

Ruth's Romance of Redemption

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STUDY FIVE

THE DEMAND AND THE REVELATION

"And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not. So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed. And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The mans name with whom I wrought to day is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen. And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law" (Ruth 2:15-23).

The last word in our last study was "left." Having been provided with rest and nourishment at the table of Boaz, she now proceeds to her day's work of gleaning. After we have received rest and nourishment, it is always easier to work than it was before. This is just what grace does. JESUS said, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest." He provides rest for the soul and then says, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." As the law said, "Work and then rest," they were provided in that dispensation with rest at the close of the week by keeping the Sabbath. On the other hand, under grace (of which this lesson is typical) we are provided with soul rest through the resurrection of CHRIST. Thus, we keep Sunday, the first day of the week, as a day of worship and then proceed to work the balance of the week to show our gratitude for the rest that was provided. It says she "left." It must have been a cross for her to leave such a place as that -- a place where she had been resting with the reapers at the table of fellowship, receiving parched corn, bread and wine, the emblems of CHRIST's death and suffering. Truly, it must have been as hard for Ruth to leave the table of Boaz as it was for Peter, James, and John to leave the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter was so enraptured there that he said, "Let us make three

tabernacles" because he wanted to remain there permanently. However, JESUS had another work to perform. He must tread down the Mount of Transfiguration into the valley of Gethsemane and up to the Mount of Golgotha, there to die for a lost world. Likewise, Ruth had a duty to perform; she had to glean in the fields of Boaz. Ruth, (the Gentile), was sufficed and satisfied, but there were others who were in need of barley (typical of Divine truth), for Naomi, who represents the Jew, and those of the city populace, who typify the unsaved, were greatly in need of the bread "*from Heaven*." Therefore, Ruth left her Master's presence to glean in the fields that were waiting for the reapers. How many, as Ruth, have enjoyed seasons of Divine fellowship and grace. They have desired to remain at the camp-meetings and prayer services in fellowship with GOD's people, but duty called them elsewhere, to the shops, farms, or places of business, to work for a livelihood and to bring the truth of the Gospel of salvation to others through their lives. There are lost souls that must be saved, wandering sheep that must be found, discouraged children that need help. We, like Ruth, must arise and go forward into the field today. May we learn this lesson well from the life of Ruth. Let us notice in this study : --

I. A GRACIOUS PRIVILEGE

II. A GOODLY PORTION

III. A GLORIOUS PROSPECT

I. A GRACIOUS PRIVILEGE

If we have duties to perform, the Lord will go before us, as Boaz went before Ruth, and pave the way, make the hard places easy, and give special instructions to others for our benefit. This reminds us of the words of the song writer: "*He always takes the heavy end and gives the light to me*." Often the more difficult the duty is to perform, the greater is the blessing bestowed and the reward given. Note the threefold privilege --

A. THE DIVINE PRIVILEGE "*Boaz commanded*" (v. 15).

While she was busy gleaning, Boaz was busy commanding. In the same way, beloved, if we will rise and go into the fields to glean, we shall find that, while we are busy gleaning, our Boaz (JESUS) will be busy commanding. This was a Divine privilege; Boaz gave permission to glean and instruction to favor the gleaner. Boaz had not forgotten that Ruth had accepted the invitation he gave her -- "*At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar*" (v. 14). Her love for Boaz had been expressed in the acceptance of the invitation, but now her love is to be rewarded. He gives special instructions to the young men to allow her to glean among the sheaves and to drop handfuls on purpose for her. He so appreciated her fellowship and communion that now he is going to reward her for the time spent at the table with him. Time spent in communion with JESUS CHRIST is always never wasted. She received more for one-half hour of fellowship and communion with him than she would, had she toiled for days in the field. What a lesson for the believer -- in order to have success, time should be spent in fellowship and communion with Him before one goes into the day of gleaning. This is the reason some people seemingly have so many unsuccessful days; they neglected their family worship or seasons of secret prayer, depending on their own strength, human ability and intelligence or past experiences to help them in their toils for the Master. I have seen the time in my own experience when it seemed that I was so rushed that I could hardly take time to pray, but because of a strong impression by the HOLY SPIRIT, I obeyed the call to prayer. While so engaged, He brought to my mind some important matter which needed immediate attention. Had I rushed on,

disregarding the checks of the Spirit to pray, I would have lost far more time. This has been the experience of thousands of others. It would have been so in the case of Ruth. "*Boaz commanded his young men*"; this reminds us that it is young men for service and old men for counsel. An older man has gone through the experiences and trials of life and thereby is able to give better counsel than a young man, who is often more active and swifter for service.

B. THE BOUNTIFUL PRIVILEGE "*Let her glean even among the sheaves* (v. 15).

The sheaves were the large bundles of barley which were set in shocks. Surrounding these shocks of grain there would often be much grain that would be picked up by the reapers in hauling the grain to the threshing floor. Special permission was given to Ruth to gather this grain for herself. Gleaning was a humble work. It required stooping. In order to be a gleaner in the field of truth and to get the fathoms of GOD's Word, a person must often stoop in prayer, in humiliation, and in self-abasement. The revelation received in such an attitude is often of the greatest value to a person's life. Revelation given by the HOLY SPIRIT always remains longer in the memory of man than truth received from lip or pen. Gleaning also means toiling. The reason we have so many shallow and unlearned Christians is because they are not willing to take time to dig into the Word of Truth to get the food their souls require. Boaz also commanded saying, "*Let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them*" (v. 16). Usually gleaning is a slow process; we gather one spike of grain at a time, but occasionally, as Ruth, we receive a handful on purpose. Often when the week has been one of testing and trials, the saint of GOD goes at the house of worship with a depressed spirit. Under the inspiration of the HOLY SPIRIT, the preacher gives just that which the soul needs. Just when our faith has been stretched to the limit and trials have gone nearly beyond the mark of endurance, GOD drops a big handful of purpose just to lift us to higher ground.

After Peter had denied the Lord and lied and cursed to the damsel, a special message was sent to him: "*Go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee*" (Mark 16:7). This special invitation to backslidden Peter was a handful (**of restoration**) on purpose.

Likewise, Paul, when he was buffeted by the messenger of Satan, "*a thorn in the flesh,*" received a handful on purpose (II Corinthians 12:7). He entreated the Lord on three occasions for deliverance from this humiliating condition, but instead of having the thorn removed, he received a handful (**of recognition**) on purpose when the Lord spoke to him saying, "*My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness*" (II Corinthians 12:9). How many of GOD's dear children have had handfuls on purpose given them just in the time of need.

While John, the apostle, was a prisoner for the Word of the Lord on the isle of Patmos, he was banished from home, Christian fellowship, and everything that was dear, from an earthly standpoint. Nevertheless, CHRIST does not forget His own in an hour like that, and out of that trying time he received the wonderful Book of Revelation, which has been handed down throughout the church age that we might know what conditions would exist and what things would transpire up to the closing time of this dispensation. GOD knew how to encourage John in the hour of great need and visited him at this time with handfuls (**of revelation**) on purpose. In like manner, GOD has revealed many precious things to His children while they were passing through trying times and circumstances.

There are three reasons why Boaz showed this special privilege:

First, it was because of his love for her. This is seen in the eighth verse of this chapter where he bids her "*go not to glean in another field.*" This instruction Ruth repeats to her mother-in-law in verse 21: "*He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.*" Here the love of Boaz for Ruth may be discerned between the lines, for at the closing of the harvest, he hoped to be the bridegroom in marriage.

Second, he extended to her the special privilege because of their relationship. He knew that he, the kinsman redeemer, was of near kin to her and expressed it by the term so often used, "*My daughter.*" How the dear Lord allows us to glean among the sheaves and gives us handfuls on purpose because we are His sons and daughters. How we ought to bless His name for sonship in the Divine family.

Third, he gave her this privilege because he desired to reward her for the time she spent with him in fellowship and communion, as previously stated in this study. I am sure because of this threefold fact that JESUS (Our Heavenly Boaz) will be sure that we are privileged to glean among the sheaves and will give us handfuls on purpose. We have noticed the Divine Privilege and the Bountiful Privilege. Let us now note : --

C. THE UNHINDERED PRIVILEGE "*Reproach her not*" (v. 15).

Boaz wanted her to have liberty as the sheep, which go in and out and find pasture. JESUS said, "*I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture*" (John 10:9). As the field of Boaz was open to Ruth so the Word of GOD is open to one and all. The lower we stoop, and the harder we toil, the more GOD will give to us out of His precious Word. Sacred truth is not received by reading novels and stories that contain no spiritual soul food. Many study the fashion page while their souls are starving for want of food; some listen to worthless entertainment over the radio while the Bible is neglected. Billy Sunday said, "Show me the books you read, and I will tell you the kind of person you are." There are times when the Bible seems to be a dry book, and very little information and spiritual good is obtained from it, but at some future time a person may read the same chapter or portion and receive unmeasured truth from its sacred contents. The difference is the two occasions is that in the latter reading GOD's SPIRIT was active in revelation. He doesn't want us to be hindered and desires us to know more and more of Him, Who is the Lily of the valley, the fairest of ten thousand to the soul.

II. A GOODLY PORTION

What was Ruth's portion for her day's work? In verse 17 it says, "*It was about an ephah of barley.*" In a careful study of Exodus 16, we find that the individual amount of manna that the children of Israel were to gather for their day's supply was "*an omer for every man*" (v. 16). On the sixth day, they were to gather twice the amount or "*two omers for one man*" (v. 22). Peter writes that one day is with the Lord as one thousand years and one thousand years as one day. There are to be seven days (one week) of one thousand years each in the world's history. This will close the probationary period of the human race, which may be divided approximately as follows: two thousand years from creation to Abraham; two thousand years from Abraham to

CHRIST; two thousand years from CHRIST to the beginning of the millennial age; and the seventh day, or the last one thousand years, is the millennial period, CHRIST's reign on earth. This same truth is taught in the first seven characters in Genesis 5 if the meaning of these names are studied from a dispensational standpoint.

(1) Adam and Seth. The word "Adam" means a "man of the earth." This reminds us of creation when man was created by the hand of GOD. It also reminds us of the fall when sin entered the garden, destroying their righteousness and holiness and passing upon them the sentence of death, which was given by GOD because of their act of disobedience. The name "Seth" means "appointed or put" (Genesis 4:25). This reminds us of Abraham, who after the first two thousand years was about to offer up his son Isaac on Mount Moriah. It was there that GOD put the ram in the thicket and appointed him to die in the place of Isaac (Genesis 22:13). This was prophetic of the death of CHRIST, Who was appointed by GOD to die in the place of fallen man.

(2) Enos and Cainan. These two men covered the two thousand year period (representatively) from Abraham to the time of CHRIST. The word "Enos" means "mortality or death." This reminds us of the law that was given to the children of Israel on Mount Sinai in the third thousand years of the world's history; the penalty for the broken law was death. The word "Cainan" means "to purchase." This brings us up to the birth of CHRIST, which occurred in the last part of the fourth thousand years. He came to purchase the lost estate and buy back that which man lost through the fall. Thus, we are bought with a price, and that price is the blood of CHRIST.

(3) Mahalaleel and Jared. Mahalaleel means "praise of GOD." This brings us into the fifth thousand years, the beginning of the dispensation of grace when the church of the first-born was the "praise of GOD." The name "Jared" means "descending." The closing of the six thousand years will be in terrific judgment when the wrath of GOD shall descend from Heaven on the God-defiers and Christ-rejecters on the earth. This period will be known as the great tribulation which will close with descending judgment which is now incomprehensible.

(4) Enoch. This means "*a teacher or one who imparts knowledge.*" This portrays the millennial age when His righteousness shall cover the earth and all shall know the Lord from the least of them to the greatest of them (Jeremiah 31:34). This seventh thousand years cannot occur until after the Church of the living GOD has been raptured to Heaven and the tribulation has passed. This is typified in this character we are now discussing, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who "*was not for God took him*" (Genesis 5:24). The Israelites on the sixth day had to gather two omers, which was to be enough for the sixth and seventh days, typical of the church age and the millennial age. If we would reign with CHRIST in the coming dispensation, it is now time to gather manna. As the seventh day closes up the week, we have a new beginning in the eighth day, which will be the beginning of a new creation. This will be the ages of ages so beautifully portrayed in Revelation, chapters 21 and 22. In the closing verses of Exodus 16, it tells the amount of an omer, "*now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah*" (Exodus 16:36). If Ruth gathered an ephah, she gathered ten times the amount of one omer, (an Israelite's portion for one day) or a ten days' supply. If barley typified CHRIST in incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, as described in the previous chapter, she had sufficient to supply her from the ascension of CHRIST to the descent of the HOLY SPIRIT, which was a period of ten days. How beautifully the whole scheme of redemption is pictured in this little Book of Ruth.

THE NUMBER TEN

Ten in the Scripture is the number of responsibility. GOD gives us ten toes to walk with and ten fingers to work with; the Israelites had ten commandments, for the keeping of which they were responsible. There were ten spies responsible for the report brought back from Canaan's land. The ten virgins were responsible for their spiritual condition when going out to meet the bridegroom. Again, tithes, or one part out of ten, were demanded by GOD from Israel, being the measure of their responsibility in giving. Likewise, GOD held Naomi and Elimelech responsible for their ten years of wandering in the land of Moab (Ruth 1:4). There were ten elders of the city who sat at the gate as responsible witnesses to the transaction accomplished by Boaz in redeeming the lost estate and becoming the bridegroom of Ruth (Ruth 4:2). There were ten generations mentioned in the closing verses of this Book, who were responsible in bringing forth David, who is typical of the Redeemer, JESUS CHRIST. We find there are no errors or mistakes in GOD's Word concerning dates, numbers, types, and dispensations. It all dovetails together, making a complete and perfect plan.

Note the three splendid qualifications Ruth possessed:

- A. HER FAITHFULNESS**
- B. HER CAREFULNESS**
- C. HER THOUGHTFULNESS**

A. HER FAITHFULNESS. *"She gleaned in the field until even"* (v. 17). **She was not like those who begin in the evening of their lives and have nothing to present to GOD but the ashes of an idle and misspent life; she started her gleaned in the morning and continued until evening. All the bright and sunny portion of her life, she spent in the Master's service. How it behooves the young people to seek Him in their youth, while He may be found, that they may spend their days in service and sacrifice in the Master's kingdom, that they may, at the close of life's day, have a good supply and a great reward for their toils of life. Gleaning sometimes is slow work, but if we save what we gather, it will increase, yes, even multiply, and at the close of the day, we will not come empty handed into Boaz's (CHRIST's) presence. There is no place for a lazy Christian in GOD's kingdom.** Dr. Watson once said, "Many talk about the upper room but live in the basement." Those in the upper room were engaged in supplication and prayer and, no doubt, were reviewing the words of the Master. The Christian's life should be a busy life, busy in communion and in study of His Word, busy in winning souls and encouraging others. You will find that the person who is thus engaged is always the greatest blessing.

B. HER CAREFULNESS. She *"beat out that she had gleaned"* (v. 17). It is not only our duty to be faithful in gleaned but also to be careful to beat out the chaff from the grain we have gleaned. The beating out process is too often neglected by some people. Some sermons need thrashing, for it is certain that there is a portion of straw and chaff in some of them. Not everything that is preached is Scriptural, nor is everything light to the listener, but some people after hearing a message, thrash the preacher with their tongues rather than the straw and chaff -- quantity but no quality. Ruth wanted the bulky chaff removed that she might have pure grain to carry home. If people would search the Word in analyzing the sermon, it would spare many the danger and the sorrow of falling into error. What we need today is Berean Christians, for they *were more noble*

than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). It is not the Word of GOD that forms the chaff, but the misinterpretation. Let the chaff go to the wind and the straw to the fire, but retain the wheat, the solid grain of truth, within your own heart and mind, that you may be able to hand it on to others after you have been sufficed. One has said: "Preach the word: if you can't eat the chaff yourself, don't give it to another."

C. HER THOUGHTFULNESS. *"She brought forth, and gave to her (mother-in-law) that she had reserved after she was sufficed" (v. 18). After Ruth was rewarded for her day of toil, she went into the city" (v. 18). This pictures a place of need. **GOD will not give us special privileges to glean among the sheaves and receive handfuls on purpose to hoard for ourselves, He gives it to us that we may go to the populace and distribute to those in need.** JESUS said, "Give, and it shall be given." Communion through the Word and fellowship in prayer are seen in the two acts -- gleaning and beating. To be just a student of the Word without a life of prayer makes one a formalist. There will be truth but no glory; facts but no fire. To spend much time in prayer but to neglect the study of the Word will cause one to become a fanatic. Prayer and study must go hand in hand. Prayer puts power and force back of the truth, thus causing it to have an effect upon the needy living in the regions of the city. For that reason I seldom go to prayer without taking my Bible that I might feed my prayer on the promises of GOD and at the same time receive truth for my soul.*

Some writers have criticized Ruth by saying that she looked after her own personal interest first before passing on the grain to Naomi, but if we look at it from a spiritual standpoint, this is not so. She could not give to Naomi until she had first been satisfied herself. Her own soul had to be fed before she could feed others. "Faith must feed on its gathered store before it can impart to others" (S. Ridout). Here is also a dispensational truth. Naomi, who is a type of the Jew, could receive no blessing or sacred spiritual truth unless it came through Ruth, a type of the Church. The Jew of today can receive no spiritual help unless it comes through the Church. The HOLY SPIRIT, the indweller and the abider in the body of CHRIST, must convict them, in the same way as He does the Gentiles, through the Word of GOD to convince them of their error and their sin. May the Church of JESUS CHRIST see from this their responsibility in passing on the truth of the Gospel to the Jew, which is typified by Naomi. Ruth expressed the true spirit of Christianity when she shared with others that which she had received from the hand of Boaz, but how slow Christianity is today in giving out the Gospel to the multiplied heathen who have never yet enjoyed one grain of spiritual barley (incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of CHRIST). They are dying without ever having any knowledge of Gospel light. May the reader ponder over the following words of my Gospel song entitled, "*Dying Without Gospel Light*":

While we humbly kneel and pray,
Heathen living far away
Grove in darkness void of grace,
Hurrying on with rapid pace.

While we worship at His feet,
Countless millions must repeat,
"We have never heard of Him
Who can save the soul from sin."

While our fellowship is sweet,
Heathen by the score you'll meet
In the regions of distress,
Never have such happiness.

While we're nearing Heaven's door,
Heathen dying by the score
Close their eyes in darkest night,
Dying without gospel light.

While we're singing round the throne,
Safely we are gathered Home,
Millions barred outside the gate
For the Gospel once did wait.

III. A GLORIOUS PROSPECT

Ruth had secured a good supply and returned with the barley to her mother-in-law. Naomi "*saw what she had gleaned*" (v. 18). If we have been faithful, careful, and thoughtful, as the previous side-headings indicate, others will see it by the amount of spiritual truth we can produce. It is impossible to hide our light under a bushel. Others will readily see that we have been gleaning and then beating out that which we have gleaned. In other words, a life of communion through the Word and a life of fellowship in prayer cannot be hid. In the introduction of this book, I mentioned that the Book could be studied : --

First, HISTORICALLY

Second, DISPENSATIONALLY

Third, EXPERIMENTALLY

This truth can be plainly seen in these last few verses we are now reviewing in this chapter. I will call your attention to them as we reach the verses. There are three words beginning with "K," which I would like to use as subdivisions under this heading, namely - knowledge, kindness, and kinsman.

A. THE KNOWLEDGE. Naomi asks Ruth, "*Where hast thou gleaned today? and where wroughtest thou?*" (v. 19). She saw the splendid supply Ruth had obtained for her day's toil, but now GOD is going to reveal to Naomi something far greater than the knowledge of the field where Ruth had toiled. She is now to know the owner of the field, Boaz. Naomi at once pronounces a blessing upon Boaz by saying, "*Blessed be he that did take **knowledge** of thee*" (v. 19). While bestowing this blessing, she was unconscious of the fact that the blessing was upon Boaz, the near kinsman. Here is a dispensation truth. She was still in the dark as the Jews are today. The Jews realize that blessings are being bestowed upon them, but they are unaware that these blessings come directly through JESUS CHRIST, their own kinsman, according to the seed of David. Likewise, Naomi was unaware that it was Boaz, the near kinsman, that was bestowing upon them these special favors and blessings in giving them handfuls on purpose. Then Ruth slowly unfolds the truth by saying, "*The man's name with whom I wrought today is Boaz*" (v.

19). Here Naomi is given firsthand information as to who the bestower of the blessing was. I wonder if we Gentiles are giving the Jews the information of which they stand in need -- that the untold blessings they are receiving in these last days are from the hand of their Kinsman Redeemer, Who was of the seed of David, of the tribe of Judah, Who was born in Bethlehem, and Who is the Bread of Life for the world. The word "**knowledge**" is from the Hebrew word "nakar," which means "to discern or make a distinction." The word is twice translated "**knowledge**" in the Old Testament; they are both in this chapter, verses 10 and 19. It emphasizes that Boaz had made a distinction in Ruth. How wonderfully that points forward to the dispensation of grace when GOD through JESUS CHRIST made a distinction in the Gentiles, who were without GOD and without hope in the world. How we ought to unite with Naomi and say, "*Blessed be He that did take knowledge of us.*"

B. THE KINDNESS. Naomi had been informed that the owner of the field, who gave the handfuls on purpose, was Boaz. She said, "*Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead.*" That her eyes were fully opened can be seen by the manner of her blessing. In the previous verses she said, "*Blessed be he,*" but in this blessing she adds a few words and says, "*Blessed be he of the Lord.*" She realizes that GOD's hand was in it all. The new convert blesses JESUS CHRIST in the same manner today. He realizes His divinity and expresses it by saying, "*Blessed be He of the Lord.*" Slowly the scales had dropped from the eyes of Naomi; so it will be with the Jewish remnant in the last days. In this blessing ("*who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead*") we can see the threefold teaching of the Book, **historically, dispensationally, and experimentally.**

First, Historically. Naomi had been living in Moab so long that she had forgotten her kindred in the land of Israel until GOD, by a slow process of revelation, revealed them to her. She is reminded that Boaz had showed kindness to the dead, that is to Elimelech and the two sons. The kindness extended to her husband in former days is not stated, but for some reason Boaz is showing the same spirit of kindness to the living now (Naomi and Ruth) that he did in former days to Elimelech and his sons.

Second, Dispensationally. The living is here typified by Ruth, the Gentile, while the dead represents the Jewish people. As a nation, the Jews are dead and buried in the graveyard of nations according to the teaching of Ezekiel, chapter 37, where it tells how the prophet was shown a valley of dry bones and was asked the question, "*Son of man, can these bones live?*" (v. 3) Many of the readers know the story how Ezekiel prophesied to these bones, commanding them to hear the Word of the Lord, and how a promise was given him that breath would re-enter; sinews, flesh, and skin would appear upon the bones; and they would live. While he was prophesying the miracle occurred, and they stood upon their feet. The number of people was so large that it constituted a great army. The Lord said unto Ezekiel this army of people "*are the whole house of Israel*" (v. 11). "And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live." (vss. 12-14). Thus by a careful study of this chapter, it can be seen that Judah (the two tribes) and Israel (the ten tribes) will be raised up in national resurrection and united together as portrayed by the two sticks, which were joined together in the hand of the prophet. It will do the reader good to take time to study this chapter. The Jews are now passing through a state of death, but the springtime is coming, the fig tree is budding, and we know that summer is nigh, that life for the dead is close at hand. In the meantime, while the Jewish nation has been

lying in a state of death, GOD has been extending His kindness to the living, the Gentile people, represented by Ruth.

Third, Experimentally. In the preceding thought we have studied Israel as a nation, but we will now consider these verses from the standpoint of Church truth. In the Book of Ephesians, the second chapter, Paul writes "*You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*" The word "*you*" refers to those who are now alive in CHRIST. They have been quickened and raised from the state of spiritual death. The same power that raised JESUS from the dead is now able to raise men out of degradation and sin, and by the kindness of GOD the Father (v. 7) through JESUS CHRIST, the "*you*" of the text have been made alive by "*his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus*" (v. 10). **Thus, the Christian of the present day is not a reformed man, but he is a transformed or a new created man, having new life, new desires, and new ambitions; old things have passed away and all things have become new. May I emphasize that Christianity is not church membership, reformation, new resolutions, or good parentage, but it is life in CHRIST JESUS -- life imparted into the soul that gives man a new walk, new hopes, and new aspirations.** But to whom does the word "*ye*" in verse two refer? "*Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world.*" The "*ye*" of the text were the Gentiles who were living in a state of death because of trespasses and sins, who were under the dominion of the Prince of the power of the air. Paul continues in the following verse by saying, "*Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh.*" There we have the Jew included in the term "*we*," for Paul was an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. The Church of JESUS CHRIST is composed of those called out from among the Jews and Gentiles, those who were dead in trespasses and sins but who are made alive through the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST. The object and purpose of it all is shown in the seventh verse of the chapter we are discussing, "*That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*" In this chapter we find the term "*ye*," representing the Gentiles; "*we*," representing the Jews; and "*us*," representing the Church composed of Jew and Gentile. These will be put on display in the ages to come that the exceeding riches of His grace in His **kindness** may be manifested throughout all eternity. Certainly here is a shouting point. May all the people say "Amen!," rejoice, and bring glory to His name.

The thought we have been studying in the **kindness** that He has shown to the living and to the dead. Here we have it pictured in His **kindness** toward us through JESUS CHRIST by giving us the exceeding riches of His grace in His redemption, in raising us out of the graveyard of sin that **in the ages to come** He may exhibit us before Satan, a fallen world, and unholy men, the trophies of His marvelous work of redemption, wrought by the sacrifice and resurrection of His own SON. The object of all this was not for time, but for eternity, "**in the ages to come.**" After Satan has been cast into the lake of fire, after sin has been annihilated, after time is replaced by eternity, after sorrow and tears are wiped away, after death has died to rise no more, after man has ceased gaining his livelihood by the sweat of his brow, after the curse on a wrecked creation has been completely lifted, these redeemed ones shall dwell with Him forever and ever, "**the ages to come.**" What **kindness** He is extending to the living, the Gentiles, and to the dead, the Jews. Thus we can plainly see in this verse the historical, dispensational, and experimental teaching of this book.

C. THE KINSMAN. Naomi says to Ruth, "*The man is near of kin unto us.*" This speaks of one

that hath right to redeem. By this statement Naomi acknowledges the kinsman. The relationship that exists has dawned upon her, and dispensationally, in the same process of revelation (which has been rather slow) the Jews will be made to see that JESUS CHRIST, Whom their ancestors forced to the cross, was the Messiah. It was in this slow manner that CHRIST revealed Himself to the Samaritan woman as recorded in the fourth chapter of John. JESUS, tired and weary, sat on the well. He Who had created all, even the water within the well, now stoops in humiliation and begs a drink from the Samaritan woman. "Give me to drink" (v. 7). The woman replies, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" (v. 9). She saw JESUS at this time as just a weary, thirsty **Jew**. Slowly He unfolded to her His Messiahship by telling her of the water He had to give, living water, and that if she would drink of this water, she would never thirst again. When she acknowledged that Jacob's well was deep, it was a hint of a weary existence, and that it was through toil and labor that she came at the noonday hour, in the heat of the day, and drew water from this well. It was customary for women to carry the water in the morning and in the evening, but sin had ostracized her from the companionship of the feminine society of her day. The woman expresses her desire to have this water that she may be relieved of the task and hardship that was placed upon her. In reply to this request, JESUS said, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." (v. 16). The woman answered, "I have no husband." She was trying to cover up her sin by truth when she made that answer. JESUS reminded her that she had five husbands but now was living with a man that was not her husband. Here the revelation of CHRIST goes a little deeper, and she confesses, "I perceive that thou art a prophet." (v. 19). He is no longer a weary Jew in her sight, but now He is a **Prophet** of the Lord. At once their conversation drifts into the thought of worship. The woman expresses her hope in a coming Messiah and even goes so far as to give His name (CHRIST) and His work (He will tell us all things). Then JESUS brings to her the third revelation by saying, "I that speak unto thee am he" (v. 26). Immediately she left her water pots (the symbol of her sinful toil), went into the city, and spoke to the men (probably those with whom she had lived) saying, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (v. 29). Now she acknowledges Him as the Messiah, the Son of GOD.

How beautifully this chapter shows the slow process of revelation: First, a **Jew**; second, a **Prophet**; third, the **Messiah**. May we take a lesson from this and not be too hasty in condemning those who may not see the light as rapidly as we think they should. I wish to add that there are two persons to whom the Lord reveals the true character of Himself: To the **outcast sinner**, which we have just reviewed in the case of the Samaritan woman, and to the **outcast saint**, the blind young man in John 9:35-38, He revealed Himself as the Messiah, the Son of GOD.

We will not give the duty of the kinsman redeemer under this division but will explain that later in the study of the book. However, if we read carefully and prayerfully between the lines, we can see one hint given here in the statement of Ruth to Naomi when she said, "He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest" (v. 21). Let us notice the "also" of this quotation. Boaz had instructed her to keep fast by the young men until they had ended all the harvest. Here is a prediction that at the close of the harvest Boaz would accomplish one of the duties of the kinsman -- that was to marry the wife of the deceased relative. Here is a blessed thought for those to whom He has extended kindness; that is when the *harvest is past, the summer is ended* (Jeremiah 8:20), the Bridegroom Kinsman and the bride of CHRIST will be united in marriage. Naomi (typical of the Jewish remnant) now takes on new faith, which is evident by her instruction to Ruth when she says, *It is good, my daughter, that*

thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field (v. 22). What a warning it should be to the Gentile believer today, especially at the close of this dispensation, when the harvest is almost past, that they find thee not in any other field. What sorrow and distress will befall the man that is found in the field of the world when the Heavenly Boaz comes to take His bride to the bridal chambers in the sky. It will be for your eternal good to follow the example of Ruth, for *she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of the barley harvest and of wheat harvest* (v. 23). We are closing this chapter, leaving Ruth dwelling with her mother-in-law at the close of the harvest. Just a word in closing: the grace of JESUS CHRIST is so wonderful that the Gentile and the Jew, represented by Ruth and her mother-in-law, can live harmoniously together, embracing the same faith, worshiping the same CHRIST, bowing at the same altar, enjoying the same hope, having intercession by the same HIGH PRIEST, feeding on the same truth, and communing in the same SPIRIT. It is the grace of GOD that can make enemies, friends, yea, brethren in CHRIST, and cause them to live in the realms of love and unity. This same truth can be applied to domestic realms where grace can be supplied to live with a much abused person, such as the *mother-in-law*.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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