

Sunday June 21st 2020
The Word of God
A Survey of the Bible – Lesson 20A
Alas, Sinful Nation

1). As we know the Book of Ruth is a Book about the experience of the faithful Christian leading up to and then beyond the Judgment Seat of Christ. And throughout this Book dealing with the faithful Christian we have seen the ever-present Naomi who, in the type, pictures both the nation of Israel and more particularly the Word of God entrusted to them- Ro 3:1 *What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.*

And throughout the Book there are circumstances surrounding Naomi that are revealed to us, that through the type given, cover the whole of Jewish history.

a). We will remember how the Book begins – Ru 1:1 *Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land.*

In the historical account there would have been a literal famine in the land, but in the antitype this famine is of a spiritual nature – Eze 14:12 *The word of the Lord came again to me, saying: 13 “Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it.*

Am 8:11 *“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord God, “That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the Lord. 12 They shall wander from sea to sea, And from north to east; They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, But shall not find it.*

And to this time of spiritual famine we can, through the type in Ruth, add death and barrenness – Ru 1:3 *Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died;*

Ru 1: 5 *Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.....11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?"*

The circumstances surrounding Naomi, being the reason she was in Moab, remained the same both before and after Orpah and Ruth become part of the family, and we will remember how Naomi described her circumstance upon her return to Bethlehem – Ru 1:20 *But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara [lit. bitter], for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full, and the Lord has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the Lord has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?"*

Within the antitype, Israel's spiritual condition has not changed either; neither prior to, nor since, the Church was brought into existence – Jn 11:14 *Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead..... 17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.*

Mt 21:19 *And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away.*

Mt 12:43 *"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. 44 Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."*

And as we had seen last time, Naomi's 'bitterness' was not turned into blessing until Boaz had taken Ruth as his wife. And this is exactly how

matters will also play out in the antitype – only after Christ has taken the Bride to be His Wife at the completion of the redemption of the inheritance will Israel’s blessing come to its fullness and the blessing of God through her come to the Gentile nations of the world. Because only then will Israel have been brought to repentance, so as to make this possible.

2). So, why has the Almighty afflicted His chosen people as typified in Naomi? - Ex 19:4 *‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.*

The key is here in God’s words to His people following their deliverance from Egypt, ‘if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant...’ There is then the expectation of faithful obedience if the nation is to be His ‘special treasure’. A call to obedience we find repeated in – De 30:19 *I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; 20 that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”*

Despite making clear a pretty stark and obvious choice, faithful obedience was sadly lacking – Jer 7:19 *Do they provoke Me to anger?” says the Lord. “Do they not provoke themselves, to the shame of their own faces?” 20 Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Behold, My anger and My fury will be poured out on this place—on man and on beast, on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground. And it will burn and not be quenched.” 21 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat. 22 For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. 23 But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you*

shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’ 24 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. 25 Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them. 26 Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

And the outcome for not obeying the Lord’s voice and walking in the ways He commanded them, is presented to us succinctly in the only other Book of Scripture that is named for a woman, the Book of Esther – Est 1:10 *On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus, 11 to bring Queen Vashti before the king, wearing her royal crown, in order to show her beauty to the people and the officials, for she was beautiful to behold. 12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command brought by his eunuchs; therefore the king was furious, and his anger burned within him.*

Queen Vashti is also a type of Israel who, in the historical account, had been summoned to appear before King Ahasuerus on the 7th day wearing her royal crown, to show her beauty to all gathered there. But as we see from the verses we have just read, ‘Queen Vashti refused to come at the king’s command brought by his eunuchs’. And as a result, ‘the king was furious, and his anger burned within him’. And here we can hear echoes from the verses in Jeremiah.

a). In the antitype, Israel had been called into existence to appear with God the Father in the 7th Day as His Consort Queen within the Theocracy, but Israel has so far refused to obey His voice. They refused to obey Him with respect to the land and refused to obey Him in the person of His Son with respect to the heavens. And consequently, God is furious – Est 1:16 *And Memucan answered before the king and the princes:*

“Queen Vashti has not only wronged the king, but also all the princes, and all the people who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus.

Israel’s actions in refusing to obey God with respect to her calling has not only wronged God the Father, but also ‘all the princes’ [presumably those in the angelic realm] and the Gentile nations; nations who were to be blessed by Israel as she fulfilled her regal calling, just as God had promised to Abraham – Ge 12:2 *I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*”

If we continue in the Book of Esther, we will see that Memucan continued to describe the far-reaching consequences of Vashti’s actions – Est 1:17 *For the queen's behavior will become known to all women, so that they will despise their husbands in their eyes, when they report, ‘King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in before him, but she did not come.’ 18 This very day the noble ladies of Persia and Media will say to all the king's officials that they have heard of the behavior of the queen. Thus there will be excessive contempt and wrath. 19 If it pleases the king, let a royal decree go out from him, and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it will not be altered, that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she.*

And so, because Vashti’s actions had such far-reaching consequences, impacting the marriage relationship within Ahasuerus’s kingdom, it was determined that she should ‘come no more before the king’ and that her royal position should be given ‘to another who is better than she’.

b). Vashti was from that moment set aside, she was divorced, and a new wife for the king was to be found.

c). The ‘other’ who was found, who was better than Vashti, who would be Ahasuerus’s new queen, was of course Esther. And in these 2 women, the divorced wife, Vashti, and the new queen, Esther, we see types of both unfaithful, disobedient Israel and Israel in repentance, restored to her calling.

d). In this both Esther and Abraham's wife, Keturah, present 2 parts of the same picture.

e). And then Esther as queen, her cousin Mordecai sitting in the king's gate and fruitful Keturah, all taken together, are exactly what we saw pictured at the end of the Book of Ruth – Ru 4:13 *So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son. 14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! 15 And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him." 16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. 17 Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.*

In the Book of Esther there is no reason given as to why Vashti refused to obey the king. We are just told that she didn't.

f). But if we consider Israel's behavior throughout her history, behavior that led to God the Father divorcing her and the nation being set aside, encapsulated in Vashti, we can see that their rebellious, disobedient behavior amounted to a refusal on Israel's part to enter the 7th Day – Heb 3:18 *And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

Here in Hebrews we see the inextricable connection between disobedience and unbelief. And so, in order to look at the nature of Israel's sin of unbelief, we can return again to the circumstances in place at the beginning of the Book of Ruth – the days when the judges ruled.

g). The days when the judges ruled was a period in Israel's history in which a specific cycle of events was constantly repeated – Jg 2:13 *They forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. 14 And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. 15 Wherever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against*

them for calamity, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed. 16 Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17 Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the Lord; they did not do so. 18 And when the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. 19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

Israel had refused to obey the voice of the Lord spoken to them from the beginning – Ex 20:1 *And God spoke all these words, saying: 2 “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 “You shall have no other gods before Me. 4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

The nation’s disobedience found its apex in actions that the Lord calls harlotry, and because of this harlotry there was a famine in the land; a spiritual famine pictured through the physical famine which is the setting for the Book of Ruth.

b). The cycle of behavior seen in Judges is one of Israel’s harlotry followed by God’s judgment of this sin; judgment brought about through persecution at the hands of the Gentile nations who surrounded them. This persecution led to Israel crying out to God in their distress, and God hearing their cry, would then raise up a judge who would deliver ‘them

out of the hand of those who plundered them'. Then, when the judge was dead, 'they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers' – the cycle would begin all over again.

c). But in the cycle, itself, is foreshadowed the conclusion of the matter, and taken along with that seen in Exodus, has set the unchangeable pattern by which Israel's final deliverance will be accomplished.

d). By putting Exodus and Judges together we see that Israel's harlotry must result in them being scattered among the Gentile nations to suffer the persecution commensurate with their sin in order that they might be brought to repentance – De 28:64 *"Then the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone. 65 And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. 66 Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life.*

Lk 21:20 *"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. 22 For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. 24 And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

But when their persecution among the nations becomes so intense that they can do nothing else but cry out to the God of their fathers, then God will hear and deliver them – 2 Ch 7:13 *When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14 if My people who are called by My name will humble*

themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Israel in Egypt provides the foundational type for the Jewish people persecuted among the Gentile nations. The Book of Judges continues the theme of persecution at the hands of the Gentiles, but also adds Israel's harlotry as the reason for it. And then with the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities we have the uprooting of the nation from geographical Israel to complete the type, foreshadowing that prophesied by the Lord in Luke Chapter 21 when the final dispersion of the nation will take place.

1 Ch 6:15 Jehozadak went into captivity when the Lord carried Judah and Jerusalem into captivity by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

We might remember that the northern 10 tribes of Israel were taken into captivity slightly over 100 years before the southern 2 tribes of Judah and Benjamin were taken captive, seen in the verse from 1 Chronicles.

e). During the captivity there was no raising up of a judge, or anyone else, to deliver the Jewish people from their captivity. And although there was a remnant who returned to the land at the end of the time God had allotted for it – *Da 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— 2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. 3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.*

This remnant was just that, but the majority of the Jewish nation remained outside of the land. The times of the Gentiles continued, as they still do today, waiting to be fulfilled.

f). Israel's harlotry continued, finding its zenith at the Lord's first advent when they killed their King and pledged allegiance to a pagan Gentile ruler who considered himself a deity. And as a result, those in the land were dispersed from it in 70AD. The remnant there now will then

surpass the zenith of Israel's harlotry at the Lord's first advent, when they, as God's covenant people, will make a covenant with the one who is the antithesis of the God of Israel, the Antichrist, bringing Israel's harlotry to the full – Re 17:1 *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." 3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. 5 And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.*

We will have to continue with this next time – if the Lord is willing.