

PERTH BIBLE CLASS – JAN – MARCH 2005

STUDY – BIBLE BRIDES – RUTH

The book of Ruth is the 8th book in our Bible. Eight is the number of new beginnings and clearly for Israel this little book heralds the dawn of better days. The previous book Judges ends on a low point probably as low as the people of God can become “in those days there was no King in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” Interesting that the book of Ruth opens with “there was a famine in the land”.

As the book of Ruth develops we see the beginning of recovery. Writing of Naomi we read “she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return” 1v6. The book will end by taking us forward to one of Israel high points by introducing us to David.

In our study of Ruth we will accept the chapter divides and think on her

Chapter 1 – Following in the way

Chapter 2 – Gleaning in the field

Chapter 3 – Resting at his feet

Chapter 4 – Bearing fruit in the family

Ch 1 – Following in the way

Ch 1v16–18. Ruth having left Moab with Naomi and Orpah is now challenged as to following on with Naomi or returning as Orpah does. It is good to note what she decides.

She will have her attention on a **PERSON** – note in the verses the repetition of thee, thou and thy. She has learned from Naomi something of the beauties of the people of God but in a deeper sense the God of the people so she will commit to “thy people” and to “thy God”.

Early disciples heard the Saviour say “follow me fishers of men” Matt 4v19. Good to see the response of men who left all to follow Christ.

Elisha in the day of meeting Elijah is reported “he arose and went after Elijah and ministered unto him” 1 Kings 19v21. For up to 10 years he is in the shadow of Elijah but seems happy to follow and learn until the time he will be used in the service of God.

The Lord Jesus indicates to us that to follow will have cost implications for us “take up his cross and follow me” Matt 16v24. It is clear that when faced with such a choice the rich young ruler to whom Jesus said “follow me” Matt 19v21 “went away sorrowful for he had great possessions” v22.

Paul in his writings stresses the need to follow and there are a number of exhortations;

1 Cor 4v16 – Be ye followers of me

Eph 5v1 – Followers of God

Phil 3v17 – Followers together of me

1 Thess 1v6 – Followers of us and of the Lord

1 Thess 2v14 – Followers of the churches of God

Ruth will follow the **PATHWAY**. “whither thou goest I will go”.

In our study of Abraham’s servant going to find the bride for Isaac we did note that the servant spoke of “I being in the way the Lord led me” Gen 24v27.

In the history of Israel we observe how their journey was controlled with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. It can truly be said of them “he led them forth by the right way” Psa 107v7.

The psalmist seemed to know all about divine guidance and wrote “thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” Psa 119v105.

The prophet Jeremiah seemed to know how to obtain divine guidance by praying with the godly remnant “show us the way wherein we may walk” 42v3. This is also a similar prayer to the psalmist “show me thy ways O Lord, teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth and teach me” Psa 25v4 & 5.

Ruth will follow to the **PLACE** – “where thou lodgest I will lodge”. She would not come to Bethlehem with Naomi and then look to set out on her own to some other location. For her it was to be

PERMANENT – “where thou diest will I die”.

It is clear that in the Old Testament there was a clear geographical place where God would meet with His people. Abraham was directed to “one of the mountains which I will tell thee of” Gen 22v2. Jacob as he spent the night with only a pillow of stone came to understand that “the Lord is in this place” Gen 28v16 he called the place “Bethel” (The house of God). In preparation for eventual entry to the land Moses warns “take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest” Deut 12v13. Earlier in this chapter he did indicate “the place which the Lord your God shall chose out of all the tribes to put his name there” v5. For Israel once established in the land this became clearly the City of Jerusalem.

The New Testament makes no reference to one geographical centre. No longer would even the Jewish people be compelled to journey to Jerusalem as they had done at the feast times in the Old Testament. The Lord clearly taught “where two or three are gathered (having been and being gathered) together in my name there am I in the midst of them” Matt 18 v 20. Our verse makes it clear that such a place

could be anywhere in the world where believers who are meeting in accordance with the teaching of New Testament scriptures on a regular basis have the promise of the Divine presence. There is no thought that this would be a meeting on a one off basis while believers are on holiday or away from their own Assembly gathering. And so we would note in the scriptures such companies at Jerusalem, Rome, Corinth, Ephesus etc.

Ruth will express her desire that following will keep her in contact with the **PEOPLE** of God “thy people shall be my people”.

We note the group who are together at the opening of Acts “these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication” 1v14. On the great day of Pentecost “there were added unto them” 2 v 41. On conversion of Saul of Tarsus we read of him being “with the disciples” 9v19 when he comes to visit Jerusalem we read “he assayed to join himself to the disciples” v26.

Good that we have the desire to be in fellowship with those who are of similar mind and seek to work with them in harmony in the things of God.

Ch 2 – Gleaning in the field

Why? – for food to sustain the body. Yet Jeremiah spoke “thy words were found and I did eat them” Jer 15v16. The spiritual man can only be sustained by the word of God. The Lord Jesus clearly used natural bread to indicate the spiritual. Having fed the 5000 he then spoke of himself as “the bread of life” John 6v48.

When? “from morning until now” v7 “until the even” v17. For Ruth this was to be a full time effort. The lesson for us must be that while legitimate things must be given time it would be good to start and close the day with a consideration of the word of God.

Where? “part of the field belonging unto Boaz” v3 “not to glean in another field” v8. We need to be careful where we glean. Much concern is expressed with children brought up on a diet of videos with a violent theme as to its impact on them. Could it be that what I take in will find its expression in my life?

How? – Diligently “let me now go” v2 – “beat out” v17. She was not only prepared to put the effort into the gleaning but then she would make use of it. As a result of this she was able to provide also for Naomi v18. Good when as a result of not just reading scripture but really studying the word we have food for our selves but able to share with others also.

Willingly “let me glean” v7. There was clear exercise on Ruth’s part.

Scripturally “after the reapers” v7. She must have been taught by Naomi the truths of Deut 24v19 where God gives clear instruction of how widows would be provided for.

Thankfully “she fell on her face and bowed herself to the ground” v10.

Ch 3 – Resting at his feet.

Her approach v3 “wash thyself” good to remember that our fitness for His presence is as a result of the cleansing work of Calvary.

Her respect v3 “until he shall have done eating” she would wait her time until she came into his presence. What a wonder that today we are instructed “come boldly unto the throne of grace” Heb 4v16. Yet we must never lose the sense of respect or reverence for the divine presence.

Her requests v9 “spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid”. This covering was in effect her request that he be her redeemer. The subsequent conversation reveals this. Calvary and redemption fit us for approaching the throne now and for Heaven hereafter.

Her obedience to v14.

Her reward for v15 – her gleaning led to an ephah of barley but resting quietly in his presence gave her six measures of barley. The hymn reminds “they who watch at wisdom’s gate are never empty sent away”.

Ch 4 Bearing fruit in the family.

From the beginning God has always indicated the principle of fruit bearing.

In creation “be fruitful and multiply” Gen 1v22 v28

After the flood Gen 8v17 9v1 v7

To Jacob Gen 35v11

To Joseph Gen 48v4

Moses to Israel Lev 26v9

In the New Testament the Lord speaks of the true vine and the branches John 15. The expectation is clear “fruit” “more fruit” v2 and “much fruit” v5.

Fruit is described as “love joy peace longsuffering gentleness goodness faith” Gal 5v22 and “goodness righteousness truth” Eph 5v9.

May these be the fruits that we produce in our lives from day to day.