

## **THE UNION (from the book of Ruth)**

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of **Bethlehem of Judah** went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, his wife, and his two sons. But Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and so did her two sons.

In this apparent voided of happiness story there is a prophetic and beautiful end. We see in this story not only the picture of God's love embedded in His plan for the Gentile nations, but also Ruth a type of the gentile bride of Christ.

Call me not Naomi, she said, call me Mara [bitter]. While Naomi was soaked in her unhappiness, God had for her life a beautiful future; one that made her forget all her losses. It started with her daughter-in-law, Ruth, after Naomi's husband and two sons had died. In her grief, she made a choice of returning home, to Bethlehem of Judah, alone. However, at her persistence to send her daughter-in-laws back to their homes, Ruth said, "urge me not to leave you or to turn back from following you; for where you go, and where you lodge will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God" (v.16).

What compelled a young woman to give up her family, culture, and religion to follow her Mother-in-law? She wouldn't have another son to give to her, or riches to offer her a comfortable life. Ah! Looking beyond the sphere of human reason, we see God working His plan to bring His Son into the world.

Ruth meets Boaz during the barley harvest in the month of Abib or Nisan (April). She left her Egypt (sort of speak) in the spring time to start her new life in a new place, in a new year (God's year starts in spring). And this was the beginning of the great plan God had for her.

The barley and the wheat harvest are directly linked to Passover and Shavuot – a solemn assembly is the festival of weeks (Leviticus 23:15-16). Jesus was raised from the dead in the first day of the festival of weeks, as it should have been translated, "On the first day of weeks" and not on the first day of the week. "You shall count from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, (symbolizing Jesus resurrection) seven Sabbaths" (seven full weeks), this is the festival of reaping, the day of the first fruits. Jesus

became the first fruits of all those who have fallen asleep in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Passover (spring) was the time when Israel was saved from her bondage to freedom; the time when her male children were saved from the plague of death; it was the time when she started her journey to Canaan, the land of promise. And it is in the spring time that our Bridegroom calls us (His bride) and says, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth and ripens her green figs, and the vines are in blossom and give forth their fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one and come away (SS.2:10-13). I see in this passage the picture of the rapture. In the blissful moment when we will see our Bridegroom face to face, when we will behold and gaze upon His beauty, then we will be able to say, "My beloved is mine and I am His". Will it be in the spring time, during the wheat harvest or Pentecost day?

Ruth, as a type of the gentile bride of Christ, had left Egypt, a type of the world in the spring time, to become the bride of a Jew, her redeemer, Boaz. When she made the decision to leave her gods to embrace Naomi's God, the only true God, then she experienced the Passover. She had passed over from death to life. She was also given the position that many of us would like to have: to be the great-grandmother of the great king David and to be given the lineage from which the Son of God would have come. Oh what an expression of God's love to the entire world! The union of Jew and Gentile shown in His lineage.

At the cross, Jesus reconciled us to Himself - Jews and Gentiles; at the cross He made us one in His body, as Paul said, "There is [now no distinction] neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal.3:28). And "There is no distinction between Jew and Greek. The same Lord is Lord over all and He generously bestows His riches upon all who call upon Him" (Romans 10:12).

In His priestly prayer, Jesus prayed, "Neither for these alone do I pray, but also for all those who will ever come to believe in Me through their word and teaching, **that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I in You**, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe and be convinced that You have

sent Me (John 17:20-21). And together we will stand in the faith that He has given us to be witnesses of His love to the whole world- Jews and Gentiles, working together to the end until He comes!

We, like Ruth, are on the journey to the promise land, where we will meet our Bridegroom and then we (His bride) will be part of the marriage of the Lamb. We will be permitted to dress in fine linen, dazzling and white- for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints (Revelation 19:7, 8).

As Boaz and Ruth provided a closure for the festival of the spring time, Christ and His bride, the Church, will provide the closure for the festival of weeks- Shavuot.

**THINK ABOUT IT!**

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