

11). And so with Naomi in place as the word of God and Orpah and Ruth as Christians on their pilgrim journey let's continue.

a). Both Orpah and Ruth start out together on the journey and early on they get opportunity to turn back - Ru 1:8 *And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9 "The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband." Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. 10 And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people."*

b). We cannot help but see here the introduction of the marriage relationship and its connection with finding rest – do we hear echoes of Genesis here? We should.

c). What comes next in the verses that follow these is an explanation from Naomi concerning marriage, husbands and an inheritance.

d). The essence of what is being spoken in these verses is that Orpah and Ruth could return to the way of life they had before being members of the family with the prospect of fulfilling their needs in the present, or they could follow Naomi to Bethlehem with the prospect of finding a husband, remaining yet future, with the ever present possibility of that hope not being realized.

e). Here is the response - Ru 1:14 *Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. 15 And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."*

f). Orpah – the stiff necked turns back – and so do the majority of Christians for exactly the same reason. Understanding what the scriptures really teach about Christ and His Bride is not a well trodden path within Christendom and the majority of Christians have turned back before their journey ever really began. And for those who do walk this path, many will turn back as what is expected of them is too difficult.

g). Not that what scripture expects is too difficult of itself, but many do not want to give up sin, because they enjoy it too much, and many do not want to face the issues in their life that need to be faced.

h). And it is at this point in the account in Ruth that Orpah disappears from the narrative. What follows concentrates on Ruth, the one who has determined to continue the journey.

i). Although we do not see Orpah again, we need to realize that she still remains a part of the Jewish family – but she is not the one who finds a husband and an inheritance and a royal lineage in Bethlehem.

j). And as we already understand from our study of the word we would have to go elsewhere in scripture, ‘here a little and there a little’ to get the complete picture concerning the unfaithful Christian.

12). 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." 18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.*

a). Ruth clings to her mother-in-law, and do you see the words she uses, ‘I will go’ – exactly the same as those used by Rebekah to Abraham’s oldest servant. This is not coincidence.

b). And then, later in our story, look at why Boaz commends Ruth

Ru 2:11 *And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and **how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth**, and have come to a people whom you did not know before.*

c). Isn't this exactly what Rebekah did?

d). And isn't this exactly what God had said to Abraham –

Ge 12:1 ¶ *Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.*

e). Taking us all the way back to our foundation in Genesis 2 –

Ge 2:24 *Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

f). This is a place we must all come to, and you may have come to it for the first time even now – we will have to choose, 'I will go', clinging to Naomi, the word of God, following explicitly what the word instructs looking for that future day when we would rule and reign as a joint heir with Christ. Anything less than that commitment and we have already turned back.

g). Eph 5:31 *"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

13). Ru 1:22 *So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.*

Ru 2:7b.....*So she came and has continued from morning until now,*

Ru 2:23 *So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.*

a). At the end of Ruth Chapter 1 Ruth and Naomi arrive in Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest. Barley was the first grain harvest of the year and it would be a sheaf of barley that was waved before the Lord on the Feast of First Fruits.

b). It is this Feast that was taking place on the day of the Lord's resurrection, and this Feast that for centuries pointed to His resurrection.

c). In this we can see Ruth's work in Boaz's field as our work done in Christ's field, apart from our flesh.

d). The wheat harvest at the end of Chapter 2 adds more detail as we understand that only in dying to our flesh can we produce works in the spirit acceptable to God - Joh 12:24 *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain."*

i/ Ro 6:5 *For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,*

e). And the duration of Ruth's work, 'from morning until now', shows a complete period of time. Our work of dying to the flesh and walking in the Spirit is to be a continuous process from the moment of our eternal salvation until the end of our pilgrim journey.

14). Ruth through her acts of faithfulness to her mother-in-law and her decision to leave the land of her birth and her father and mother found favor in Boaz's sight – Ru 2:12 *"The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."*

a). So much so that he personally took oversight of her work in his field and gave instructions both to his reapers and to Ruth with regards to accomplishing this work –

b). Ru 2:8 *Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. 9 "Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn."*

c). Ru 2:15 *And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. 16 "Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her." 17 ¶ So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.*

d). The application for us of the instruction given to Ruth should be clear – we are only to work in the field of the One whom Boaz typifies, that is Christ, and we can only do this in the spirit and not in the flesh.

e). And we are to keep our eyes focused in one place alone –

Heb 12:2 *looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

f). And then of course to the young men, who are identified earlier as the reapers, they are instructed to purposely let bundles of grain fall for Ruth to glean.

g). In the parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew Chapter 13 angels are described as reapers - Mt 13:39b.....*and the reapers are the angels.*

h). Angels in Hebrews are described as - Heb 1:14 *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*

i). And in respect of work we see this in - Eph 2:10 *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

15). And Boaz is the kinsman redeemer – a close relative within the family of Elimelech who is able to redeem the inheritance that was lost through the death of Mahlon and Chilion. Just as the Lord Jesus Christ is our Kinsman Redeemer who is able to redeem the inheritance lost through the death of the Man and the Woman in the Garden.

16). In our account in Ruth, Naomi is fully aware of the potential for Ruth if she were to marry Boaz - Ru 3:1 ¶ *Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? 2 "Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.3 "Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 "Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do." 5 And she said to her, "All that you say to me I will do."*

a). In that which Naomi pictures for us, the word of God, is contained everything we need to know about how to be prepared to meet Christ on His threshing floor, the JSOC.

b). Just as we read here in v3 – ‘wash yourself’, ‘anoint yourself’, ‘put on your best garment’.

c). And we will note Ruth’s response to Naomi’s instructions, which should be ours also – ‘All that you say to me I will do’.

d). Washing ourselves we have already looked at, it is the cleansing that is to take place in us through the washing of the word - Eph 5:26 *that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,*

e). Anointing in the OT would be done with oil, and the oil was a type of the Holy Spirit – the anointing would be done in preparation for ministry.

f). For us this would be a continual filling of the Holy Spirit that comes only from the word of God - Eph 5:18 *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be [continually] filled with the Spirit,*

g). Which is described in this way in - Col 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

h). And putting on our best garment takes us once again to the wedding garment to be worn by the Bride of Christ as she becomes His wife Re 19:7 *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

i). Although these preparations are presented to us sequentially we would need to understand that they all happen at the same time and all happen continuously.

j). In fact although the events in Ruth are presented chronologically, in our experience, our journey, our work in Christ's field and our preparation to appear at His Judgment Seat are all simultaneous - and should continue uninterrupted throughout the course of our Christian life.

17). So then to review – we have seen then how the detail given in the bride taken from the body and the bride taken from the family is added to as we build into this equation the bride taken from the Gentiles.

a). And we have particularly seen, in respect of Ruth the absolute necessity for the Christian who will be part of the bride to be determined to make the journey that will end at Christ's Judgment Seat.

b). How that Christian will be prepared to separate from other Christians who don't want to make the journey.

c). The necessity to cling to Naomi, to allow the word of God and the word of God alone to lead us and direct us, to train us and to teach us.

d). We have seen the work we are to do in Christ's field and the preparations we are required to make

e). If we should choose to be diligent to do all of this there will be a glorious meeting with our Kinsman Redeemer at His Judgment Seat, resulting in a marriage relationship, a redeemed inheritance and regality.

f). And if we choose not to do so, there is the obscurity of an Orpah – eternally saved, but no Kingdom, no inheritance, no part in the Bride.

g). If this were us we would have rejected the purpose for our creation and turned our backs on everything God has desired to teach us through the picture of marriage.

h). What are you? A Ruth or an Orpah?