

THE GENTILE BRIDE



(Ruth 1-4)

The story of Ruth, the Moabite, does not stop with the end of the book of Ruth; instead, it begins. It is an amazing story to read. In fact, it is the kind of story everyone would like to read for its wonderful ending. In the days when the Judges ruled, as the Bible tells us, a family of four from the town of Bethlehem of Judah, left their country to sojourn in the country of Moab, due to a famine in the land. They were Elimelech, Naomi and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. It was a trip of about twenty to thirty miles, not far at all. Moab, is located east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, South of the Arnon (Num. 21:10-15). The Moabites descendants have a questionable history due to Lot's daughters in their incestuous relationship with him (Gen. 19:31-35). After the judgment that came to Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot's daughters assuming they to be the only females in that region where they settled, they took upon themselves the responsibility to solve the problem by bearing Lot's children to enable the line of their family to continue. In a devious and perverse way, they caused their father to lie with them and they both bore his children. Not an attractive story, is it? But God, as it is said,

“Writes straight on a crooked line.” As a matter of fact, we are all crooked before Him, but His love has covered the multitude of our sins through His Son, YAHSHUA.

Naomi dwelt in Moab ten years. They were so close to Bethlehem - (house of Bread), yet so far from it. One wonders why she took so long to go back home, that is, outside of God’s plan, for in His time everything becomes right and perfectly accomplished. Her life became meaningless when her husband and her sons died without leaving her grandchildren. In her own words, “Call me not Naomi [pleasant]; call me Mara [bitter], for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, but the Lord has brought me home again empty. Why call me Naomi, since the Lord has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?” It seems to me that Naomi’s family was out of God’s will, when her sons married Moabite women. In Ezra chapter 9:1-2a we read this report concerning Jews marrying foreign women: Afterward, the officials came to me (Ezra) and said, The Israelites and the priests and Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the land, but have committed the abominations of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites for they have taken as wives some of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy offspring have mixed themselves with the peoples of the lands.

With the death of her family she had one decision to make: to go back home. There was nothing in that land that would hold her and the time was right in God’s plan for her to do so. Although, she wanted to go back alone, God had a different plan. One of her daughter-in-laws heart had changed. She no longer wanted to be part of her culture, she wanted Naomi’s God, her people, and her country. In submission, Ruth made this confession to Naomi: Urge me not to leave you or to turn back from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God (Ruth 1:16-17). Ruth was a woman of determination and faith.

God emptied Naomi of all she had to fill her with all He wanted her to have- spiritually and physically. He wanted to fill her with blessings she never hoped for. So Naomi and her daughter-in-law arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest. It began in March-April, when the first sheaf would be cut and waived before the Lord. Lev. 23:9-11 says, and the Lord said to Moses, Tell the Israelites,

when you have come into the land I give you and reap its harvests, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, that you may be accepted; on the next day after the Sabbaths the priest shall wave it. Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem in that very special season. Special because that was the season when our Lord YAHSHUA died to redeem mankind many years later. The waving of the sheaf carried the significance of resurrection. Resurrection through His death was offered to all who would receive Him. It was not to be only for one nation, although it was through one nation, which had been prepared by God to deliver His Son.

Although Lot's family background history is blurry with non-acceptable immorality, he was considered righteous. He was Abraham's nephew and became indirectly part of Abraham's blessings through Ruth. When Ruth made a decision to follow her mother-in-law, that decision was not of herself, but from God. His History was going to sparkle through the life of this Gentile woman, who apart from all that was happening obeyed Him, giving up all she represented and all that that belonged to her. In the account of her life we read that all that her mother-in-law suggested, she obeyed, even being a foreigner, in a country where a Moabite had no chance. In God's will and in His time, He had prepared a man, a son of a Gentile woman, a resident of Jericho, who was delivered from Jericho's destruction for having saved the spies. Boaz was that man. His mother's name was Rahab. Boaz was also one of Naomi's near kinsman, but not the first in line. He was well to do and opened ways for Ruth to glean in his field. Ruth had to follow the Jewish custom to compel Boaz into redeem her. She (Naomi) said, **Wash and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor**, but to not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. But when he lies down, notice the place where he lies; then go and uncover his feet and lie down. And he will tell you what to do. And Ruth said to her, All that you say to me I will do (Ruth 3:3-5). Ruth was to wash, anoint herself and put on her best clothes in preparation to meet Boaz. For all that to happen, Ruth had to be willing to follow the Jewish's custom, as she told Naomi, Your people will be my people, your God, my God. It all happened the way Naomi instructed her. Boaz took full responsibility to redeem Ruth, after the nearer kinsman could not do it.

Boaz and Ruth were married and had a son named Obed. Obed was the father of Jesse and Jesse of David [the ancestor of YAHSHUA the Messiah]. These two

Gentile women – Rahab and Ruth were pictures of the Messiah YAHSHUA'S future Gentile bride. From every nation, and tongue He has chosen a bride for Himself. That's the mystery Paul often referred to. His Holy Spirit came down to teach, to convict and to prepare His bride for Himself. At the end, when He will meet His bride, she will be found ready to meet Him in His glorious splendor. Right now she is constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another (II Cor. 3:18b). Being sanctified, and cleansed by the washing of water with the Word, waiting to be presented to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things (Eph. 5:26-27) paraphrased.

God chose a bride for His Son from every walk of life. He did not choose one from a perfect family, for there was none. We all have sinned and have become alienated from His glory. God does not measure sin by our standard. Sin is sin, and before His holiness we all need to be forgiven and to be washed clean with His blood. The willing and broken heart of a Gentile bride makes right in His sight. Many are called, but only those who are willing to follow YAHSHUA will be chosen to be His bride, either Jew or Gentile.