

“THE TYPOLOGY OF THE BIBLE” SERIES

#10: “The Typology of the Story of Ruth”

SCRIPTURE: The book of Ruth

INTRO:

The book of Ruth is a fascinating story of a Gentile woman from Moab named Ruth.

Because of a famine in Israel, a Jewish family moved to Moab, a country not far from Israel on the east side of the Dead Sea. This family from the town of Bethlehem in Judea consisted of Elimelech, his wife, Naomi, and two sons: Mahlon and Chilion. While they were in Moab, the two sons married Moabite girls. While they were in Moab, Elimelech and both his sons died.

Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem to be with family, and she prepared to leave her two daughters-in-law in Moab. However, they told her that they wanted to go with her, but she reasoned with them that it would be better for them to stay in Moab with their own people, since she had no more sons, and even if she remarried and had more sons, they couldn't wait for them to grow up. So, she planned to return home alone.

Her daughter-in-law Orpah then decided to stay in Moab with her people, but the other daughter-in-law, Ruth, decided to go with her to Bethlehem. It was during their conversation that Ruth uttered the words that have become a part of so many wedding ceremonies: *“I will go where you go, I will live where you live; your people will be my people, your God will be my God. I will die where you die and be buried beside you. May the Lord punish me if we are ever separated, even by death!”* (1:16-17).

So, Ruth and Naomi went from Moab to Bethlehem together. Naomi's family and friends took them in, and Ruth went into the fields to glean whatever grain she could. One landowner by the name of Boaz saw to it that his workers left plenty of grain for her and Naomi, not realizing at the time that they were relatives of Elimelech.

Once Naomi found out Boaz was her late husband's kin, she told Ruth about the Jewish tradition of “kinsman redeemer,” a tradition that allowed widows of marrying and childbearing age to appeal to their closest relatives for care and support. Well, Boaz wasn't the closest relative, but the man who was chose not to exercise his “kinsman redeemer” right, so Boaz was left with the opportunity to bail them out of their debt and take Ruth as his wife.

So, Boaz and Ruth were married, and eventually became great-grandparents to none other than King David, from whose lineage Jesus came.

While this is, no doubt, a true story, it is a “type” of God’s unfolding plan of redemption through Jesus. To begin with,

THE FAMILY OF ELIMELECH TYPIFIES ISRAEL.

Elimelech, whose name means “My God is King,” lived during the time of the Judges, before Israel had a king other than God Himself. He and his family lived in the Promised Land, in Judea, in the town of Bethlehem, which means “House of Bread.” His wife was Naomi, meaning “Pleasantness.” His sons were Mahlon, meaning “Sick,” and Chilion, meaning “Failing.” Elimelech led his family away from the Holy Land to Moab. The land of Moab was named for Lot’s incestuous son, who became father to the Moabites. The name signifies “From the Father.” When they got to this foreign land, the sons married heathen girls, which, of course, was a violation of God’s instructions. The three men, Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion, then died, leaving only a remnant of their family. Naomi was so saddened that she changed her name to Mara, which meant “Bitterness.”

This all typifies the nation of Israel, who rejected God and dependence on Him, became weak and failing, socially mixing into heathen cultures, and dying and leaving God and the Promised Land.

Next,

NAOMI TYPIFIES THE FAITHFUL REMNANT OF ISRAEL THAT RETURNED TO THE PROMISED LAND.

During the days of King Zedekiah, the Lord used King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to discipline Israel for their unfaithfulness. Nebuchadnezzar’s army destroyed Jerusalem and sacked and looted the temple of the Lord. 2nd Chronicles 36:19-21 records:

Nebuchadnezzar’s troops burned down the temple and destroyed every important building in the city. Then they broke down the city wall. The survivors were taken to Babylonia as prisoners where they were slaves of the king and his sons, until Persia became a powerful nation.

Judah was an empty desert, and it stayed that way for seventy years, to make up for all the years it was not allowed to rest.

Following the seventy years in Babylon, the king of the new Persian Empire, Cyrus, allowed the Jews to start returning home. 2nd Chronicles 36:22-23 records:

In the first year that Cyrus was king of Persia, the Lord had Cyrus send a message to all parts of his kingdom. This happened just as Jeremiah, the Lord’s prophet, had promised. The message said: I am King Cyrus of Persia. The Lord God of heaven has made me the ruler of every nation on earth. He has also chosen me to build a temple for him in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. The Lord God will watch over any of his people who want to go back to Judah.

Go back, they did. And Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt, and the children of Israel became a people again.

Naomi typifies the Jewish remnant that returned to Judah.

RUTH TYPIFIES THE CHURCH.

Ruth, whose name meant “Friend,” unlike Orpah, whose name meant “Stiff-necked,” decided to go to Bethlehem of Judea with Naomi. Even though she was a Gentile heathen, she pledged herself to Naomi and the Lord God of Israel.

Arriving in Judea, she met up with a kind man named Boaz, marries him, takes his name, depends on him for protection, and lives with him the rest of her life, bearing him children.

She typifies the Gentile element of the church, those who embraced the God of the Jews and His Son Jesus, even though he was Jewish. Ruth was accepted into the family of Elimelech just as believing Gentiles were accepted into the church.

BOAZ TYPIFIES CHRIST.

Boaz, whose name means “In Him is strength,” became Ruth’s “kinsman redeemer,” who rescued her from the nearest kinsman, who didn’t want to be her redeemer. He did what her nearest kinsman wouldn’t do. He accepted her and made her a part of his family, providing her with every kind of care, sustenance, and protection.

This typifies what Christ has done for his church, welcoming Gentiles as well as Jews into it, caring for it, sustaining it, and protecting it.

THE UNNAMED KINSMAN TYPIFIES THE LAW.

Boaz, as I’ve said, was not the nearest kinsman. We aren’t given the name of this man. We just know that he was not willing to, or interested in, becoming the husband, caretaker, provider, and protector of this foreign widow of a Jewish relative. He offered her no comfort or encouragement. He offered her no opportunity for children. He provided nothing except condemnation. In fact, according to the Law, as a Moabite she was banned from the congregation of Israel. Deuteronomy 23:3 says: *No Ammonites or Moabites, or any of their descendants for ten generations, can become part of Israel, the Lord’s people. But because Ruth was the widow of an Israeli, she became eligible to be a part of the people of Israel through a kinsman redeemer.*

The relative who refused to be her kinsman redeemer typifies the Law of Moses, which could not provide what both Jews and Gentiles needed: the forgiveness of sins and a righteousness for salvation.

THE WEDDING DAY OF RUTH AND BOAZ TYPIFIES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH.

In Leviticus 23:14-16, God instructed the Israelites through Moses:

"I am your God and I forbid you to eat any new grain or anything made from it until you have brought these offerings (offerings from the first of the harvest of grain). This law will never change.

"Seven weeks after you offer this bundle of grain, each family must bring another offering of new grain. Do this exactly fifty days later, which is the day following the seventh Sabbath."

The day following the seventh Sabbath became what we know as the day of Pentecost, or Pentecost Sunday.

In Ruth 2:14, we read: *At mealtime Boaz said to Ruth, "Come, eat with us. Have some bread and dip it in the sauce." Right away she sat down with the workers, and Boaz handed her some roasted grain. Ruth ate all she wanted and had some left over.*

Seven Sabbaths later was when she went into where he was spending the night. Ruth chapter 3 relates:

One day, Naomi said to Ruth: It's time I found you a husband who will give you a home and take care of you.

You have been picking up grain alongside the women who work for Boaz, and you know he is a relative of ours. Tonight, he will be threshing the grain. Now take a bath and put on some perfume, then dress in your best clothes. Go where he is working, but don't let him see you until he has finished eating and drinking. Watch where he goes to spend the night, then when he is asleep, lift the cover and lie down at his feet. He will tell you what to do.

This was a tradition of the Jews. The next day, which was Pentecost, Boaz and Ruth were married.

Incidentally, orthodox Jews read the book of Ruth on Pentecost. It's too bad they don't "get it" when it comes to the establishment of the church.

The story of Ruth and Boaz, especially their wedding, typifies the establishment of the church, which occurred on the day of Pentecost, in A.D. 30, when Jesus became our "kinsman redeemer."

Finally,

ORPA TYPIFIES THE GENTILES WHO REJECT WHAT GOD OFFERS THEM THROUGH JESUS.

She was given the opportunity to return to Judea with Naomi, just as Ruth was. She could have been redeemed just as Ruth was. She could have been blessed as Ruth was. But she lived up to her name, which meant “Stiff-necked.” She kissed Naomi goodbye; Ruth cleaved to her. She went back to her people and her false gods; Ruth made Naomi’s people her people and Naomi’s God her God.

Orpah typifies so many Gentiles today, who will not embrace Jesus as Lord and Savior, the Son of the One True God.

CONCLUSION:

So, Ruth and Boaz were married. Soon, they had their first child, a boy, and they called him Obed. He grew up to be the father of Jesse, and when Jesse grew up, he became the father of David, who became king of Israel. From that family, many years later, another king was born, and his name was Jesus.