

BOOK OF RUTH / INTRODUCTION - 1:9

~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God begins the beautiful Book of Ruth in this report. Thus far, our safari has traveled through an official Introduction to the Bible; and then we considered Genesis, Matthew, Exodus, Mark, Leviticus, Luke, Numbers, John, Deuteronomy, Joshua - and we completed Judges in our previous report. That makes two hundred ninety-seven reports so far. Presently, we can account for well over one million thirty-five thousand words. This safari is about One thing and One Person only: The Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ; as in, the Word that became Flesh, as John told us. He is risen.

Since our examination of Deuteronomy, Satan has absolutely dogged our safari trail. Many of us have experienced tremendous difficulties, hardships and troubles in the last several months. I have been beaten down and, literally, bruised by the devil's attacks since we began Deuteronomy. I have had moments of severe despair, discouragement, debt and discontentment – and several moments where I could not possibly see any way to continue. I'm glad God is there for me because very, very few others are. See, friends, Satan HATES the Word of God, and he will throw every arrow he has at the man who deigns attempt teach Holy Writ, preach it, or even just learn it properly, correctly and completely. The Bible is supernatural, sensational and it is deadly serious about our sins – which God hates! So, Satan hates the Bible and God hates the sins that bring us to the Bible – and that makes for one conflict of spiritual warfare that kills and destroys many, many people.

Our Spiritual Safari leaves the darkest jungle of Judges in this report, with every man doing what was right in his own eyes, and we enter a clearing. A principle of the Mosaic System of Levitical Law revealed in the account of Ruth and Boaz brings us out of political anarchy and moral awfulness and into a vast open field of blessing and sunshine. Salvation is a love affair; and John told us we only love God because He first loved us. Well, for the next seven reports, we will see love illustrated in this wonderful, hopeful and

comforting Book of Ruth. This little book only has four quick chapters; but it is important in our understanding of the One we love, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ruth presents the “romance of redemption.” The events recorded in this book occur during the period of the judges of Israel and, as we have seen, those were dark days. Well, God now paints our understanding with awesome light, vivid color and immense beauty upon a black background in our previous several safari studies. Ruth is a literary gem; and has been recognized as such in some extremely unexpected quarters. Dr. Samuel Johnson was a literary giant in eighteenth century England and made a longhand copy of the book of Ruth. He recited it before a club in London presenting it as a production of literary art. The members of the club believed it to be his original writing and they praised it highly as an original manuscript. Some years later, Dr. Johnson announced its true origin. I cannot find any record of the after effect of the announcement, but I have to believe at least someone turned to the Word of God as a result; and discovered they had been missing something in their life for a very long time.

Either way, the beauty and excellency of this book of the Bible will not escape even the most casual readers on safari! What we are going to consider is the love story of a maiden from Moab! Power, passion and pure love will be revealed. It describes the unbreakable attachment of Ruth to her mother-in-law. The bond they shared was as strong as death itself. This relationship triumphs over racial and religious barriers; and reveals two hearts joined together with bands of God's love.

Ruth will be examined under the microscope in our safari laboratory and will reveal demonstrative evidence of how the love of God is divine love. It will also reveal that the human plane of genuine love, as well as the divine love of the Lord, are both impenetrable realms by the devil, and are unbreakable bonds. Interestingly, the word “love” will not be used in connection with the romance aspect of Ruth's story as it unfolds. In fact, “love” only even appears one time in this book as it says Ruth loved her mother-in-law. Now, a woman who loves her mother-in-law is certainly unusual, isn't it? Even without the word itself, the love involved in the

romance aspect of this study is inescapable and undeniable. These awesome illustrations will detail the eternal love God has for you – and me – today.

In the “old days” of seminary theological training, there was what was called “modernists” and “fundamentalists.” Today, we label the “modernists” as “liberals” – religiously speaking; and the two groups have been divided that way ever since. The seminary teachings of old – and even today – had or have one curriculum in one class that is totally and completely contradicted in the next classroom. If you had been in a modernist classroom, you would have assumed they were winning the arguments of the hour. Similarly, liberal teachings today FAR outweigh the number of fundamental teachers; likely, by a ratio of around one hundred to one. The liberal has some philosophical arguments that can be difficult to rebuff if one is not well educated in sound doctrine. The liberal church certainly has all the money, too; which gives them another facade of credibility.

Alright, the book entitled “Institutes” by Calvin is one of which there is no “whichever” - even though that is not a word. Calvin wrote as a very young man in his early twenties. Again, it is a marvelous book, even though it is tedious and tiring; and, if you deign read it, you’ll resign to thumbing through it before you finish. However, the section where Calvin lists the Biblical types of the Redeemer we find in Christ lists Moses, and that’s a good start – but then Samson is named, which is startling. Samuel is listed; and that is a good type, too. Boaz, is not even mentioned; which should send red flags up every pole everywhere. What this all amounts to is that the love aspect of redemption is simply not being taught in this modern churchy era.

Salvation and redemption are presented in the pulpit today as merely cold-blooded business transactions; talk of which is typically as dry as a deposit of cash into a bank account. God says Christ paid with His blood and – the end. You can hear the clinking of coins and feel the paper greenbacks pass from hand to hand in modern preaching of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel today is usually presented

with all the warmth of a bank president turning down your application for a loan to buy a new car. The Gospel is displayed today with all the indifference of a diamond salesman showing a golden earring to a customer. Seriously, modern Bible teaching is as frigid and useful as a frozen steak. That is how redemption is presented in contemporary Christianity – if it is even mentioned AT ALL!

Unfortunately, that's only PART of the problem. The Biblical truth that states we love God only because He first loved us is, likewise, ignored wholesale. That truth is so critical for us to understand because it's the beginning of said love affair in salvation! Paul said, "He loved me, so He gave Himself for me!" Well, we're going to focus on the proper perspective of love in redemption throughout this book of Ruth. Exodus exposed the deliverance God wrought for us. Here, we will feel the pulsing heartbeat of Jesus as we cuddle up to Him for acceptance and safety. These things are never emphasized properly in today's teaching.

The dark ages produced books such as Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* which explains why God became man. It is the theory of satisfaction in the atonement and in redemption. However, even WAY back then, there was not ANY emphasis on love! Calvin missed it; Jonathan Edwards missed it; Stewart Robinson missed it - and just about everyone else leaves it out these days, too! Love in salvation as a love affair needs recognition and mentioning; it must be understood, or the Word of God becomes meaningless. God loves us; and, by the way, those of you who say things like "... God loves you and so do I" put yourself on His plane and then no one believes anything you say because you negate the love of God – so – let's stop that, please.

Another aspect of great importance in the book of Ruth is the genealogy connecting David with the tribe of Judah; without which David could not be connected to Judah! Again, that is critical. Also, the story we will account for makes possible the birth of the Lord Jesus in Bethlehem. Without the information in this book, as we will see, Jesus would not have been born there. Thirdly, we have the demonstration of Hebrew *Goel*. That means the law of the Kinsman Redeemer, which we were introduced to briefly in

Leviticus and Deuteronomy. In addition to all of those things, we will have bright lights shed on the economy of the Mosaic System itself. Once all is developed in Ruth, we see the Lord Jesus Himself emerge! Combine those facts and you'll discover one very worthwhile little book here.

There are many acceptable ways to divide the book of Ruth as typical Bible study programs do. The Spiritual Safari does not divide the books of the Bible, because we are not after theological perspectives – we are only after the spiritual application of the direct message to our hearts. It's a totally different approach. However, we will divide Ruth because one way it can be divided is geographically; and the geography of Bible land is important to understand – even in the spiritual realm. Chapter one is in Moab. Chapter two unfolds in the fields of Boaz. Chapter three takes place on the threshing floor of Boaz; and chapter four goes into the home and heart of the man who is Boaz! So, with that very basic background, let's commence our consideration of Ruth....

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 Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

~ Our consideration of Judges ended in our last report with a recantation of our safari philosophy of history. There was religious apostasy in Israel, moral awfulness prevailed and, finally, political anarchy swept the land. That led to every man doing that which was right in his own eyes. That's the way it was in the time period in which we are studying. I believe Boaz knew the judges of his day; and we are studying a period of gross immorality, such as we examined closely during the life of Samson. The last few chapters of Judges revealed blackness in dark ages. Thank God we receive this bright and colorful account at this particular time. That happens to be how God writes, my beloved. Make a note. On the black background of sin and disobedience, God writes the law of our salvation plan. This also develops Romans chapter one, two and three infinitely. Any person who desires to live for God can do so if they are sincere; but it's going to be done His way – not yours – I promise you that!

Now, it is important to define the names of locations in the Old Testament. Bethlehem means "house of bread." Judah means "praise." So, we meet a man who lived in the house of bread and praise. That is a wonderful place to live; but this man leaves to go live in Moab! He didn't trust the Lord, so he is running away. The moment you and I stop trusting the Lord and lean on our own understanding is the moment we'll pack up and head to Moab, too, friends. There was a famine in Israel - but God didn't tell them to go anywhere or do anything about it. They moved to Moab on their own accord.

Psalm 108: 9 Moab is My garbage can ~

This Jewish family left the house of bread and praise to go eat from a garbage can. The prodigal son left his father's house and ended up eating in the pig pen. One could say we have the prodigal family before us now. There are prodigal sons, daughters, families, nations – we have all of that encompassed right here. We need to note they're going to get a whipping in the far country. That's always where the chastisement takes place. When they come back home there's never any punishment meted out. When a child of God returns to the Lord, he is always received into His Arms – never whipped. God knows they received their discipline in the far country - Moab in this case. So, let's meet the entire family....

2 And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

~ Elimelech means "God is my King." Every time we say his name, we give a testimony! Naomi means "pleasant." Let's call Naomi "Mary Sunshine," as someone once said. We couldn't have a better couple than that from the house of bread and praise! Well, Mahlon means "puny; little." Chilion means "not healthy." So, the sons were small and unhealthy, and that does seem strange, indeed. Naomi chose to live on top of the circumstances of two anemic and sickly boys; and you would never have known anything was wrong by talking to her, I'm sure. We have dear, sweet saints like that

today, too! Going to the country of Moab was bad enough but “continuing there” was even worse. If the prodigal son has stayed in the pig pen and died there, he would have still been a son, albeit a dead son – but he never would have become a pig. However, it would have been an ending in Christian Tragedy had it unfolded that way for Naomi! These are God’s children, but they are in the far country now - and they are going to have to go home if they ever want to be blessed....

3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.

4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

~ Orpah means “fawn.” Of course, that’s a little female deer. I think she was an athletic type of girl who could, obviously, move rather quickly. The name Ruth is ordinarily associated with friendship and beauty – and I’m sure she was a beautiful friend. Orpah was skittish and afraid - and would have probably kicked you if you came too close. The true characteristic of Ruth was “glamorous” but not in a Hollywood glam type of way, though. Ruth has an extremely intelligent personality, as we shall see. We’re also going to see Ruth come to the knowledge of the True and Living God; whereas Orpah wants nothing to do with Israel....

5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

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 how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.

7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

~ Well, a hard winter in Moab produced three widows. They heard how God was blessing the land again because Israel was turning back to Him - again. It's a little surprising to see Naomi speak to her two daughters-in-law as a Dutch uncle speaks to a red-headed stepchild! Naomi was firm but fair; and mother's generally don't believe there's any girl good enough for her boy, you understand. A boy is usually just a carbon copy of his dad; and mom usually doesn't really care much for him - but mom's never thinks anyone is good enough for their sons! But I digress.

Well, Naomi, apparently, appreciated these daughters-in-law. Naomi tells them they should get back to their own people. What that means, as we will see, is: go back to idolatry! She didn't have to tell Orpah twice. See, one of them had a genuine love for Naomi; but the other didn't. Ruth is going to make a stand in demonstrating the love of God she had come to know through her husband and father-in-law. Naomi knows these two could easily remarry amongst their own people and still have a life. So, she tells them to go and do exactly that. Our safari is going to go deep into this subject - but, in this report, we leave three women weeping on the side of the highway. That's a bad place - and weeping may endure for the night - but joy cometh in the morning....

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