

Ruth

Hi there, this is Richard Oliver, with another mini message, this time the book of Ruth.

In a history point of view the book of Ruth occurs between the time of the return of Israel back to her homeland after its time in Egypt and the time of the kings.

In the book Naomi and her husband have found that there was a time of famine in the land so they left Israel and went into the land of Moab, taking with them their two sons. Those two sons married Moabite girls. But as so often happens for Israel, she is only really blessed when she is in her homeland. And Naomi found exactly this, for her husband died, and pretty soon after her two sons died as well.

She decided to return to her homeland. And she called the two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, and said "Look, I'm going back. You're still young women and you can find other husbands. Go back to your father's houses, you'll find other husbands. There's no point in following the tradition in waiting for another son to come that you can automatically marry. I'm too old. It's not going to happen. I haven't got a husband. It's not worth the wait. Go back home."

So Orpah did, but Ruth said "No. Where you go, I go. Your people will be my people. Your God, my God. Where you die, I will die." Her commitment was complete. So Naomi decided to return with Ruth.

Naomi's home was Bethlehem. And the system was, in those days, for people who were poor, that the farmers as they worked their harvest had to leave certain areas for the poor. When they cut the wheat, for example, they were not allowed to cut the wheat in the corners of the fields, and as they reaped if they happened to drop some of the wheat then the poor people could follow behind and pick them up. The reapers themselves were not allowed to pick up the wheat that they dropped. This is called gleaning.

So Ruth decided that she should go gleaning. And she went into the field of one Boaz. And Boaz had several fields. He had wheat, barley and all the rest of it. So, at the harvest time, Naomi has returned to her homeland and Ruth is gleaning in the field of the lord of the harvest. I hope we're catching something already.

Boaz sees Ruth and likes the look of her. And tells his workers, his reapers "Look, drop some extra for her, give her a bit extra." He goes to Ruth and says "Look, when my people sit down for lunch you sit down with them. You eat off my table."

Now, this, of course, is a type and a pattern. It is a picture of what is happening today. In 1947, just after the Holocaust, just after Naomi had lost her husband and her sons, Naomi returned to her homeland. Israel became a nation again. This is, of course, a sign of the end time, because when Jesus returns He returns to Israel where there are Israelites. They have to be in their homeland. So this is a sign that we're getting close to the harvest. The end time of the world.

Ruth, meanwhile, is a Gentile. She's a Moabite, she's not a Jew. And Boaz quite likes her.

There comes a time, at the end of the harvest when Boaz and his people celebrate the harvest, and Naomi says to Ruth "Look, go and lie down at Boaz's feet in the middle of the night." Now, of course, no self-respecting woman would do that. She's basically offering herself to the lord of the harvest.

But Ruth represents us. Boaz represents the Lord of the Harvest, and the Lord of the Harvest is, of course, Jesus Christ. You have to lay at His feet. We have to offer all that we are if we want to be part of that future relationship with God.

And so Ruth does all that, and in the morning before it can be truly seen who is who, Boaz gives Ruth six measures of barley.

Now, from the time of about 1947-48, a new type of Christian ministry came on the scene. The key leader was a guy called William Branham. Many called him a prophet, I think he is. But his teachings are such that they bring us back to the Bible. The Bible is the final authority. He is bringing back the original teachings and understandings that the early church had. Working through the scriptures with him as he teaches, we are gleaning.

You see, Jesus Christ is not coming for a Jewish bride. And nor is the church at large, the world-wide highly organised denominational church, the bride of Christ. No. The bride of Christ are those that are willing to offer themselves individually to the control of Jesus Christ. Laying at His feet and offering ourselves to Him.

So, the same picture is here. And the gleaning is giving us food, it's giving us the situation where we are fully equipped to become the bride of Jesus Christ.

But Boaz isn't the closest according to the law. He's not the closest relative. And so that causes a slight problem. So there has to be some adjustments. Boaz then, he goes to the entrance of the city, the entrance of Bethlehem and waits. And sure enough, the nearest kinsman comes along. And he says to the nearest kinsman "Look, would you like to redeem the fields of Naomi?" and the kinsman said "Yeah, I would." And Boaz said "Well, that's fine, but, of course, you realise you will have to marry Ruth the Moabitess, and raise up children for that family." "Oh, can't do that. My goodness, no, that would mar my inheritance. I have to stay absolutely pure. I have to stay absolutely according to the law." So Boaz says "Well, I will do it." And the agreement is made.

God became man to become one of us. He became the nearest kinsman through His own life and death on the cross in Israel two thousand years ago.

Naomi has returned to her homeland, Ruth has been gleaning and is ready, we are at that time. Christ will return. He will redeem Israel, He will redeem Naomi's land, and in doing so He will also take a Gentile bride to be His wife. Amen.

May God bless you.