

# Ruth, the Moabite

that changes History and Reveals ONE NEW MAN



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We are look at the topic: from the ordinary to the extraordinary.

## The ordinary woman

Mostly we feel ordinary - only those who reach the highest sport pinnacle, or those who have successful businesses, or ministries, would think that they are extraordinary.

Generally, I venture to say that most people think of themselves as “less than” simply because we are always comparing.

And there are always those faster, slimmer, cleverer than we are - whatever the yardstick – someone will be better, and if we are lucky (note, not blessed) we will find a few that are worse off than we are.

Ruth, the Moabite ... **is nothing special**, no mother of the year awards, no children ... just an ordinary woman.

## What causes us to feel ordinary?

- ◆ The daily struggles with life.
- ◆ The problems with our children.
- ◆ The broken dreams.
- ◆ The stuck-in-the-mud stagnant life-style that we face.

All of these issues and thoughts will pull you backwards - it will be like a large rubber band that is tied to your waist. Making going forward hard or near impossible.

## History of the children of Israel

- i) Delivered from Pharaoh.
- ii) Brought into the Land of Promise.

But the Canaanites, who were left behind to test them, overpowered them - not on the battle fields, **but in the battle of the spirit** ... they have allowed idol worship / pagan GODs and Baal worship to infiltrate into their daily lives.

## What has happened to the Commandment???

*“You shall not make graven images - you shall not bow down to these images”*

## What happened to the Commandment?

*“You shall have no other GODs before Me”*

Sadly, the Bible records their life choices like this ... said differently, they built their choices on anything BUT GOD.

**Judges 6:1** *“The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian seven years.”*

- ◆ And so the curse comes into play.
- ◆ GOD releases various people groups to oppress the Israelites.
- ◆ The Moabites are one such people group.

## Ruth - the Moabite

Strange story, INDEED.

The Moabite family liner starts off, in cave where Lot and his two daughters are seen in the act of incest.

**Genesis 19:30-32** *“Now Lot went up out of Zoar and lived in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to live in Zoar. So **he lived in a cave with his two daughters**. And the firstborn said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and **we will lie with him**, that we may preserve offspring from our father.”*

**Genesis 19:37-38** *“The firstborn bore a son and called his name **Moab**. He is the **father of the Moabites** to this day. The younger also bore a son and called his name **Ben-ammi**. He is the **father of the Ammonites** to this day.”*

We will see later on that these type of relationships are not acceptable before YHWH - but those instructions are only provided later on, in the time of the Exodus journey.

Indeed, we see that this family-tribe are given a piece of Land of their own and the Israelites are instructed NOT to harass them.

**Deuteronomy 2:9** *“And the Lord said to me, ‘**Do not harass Moab** or contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land for a possession, because I **have given Ar to the people of Lot for a possession**’.”*

Almost everyone knows that the Moabites have been cursed for TEN generations ... however, most people that you ask **ascribe that curse to the act of incest mentioned above**.

## Is that correct?

The answer is NO!!!

- ◆ The Israelites are on the journey through the wilderness.
- ◆ They need FOOD and WATER.
- ◆ The Moabites REFUSE to provide these basic needs.
- ◆ **THE CURSE arises because they failed to provide basic hospitality.**

**Deuteronomy 23:4-7** "... because **they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. But the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam; instead the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loved you. You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days forever. "You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a sojourner in his land."**

Instead ... with a fear that cannot be explained, their king, calls on Balaam to curse the Israelites.

**Numbers 22:6** "Come now, **curse this people for me, since they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them from the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.**"

When this fails, the women of Moab / Midian entice the princes of Israel to stray from the path of righteousness in an orgy of sex and idol worship.

**24,000 Israelite men die.**

- ◆ The Israelites are now in the Land.
- ◆ Under Joshua, they have conquered the kings of the land.



However, every now and then, they will allow those pagans who were NOT driven out of the Land, to influence their value system.

They turn to worship IDOLS, in ADDITION to YHWH.

BUT THEY **REMEMBER** AT ALL TIMES, WHAT CAME OVER THEM as a RESULT OF THE INFLUENCE OF MOAB!!!

AND NOW ... RUTH, A MOABITE ENTERS THE LAND????

**HOW IS IT, THAT THEY ACCEPT HER?**

**IS THIS JUST A LOVE STORY, OR SOMETHING ELSE???**

Let us look at some of the **ingredients** in this story.

- ◆ **Naomi:** her name means “pleasant” or “bitter”
- ◆ **Ruth:** her name means “friend or companion”
- ◆ **Boaz:** his name means “in him is strength”
- ◆ **Elimelech:** his name means “my God is my King”

We are told that there is a famine in the Land.

## **Was this the whole of Israel, or only this area called Bethlehem?**

Consider this story is told in the time “after” Joshua ... in the time of Judges. Here we see that every now and then one of the tribes falls into adulatory - goes into some form of bondage, and then gets released when a righteous judge emerges to rule.

All we know for sure is that there is a famine in the area around Bethlehem

And now the story summary reads as follows:

### **a) A man called “my God is my King“ leaves the Land of promise**

- He leaves his inheritance and legacy
- He leaves his position as prince in the tribe
- He leaves the land of covenant and blessing AND
- He goes to the land of CURSE!!!
- and dies.

### **b) Naomi leaves full and comes back empty**

- She stayed after her husband died
- She had heard that the famine was over, but she stayed anyway
- She liked living in a foreign lands
- She had assimilated into that culture (like so many of the Jews today in Europe and America)
- Unfortunately, she is not in the land of promise.

### **c) The people in Bethlehem had turned back to God**

- The famine is over
- There is a harvest in the land
- There is the potential to bring a first fruits offering

### **d) Naomi decides to return, only now ... she is BITTER, but needs to acknowledge that her own decisions have brought to her to this position.**

### **e) Ruth, the Moabite ... the Gentile choses to go with Naomi**

- Her decision is recorded in these words ... **“your GOD will be my GOD”**, and records her choice to serve YHWH only.

Paul records the essence of that decision as follows:

**Ephesians 2:1-3** *“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”*

Ruth was “dead” to the life that she once walked in.

### **What do the interactions between Boaz, Ruth and Naomi mean?**

- ◆ Boaz is an OLD man ... a wealthy man, a land owner.
- ◆ He is leader in the community.
- ◆ He “hears” about the “good” works of Ruth ... what she had done for Naomi.

**Ruth 2:10-12** *“Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?” But Boaz answered her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!”*



- ◆ He knows that she is a gentile.
- ◆ Yet, he not only allows her to glean from the corner of the field,
- ◆ But he feeds her,
- ◆ And he tells her to **STAY ONLY IN HIS FIELD** (consider this - these are the same words that God gives to us - stay only within the boundary of the covenant)

**Ruth 2:14** *“And at mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine.” So she sat **beside the reapers**, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over.”*

And he makes her **EQUAL** to the other harvesters in the field (consider this ... is this not what GOD does - He makes us fellow heirs and sons of the Covenant).

**Ruth 2:15** *“When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her.”*

Ruth continues to serve Naomi and **DOES EVERYTHING THAT SHE TELLS HER TO DO!!!**

Naomi HAS NOTHING ...

- ◆ NO LAND
- ◆ NO INHERITANCE
- ◆ AND NO SON who could take up his place within the tribe again.

**SHE NEEDS REDEMPTION!!!!**

- ◆ Ruth is young
- ◆ She can marry any man who she likes ... there is no requirement for her to marry an old man.
- ◆ Boaz sees that Ruth the gentile has fully committed to serve ... not only GOD, but her mother-in-law as well, and, more importantly
- ◆ He sees that she does not “go *after*” the young and the wealthy men, but lives a “*set apart*” lifestyle.

**Ruth 3:10** *“And he said, “May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that **you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.**”*

Boaz decides to **REDEEM NAOMI**, by marrying Ruth and **giving up** his **ONLY SON**, OBED.

He will buy up the land and he **will give up his son**, (Just like GOD gave up His only Son, so that we could be saved).

And this son will carry another man's name so that Naomi's family line can be included BACK INTO THE TRIBE / PEOPLE OF ISRAEL.

We are looking directly at the illustration, where the Israelites ... broken off branches are being grafted back into the one olive tree, which Paul described.

**Ruth 4:13-17** "So Boaz took Ruth, and **she became his wife**. And he went in to her, and the Lord gave her conception, and **she bore a son**. Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him." Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." **They named him Obed**. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David."

**\*\*NUGGET\*\*** Ruth has been grafted into the natural olive. With her acts of loving kindness, her faithfulness, her act of sharing her blessings with Naomi she has made Naomi jealous and caused this "broken off branch" to be grafted back into the olive tree.

**1 Corinthians 12:13** "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit."



## **Ruth - the extraordinary woman**

**Paul teaches that we must become one new man.**

**Ephesians 2:11-22** *“Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands - remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the Covenants of promise, having no hope and without GOD in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the Blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to GOD in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access in **one Spirit to the Father**. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the Household of GOD, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the Cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a Holy Temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for GOD by the Spirit.”*

**How does Ruth define the outworking of the one new man?**

**How does she teach us to break down dividing walls?**

**What are some of these Character ... boundary stones that define our vision of One New Man?**

**A) DEALING WITH THE OLD MAN**

**We are called to be SALT, to be LIGHT ... to provoke all others to jealousy, when they see how, as a community, we truly love our neighbour.**

***JUSTICE - equality***

We are all equal, but different in the calling and gifting that YHWH places inside of us. Paul makes it clear. It's not about being a Jew or a Gentile, a man or a woman.

There is no special race, nor special culture, nor class distinction ... no denomination barrier, there are no walls of man's belief system that have any credibility whatsoever.

The only criteria is ...

**Are you a son / daughter of the covenant?**

**Do you reflect this in the even handedness of every action that you make?**

## **COMPASSION - mercy**

We show everyone the same Face of YHVH ... we apply the principle of loving your neighbour fully.

- ◆ By doing no harm to anyone.
- ◆ By actively doing good where ever we can.

## **HUMILITY**

We give YHVH the glory at all times ... for everything, at all times. Within this criteria, we look at the **positional place of the woman / wife** (no longer domination, no longer rulership), **but a CO-EQUAL** in unity, while still operating as servant-leader.

**Paul teaches us something about dealing with our ego.**

In the **Book of Acts** we read the story where Paul finds himself on the sinking ship.

The sailors immediately grab hold of the 'lifeboats - Paul tells them that the only safe place is to stay on the main ship.

**Acts 27:31-32** *“Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, **“Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.”** Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship’s boat and let it go.*

The Hebrew word for the lifeboats is **“anijah”**

This comes from the same root word **“ani”** which means: me / I / the old-man / the ego

We need to deal with our **“ego”** or self, if we want to become a part of the One New Man.

## **REVERSING Y'SHUA's WORK**

Y'shua did a complete work - through His death and resurrection, the WALLS OF SEPARATION have been broken down.

Any man who works to re-introduce this wall in any way,

- *by setting traditional / cultural barriers,*
- *by acts of anti-Semitism,*
- *by 'rules" of exclusivity,*
- *by words and deeds of anti-Israel – and so forth ...*

**are making the work of the Messiah to nought.**

Any man who witnesses such actions / words spoken, and does nothing about that, is complicit in declaring YHVH's work worthless.

## **B) RUTH SHOWS US THAT WE SHOULD BE SHARING THE BLESSING**

- ◆ You have been grafted into the olive tree.
- ◆ As such you are drawing on the sap which comes from those roots.
- ◆ YHWH will be blessing you abundantly ... just like Ruth, not only gleaning the corners of the field, but eating with the Owner of field.
- ◆ Ruth shared with Naomi.
- ◆ The children of Israel must experience the Blessing of YHWH through the hands of the gentiles that have been grafted in, both physically and spiritually —in a way that makes them jealous.



## **C) RUTH TEACHES US TO LEARN FROM THE NAOMI'S OF THIS WORLD**

- ◆ Those grafted into the natural olive tree, have an understanding of the work of Y'shua
- ◆ These facts are however also true;
  - The Jews have a understanding of the tabernacle and its purpose - they know why you need to “mikveh “ and why you have to “anoint”.
  - The Jews have an understanding of the “way” in which to approach YHWH - they have an understanding of “reverence/awe” simply because they stood at Mt SiNAI AND heard YHWH speak.
  - The Jews have a far better understanding of the meanings and interpretation of the Hebrew language.
  - The Jews have learned the hard way as to what the consequences are of “mixing” other idols/pagan practices with true worship.

We can learn a lot from them ... we should NOT just take all the Rituals / Tradition and teachings at face value ... we are called to “*test everything*”.

This was the commandment going into the Land of Canaan, and still is the golden rule today,

**Judges 2:21-22** “*I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the LORD as their fathers did, or not.*”

## **D) RUTH TEACHES US TO DECIDE TO SACRIFICE YOUR LIFE FOR THE NAOMI'S OF THIS WORLD**

- ◆ Ruth could have married a younger man and lived a different life.
- ◆ However, after committing herself to the GOD of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob she sacrificed her own life for Naomi.
- ◆ The child born ... becomes the redemptive gift that reinstates Naomi, back into the covenant, back into the promise of the Blessings of YHWH, and MORE CLEARLY ensures that she is grafted back into the natural olive tree.

## **How do we do this?**

We show the world that we ... JEW and Gentile, NEED EACH OTHER!!

- ◆ It's not knowing the Hebrew language.
- ◆ It's not doing the Hebrew dances.
- ◆ It's not wearing the Hebrew clothes.
- ◆ It's not worshiping with a Kippa at the Wall.

## **IT'S WALKING IN OBEDIENCE TO THE WAYS / WORDS OF THE KING!!!**

Gentiles who have found their true roots in the process of being grafted into the natural olive tree MUST FULFIL THEIR CALLING.

- ◆ We must make the “*cut-off*” children of Israel jealous.
- ◆ We must bless them by assisting them to return to Israel.
- ◆ We must rebuild the walls of that city, in order to fulfil YHWH's Word ... that HE will have mercy on them.

**Isaiah 60:9** “*For the coastlands shall hope for me, the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your children from afar, their silver and gold with them, for the name of the LORD your GOD, and for the Holy One of Israel, because He has made you beautiful.*”

**Isaiah 60:10-11** *“Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I struck you, but in my favor I have had mercy on you. Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut, that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession.”*

## **What has happened here?**

- ❖ Ruth has been grafted **into the natural olive**.
- ❖ With her acts of loving kindness, her faithfulness, her act of sharing her blessings with Naomi she has made Naomi jealous and caused this *“broken off branch”* **to be grafted back into the olive tree**.

**1 Corinthians 12:13** *“For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jew’s or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.”*

**AMEN!!!**

