

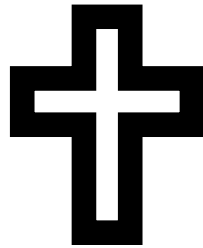
Twelve Lessons

On

**The Book of
Ruth**

by

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THE FAMILY OF THE BACKSLIDER – LESSON 1

Ruth 1:1-14

Introductory Notes:

1. Two books of the Bible are named after women.
 - a. Ruth, a Gentile woman who became the wife of a Jewish prince, Boaz.
 - b. Esther, a Jewish woman who became the wife of a Gentile king, Ahasuerus.
2. The book of Ruth was read by the Jews at the Feast of Pentecost, while the book of Esther was read by the Jews at the Feast of Purim.
3. There are 4 chapters in the book of Ruth, all dealing with Redemption.
 - a. Chapter 1 – Ruth enters the Redeemer’s Fold.
 - b. Chapter 2 – Ruth enters the Redeemer’s Field.
 - c. Chapter 3 – Ruth comes to the Redeemer’s Feet.
 - d. Chapter 4 – Ruth enters the Redeemer’s Family.
4. As in the book of Esther, here we see the grace of God working in a woman. The four chapters of Ruth are four acts in a drama: (1) tears, (2) toil, (3) trust, and (4) triumph. The book begins with funerals and ends with a wedding. Naomi moves from bitterness to blessedness, and Ruth moves from loneliness to love. What a picture of the grace of God!
5. The Prophetic view is the Redemption of the Gentiles through their Kinsman-Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. Prophetically, we have the history of Israel. How they refused Christ and God turned to the Gentiles. Through the backsliding of the Jew (typified by Naomi) the poor Gentile (Ruth) is brought to the land of blessing. Eventually she meets Boaz (type of Christ) and is married. At that time the blessings will return to the Jews as they did to Naomi. Rom 11:11-12 – *“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?”*
7. Numerically – Ruth is the eighth book of the Bible. Eight is the number of “new beginnings, the new birth, and the resurrection.” Ruth, a type of the Church, is a result of the resurrection and the new birth.

Lesson Goals:

1. To analyze the comparison in the lesson between Esther and Ruth.
2. To examine the six people in this story and the admonition about a backslidden condition.
3. To discuss the significance of Boaz’ name.

Definitions of Important Terms/Phrases:

1. Purim – Feast of. References to Purim include Est 3:7; 9:24,26,28-29,31-32. This feast commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people from destruction by an evil schemer named Haman during the days of their captivity by the Babylonians and Persians. It took its name from the Hebrew word purim, meaning "lots" because Haman cast lots to determine when he would carry out his plot against the Jews. The Feast of Purim took place on the 14th and 15th of Adar, and during its celebration the Book of Esther is read as a reminder of their deliverance. A happy ceremony, Purim is accompanied with the giving of gifts and much celebration. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
2. Famine – Occupies a conspicuous place in Scripture among the troubles with which God's people had to contend. It is mentioned as one of the scourges that God sent to chastise men for their wickedness (Lev 26:21,26; Ps 105:16; Lam 4:4-6; Ezek 14:21). Figurative. Famine is symbolic of the withdrawal of God's word (Amos 8:11-12) and the destruction of idols (Zeph 2:11). (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary).
3. Pillar – The word pillar can refer to an architectural element that supports a roof. Use of pillars was common in the Near East long before the time of Abraham. Pillars were usually made of wood or stone. References to pillars as a part of a building occur throughout the Old Testament but not in the New Testament. Wooden pillars were a prominent part of the tabernacle (Ex 27:11). But the only mention of pillars in the construction of Solomon's Temple were the two that flanked the main entrance (1 Kings 7:15-22). Solomon built a "Hall of Pillars" as part of his palace complex (1 Kings 7:6). A famous reference to pillars occurs in Judg 16:25-30, where Samson brought down the roof of a pagan temple by knocking out two key pillars. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).

I. RUTH CHAPTER 1

A. Background of the Land – Ruth 1:1 – *“Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there*

was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.”

1. Days of Sinfulness – Judg 2:11 – “*And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim.*”
2. Days of Servitude – Judg 2:14 – “*And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.*”
3. Days of Sorrow – Judg 2:15 – “*Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.*”
4. Days of Scarcity – Judg 6:6 – “*And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD.*”

B. Backsliding in the Land – Ruth 1:1 – “*...that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.*”

They didn’t have to leave – Boaz didn’t. The principle is the Backslider and the Christ. 2 Tim 2:13 – “*If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*”

1. Backslidings bring about a Famine.
 - a. Famines may be sent as A Check-up on our Faith – Gen 12:10 – “*And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.*” 1 Peter 1:6-7 – “*Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*”
 - b. Famines may be sent as A Chastisement for our Failure – Heb 12:6 – “*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*”
 - c. Famines may be sent as A Child-training for the Future – Heb 12:11 – “*Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*”
2. Backslidings bring about a Failure.
 - a. A Harmful Example to Family and Friends – Ruth 1:1 – “*...And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.*” No one ever backslides without taking someone with him. You may get back but you will leave graves in Moab.
 - b. A Formation of Forbidden Alliances (unequal yoke) – Ruth 1:4 – “*And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.*” Deut 7:3 – “*Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.*” 2 Cor 6:14 – “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?*”
 - c. A Shortening of Life on Earth – Ruth 1:3 – “*And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.*”
 - d. Declension and Spiritual Poverty – Ruth 1:21 – “*I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?*”

C. Beliefs in the Land – (Spiritual) – Conflicting Beliefs come out of Backsliding. Backsliding will “warp” the thinking of many a believer. Point: Never make a spiritual decision in a backslidden condition. Since, there were “six” people in this story, it represents the thinking of a natural man whose number is 6. Tragedies, such as famine and death, either move people closer to God or further from God.

1. Elimelech and Naomi – Two people Departing from Canaan’s land – Ruth 1:1.
2. Mahlon and Chilion – Two people Disobedient to God’s command – Ruth 1:4.
3. Ruth and Orpah – Two women Deciding for Blessing or Wrath – Ruth 1:14.
4. Naomi and Ruth – Two pilgrims Delighting in God’s own path – Ruth 1:19.

D. Behaviors in the Land – There are Seven Characters in this story of Grace.

1. Elimelech – His name means “God is my king.” Was Elimelech trying to let God be his king but was influenced by the conditions of the land. Judg 17:6 – “*In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*”
2. Naomi – Her name means “my pleasant one” but later she called herself “Mara” meaning bitter, showing the fruit of a backslidden life.

3. Mahlon – His name means “sickly.” When the Godly parents of children backslide, it will have a debilitating effect on their children.
4. Chilion – His name means “consumptive.” When the Godly parents of children backslide, like a disease, it will eat away and eventually consume the strongest child. Point: Your children ARE or will SOON BE what their parents have become.
5. Orpah – Her name means “a portion of the neck and back.” Here is the half-hearted individual – Ruth 1:14 – “...*Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.*” She wanted the Blessings without the Battle and turned Back. She represents the Scorched Seed in Matt 13:6 – “*And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.*”
 - a. The Rabbis identify the Orpah mentioned in the Book of Ruth with the Raphah (or Harafah), the mother of the four warriors of Gath who appear in II Sam. 21, and the Goliath from Gath (Harafah’s son), with the Goliath who fought David in I Sam. 17. According to this identification, both Goliath and the other warriors are therefore Orpah’s children.
 - b. These men with their special powers were the recompense for the manner in which Orpah parted from Naomi. In the version of the midrash in BT *Sanhedrin* (fol. 95a), Orpah also aided her son, Ishbi-benob, in his battle with David and Abishai, and even died during the course of this fight. **BT Sotah connects the death of the sons of Orpah at the hands of David and his servants with these opponents’ respective mothers, Orpah (“And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law”—Ruth 1:14) and Ruth (“But Ruth clung to her”—ibid.): “May the sons of the one who kissed come and fall by the hand of the sons of the one who clung” (BT Sotah 42b).**
6. Ruth – Her name means “satisfied.” The true believer will not find satisfaction in Moab (the world), Naomi (religion) or in Bethlehem-judah (House of bread and praise – mere knowledge) but she found it in Boaz (the kinsman-redeemer).
7. Boaz – His name means “in him is strength.”
 - a. Significance of his name – When Solomon built the Temple, he erected two brass pillars. The right pillar he named Jachin, which means “*he shall establish.*” The left pillar was called Boaz, meaning “*in it is strength.*” Brass is the typical of judgment. At Calvary, Jesus endured our judgment as lost men.
 - b. Symbolism of his name – By the *strength* of His death and resurrection, He shall be able to *establish* a church against which the gates of hell will not be able to prevail.
 - c. Sovereignty of his name – Ruth is a book of Hope. It is a hope that no matter what you encounter in life, whether it be famine, death or lack, God has a grand finale planned for your life. God is sovereign and is planning a long-term blessing for you, even when things look the darkest.
 - (1) Heb 10:9 – “*Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.*”
 - (2) Ruth teaches us that God never allows you to lose anything, unless He plans to return to you something better than what you had. Yet, your reaction to trouble will determine your outcome.

CONCLUSION – Every believer will experience Famines: Physical, emotional, spiritual famines but how you react to them will determine the outcome. Will you backslide, get bitter, get broken, go back, or get better?