

Sunday February 14th 2016

Ruth

Part Four

1). 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. 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."*

a). As we had seen last week Naomi, Orpah and Ruth set out on a journey to return to the land of Judah, because in this land God had visited His people by giving them bread. It is from Naomi that Orpah and Ruth hear about this land and what is to be found there and they are reliant upon Naomi for the direction they are to take.

b). Both Orpah and Ruth are members of the family and both Orpah and Ruth hear exactly what Naomi has to say and in this there is no distinction between them.

c). The journey they are to make is reminiscent of the journey made by 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."*

The instructions that God gives to Abraham in this verse present exactly the action which was required of Orpah and Ruth, and to accomplish this they had to put their trust completely in Naomi and her God.

d). And the choice and the challenge that these 2 women faced is presented in v8 -9 where we see, 'Go return each to her mother's house' set alongside Naomi's prayer for them, 'The Lord grant that you may find rest,

each in the house of her husband'. The reference to 'rest' and a marriage inevitably takes us back to the purpose for Man's creation as seen in Genesis and it is correct that we should make this comparison.

e). But please note that the return to 'her mother's house' is tangible and concrete – we can imagine, 'There is your house, there is your mother, [probably waiting with open arms] just go back', and in this whole thought we can find echoes from Genesis Chapter 24 - Ge 24:55 *But her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman stay with us a few days, at least ten; after that she may go."*

f). Then placed alongside the concrete and the tangible we find the relative uncertainty of, 'The Lord grant that you **may** find rest.....' and here we can find echoes from Hebrews Chapter 6 – Heb 6:1 ¶ *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do **if** God permits.*

Now it is not that finding rest in the house of her husband would ever be in doubt, this would clearly not be the case, the uncertainty however comes through having to commit to the wholehearted devotion that it will take to see this certainty realized in their own lives - Ru 3:5 *And she said to her, "All that you say to me I will do."*

And although this is not addressed in the Book of Ruth beyond Orpah's return there remains the ever present, implied possibility, by comparing scripture with scripture, of turning back at any time between beginning the journey and appearing on Boaz's threshing floor. The uncertainty then lies in the nature of the human condition for the eternally saved, a fully redeemed spirit sharing the same body with an ever present and self-destructive sin nature – Eph 4:22b.....*the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,*

g). The 7th Day, the Sabbath Rest of God, Christ's Millennial Kingdom and positions of rulership as Christ's consort queen for Christians has never been in doubt – all that remains uncertain with regards to this future reality is who will be approved to have one of those positions of rulership with the Lord –

Heb 4:9 *There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. 11 ¶ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.*

h). The truth is that 'Orpah' is alive and well and lives inside each one of us and we all retain the potential to turn back at any time just as she did. Now although this potential remains and we should not become complacent about the possibility, there is such very great encouragement for us through the scriptures because we are shown clearly and unequivocally what we must do to be a 'Ruth' - 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." 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.*

And we would have to see Ruth as part of that cloud of witnesses seen in Chapter 12 of Hebrews - Heb 12:1 ¶ *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,*

And if we follow this through to its conclusion what do we find? We find guaranteed success at Christ's Judgment Seat, we find joy inexpressible and full of glory, we find approval and regality, the goal of our faith, the salvation of our soul - Ru 3:10 *Then he said, "Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. 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.*

2). This same glorious encouragement to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of us is also found in another foundational type concerning Rebekah and Isaac, and the account we see in Genesis Chapter 24 parallels and gives commentary on that which we see in Ruth and vice versa - Ge 24:51 *"Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as*

the LORD has spoken." 52 And it came to pass, when Abraham's servant heard their words, that he worshiped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. 53 Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother. 54 ¶ And he and the men who were with him ate and drank and stayed all night. Then they arose in the morning, and he said, "Send me away to my master." 55 But her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman stay with us a few days, at least ten; after that she may go." 56 And he said to them, "Do not hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master." 57 So they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally." 58 Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." 59 So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. 60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her: "Our sister, may you become The mother of thousands of ten thousands; And may your descendants possess The gates of those who hate them." 61 Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and they rode on the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed.

We will remember that Genesis Chapter 24 is the account of Abraham's oldest servant going to Abraham's family to find a bride for Abraham's son, Isaac and this account pictures the present work of the Holy Spirit amongst the eternally saved searching out a Bride for God's Son.

a). We will also remember that the account in Chapter 24 is found within a panoramic sequence of Chapters which begins in Chapter 21 with the birth of Isaac, the son of promise picturing the birth of THE Son of promise our Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter 22 takes us to the sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah, picturing the Lord's sacrifice on the same mountain. Chapter 23 then gives us the death of Sarah, picturing the setting aside of Israel while God would deal with a new nation.

b). The death of Sarah and the deaths of Mahlon and Chilion picture exactly the same thing in this respect, Israel in the place of death while God takes out of the Gentiles a people for His name, and it is this that we see in Chapter 24, with a specific focus on those who would be faithful. In this respect both Rebekah and Ruth picture the same group of Christians, those seen in the 4th part of the parable of the sower, those who produce fruit, some 100, some 60, and some 30.

c). That which takes place in Genesis Chapter 24, following the arrival of the oldest servant, parallels that seen in Ruth through the journey, the gleaning and the preparation. In Ruth these events are seen in relation to Naomi's instructions and in Genesis 24 they are seen in relation to the actions of the oldest servant – in other words that pictured through the journey, the gleaning and the preparation are recorded in the Word of God given to the Jews and that pictured through the jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold and clothing are revealed through the work of the Holy Spirit and that seen in these 2 accounts provides us with the complete picture, just as the scriptures teach – Joh 16:13 *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.*

In other words the Holy Spirit takes the God breathed scriptures and opens them to our understanding, thereby guiding us into all truth concerning that which is Christ's, His Kingdom and His Kingdom rule - 1Co 2:9 *But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

d). And so, as we read the Book of Ruth and see the instructions given to Ruth by Naomi we must not only think, 'the holy scriptures' but also the work of the Holy Spirit through these scriptures. The 2 must go hand in hand.

e). Now, in the Book of Ruth we see a progressive period of time in which the journey takes place, followed by gleaning in Boaz's field from the beginning of barley harvest to the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest, work taking place from morning until evening, all of which pictures the work

to be done throughout the entire Christian life as we continue to seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness.

f). In Genesis Chapter 24 there is a more truncated period of time. The oldest servant arrives and we are told that he 'stayed all night' and then left the following morning. Although in the literal account this is a short period of time what it pictures for us is the complete 2000 years of this dispensation.

g). We might remember from previous studies how this dispensation has a particular association with the night and darkness, something we can trace from the time just preceding the Lord's betrayal - Joh 13:30 *Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. **And it was night.***

*Eph 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against **the rulers of the darkness of this age**, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

*Ro 13:12 **The night is far spent, the day is at hand.** Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.*

What we see then is the Holy Spirit's present and continuous work amongst the eternally saved throughout the complete time of this dispensation, a time associated with the night and darkness, a time in which He will fulfill that seen in 1 Corinthians 2:9-13 for those with eyes to see and ears to hear.

h). So on the one hand we have the Holy Spirit opening the scriptures to our understanding to reveal the deep things of God [hearing the word of the kingdom] and on the other hand we are to take that which we are given through this revelation and work with it to produce fruit / a harvest / a profit / an increase / to beat out the grain.

i). And all of this activity on our part and on the part of the Holy Spirit has one end in view – our appearance at Christ's Judgment Seat for the purpose of being approved for rulership.

[Power Point]

j). Although we have seen this many times I won't be negligent to remind us all once again that the Judgment Seat and the 7th Day beyond it is the purpose for Man's creation, the reason we have been saved and the reason

we are being saved – this is the whole focus of scripture, God’s revealed purpose. Let’s not take our eyes off of this even for a moment.

k). In the Genesis 24 account it is the morning following the night when the oldest servant leaves with Rebekah and her maids on the 10 camels to go to meet Isaac, and although this is a journey it is not the same journey as we see Ruth make – this journey in Genesis 24 pictures the resurrection/rapture of the Church.

l). In Ruth, the resurrection/rapture is implicit in Ruth’s appearance on Boaz’s threshing floor at midnight and in Genesis 24 it is going out to meet Isaac part way between Rebekah’s home and his home.

m). What is common to both accounts though is the absolute determination of both women. We have already looked this morning at Ruth’s determination and devotion and we see the same thing with Rebekah using exactly the same words as used by Ruth – ‘I will go’. Rebekah’s choice is based entirely on that which the oldest servant has revealed to her which exactly parallels Ruth’s decision based on that which Naomi had told her.

n). And again, because of Rebekah’s wholehearted determination and devotion there is absolutely no uncertainty regarding the conclusion of the matter, just as there is none with Ruth - Ru 4:9 ¶ *And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. 10 "Moreover, Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day." 11 And all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem.*

Ge 24:64 Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel; 65 for she had said to the servant, "Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took a veil and covered herself. 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Both accounts provide different facets of the same picture. And this is what awaits each one of us if we will run this race with patient endurance, continually looking from this world unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith - Heb 10:36 *For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.*

o). Do we want to be free of uncertainty about our appearance at Christ's Judgment Seat? Then let us learn from Rebekah and Ruth. Do we want to be loved by our Savior in that Day as a husband loves His Wife? Then let us learn from Rebekah and Ruth - Joh 14:21 *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.....26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

3). Ru 1:18 *When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.*

Now we have rightly said that Orpah and Ruth faced a test when it came to going on or turning back, but I do not want us to think that there is a point at which testing ceases for us based upon this verse.

a). Quite simply here we see that once Ruth has shown her determination to go on Naomi stops trying to persuade her to go back, but Ruth's testing does not end here. In fact every time Naomi gives Ruth an instruction the implicit test is will she be obedient or not? We should remember that Ruth is not an automaton; her choice to be faithfully obedient is just that – a choice.

b). Now according to the scriptures - 1Pe 1:5 *who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 ¶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been*

grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.

We see from the verses here that the ‘various trials’ that grieve us are specifically allowed to prove the genuineness of our faith which is enormously precious in God’s eyes. Now these various trials are not seen beyond Ruth’s initial testing because this is not the focus of the Book. We would go elsewhere in the scriptures to see this – the life of Abraham would be a good example to look to for this.

c). But there is something taught through Ruth’s experience as it is recorded in that Book, concerning the ‘various trials’ that is profoundly important.

d). And very simply it’s this – in every trial that comes our way, no matter how grievous it may be, if we will respond to it and go through it in faithful obedience to the scriptures then it will in that Day lead us to success and glory, just as we see with Ruth on Boaz’s threshing floor and Rebekah in Sarah’s tent.

e). The Apostle Paul says it this way - 2Co 4:16 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

The wisdom of the world says, ‘You are what you eat’, but the truth of scripture says, ‘We are what we look at’.

f). We will continue with this next time though – if the Lord is willing.