

Ruth 1B

- Study verse by verse, allowing scripture to interpret scripture
 - Observation, interpretation, application
 - Prophetic meaning
- The events in the story of Ruth are literal. They are historical. They took place in a certain day and time and they involved real people
 - Tonya led you through some of the background for the story from the opening verses of Chapter 1
 - But friends, there is so much more to know and understand from the book of Ruth if we are to truly appreciate the story
- Because the story of Ruth is actually a book of two stories
 - On the one hand...it tells of the events in Elimelech's family
 - Of Naomi and her sons and daughters in law
 - On the other hand, Ruth tells the story of God's plan for His people, Israel
 - Told through their lives and circumstances of this one family
 - As we will see in the book of Ruth, God moved the circumstances of their lives in purposeful ways
 - Just as if they were actors in a play and God was the director
 - And through the story of their lives, God provides us with a beautiful picture of His plans for Israel and for the Church and for His Son
 - This second story is one I will bring out from the text over the next five nights
 - In the process, we will learn a little about eschatology – the doctrine or teaching of the end times
- Tonight, I want to begin our second story by introducing its characters
 - Just as in the story of Naomi and Elimelech, our story begins with a wife and her husband

- The wife is named Israel and the Husband is Jehovah
 - Jehovah, the God of Abraham, set apart for Himself a people, called Israel
- In scripture, God often describes Himself as the Husband of Israel and Israel as His wife

[Is. 54:4](#) ¶ "Fear not, for you will not be put to shame;
 And do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced;
 But you will forget the shame of your youth,
 And the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.

[Is. 54:5](#) "For your husband is your Maker,
 Whose name is the LORD of hosts;
 And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel,
 Who is called the God of all the earth.

[Is. 54:6](#) "For the LORD has called you,
 Like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit,
 Even like a wife of *one's* youth when she is rejected,"
 Says your God.

[Is. 54:7](#) " For a brief moment I forsook you,
 But with great compassion I will gather you.

[Is. 54:8](#) "In an outburst of anger
 I hid My face from you for a moment,
 But with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you,"
 Says the LORD your Redeemer.

- Did you notice that when speaking of Israel in this passage, God refers to Israel as a wife
 - And He calls Himself her husband
 - But notice God also describes His wife as one who rejected her husband
 - And perhaps most interestingly of all, God refers to a period in Israel's history when she experienced widowhood
 - A woman who was rejected by Her husband and grieved in her spirit
 - This is one of the ways the Bible describes Israel
- Why does Israel find herself grieving, alone and without the attention of her Husband, her maker?

- Tonya has already shown us how Israel's disobedience to God's commands lead to God's discipline and judgment falling upon Israel
 - Bringing famine to the land, for example
- But there is more to God's judgment than just famine

[Lev. 26:14](#) ¶ ""But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, [Lev. 26:15](#) and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, [Lev. 26:16](#) then I will do this to you: I will bring upon you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and drain away your life. You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it.

[Lev. 26:19](#) I will break down your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze.

[Lev. 26:22](#) ` I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted.

[Lev. 26:38](#) You will perish among the nations; the land of your enemies will devour you.

[Lev. 26:39](#) Those of you who are left will waste away in the lands of their enemies because of their sins; also because of their fathers' sins they will waste away.

- What did you see in that passage?
 - If you do not carry out these commands
 - If you are a disobedient nation
 - Then, I will bring upon you wasting diseases
 - Drain away your life
 - Rob you of your children
 - Make you few in number
 - You will perish among the nations (Gentiles)
 - You will waste away in the land of your enemies
- This is God's promise to Israel under the terms of the Old Covenant

- Think back for a moment to the names of the characters from our the book of Ruth
 - Elimelech – Husband - God of the King
 - Naomi – Wife - pleasant or lovely – i.e., his lovely Jewish wife
 - They lived in the time of the judges, a time marked by the culture’s disobedience
 - And judgment came upon the land in the form of famine
 - And the famine scattered the family
 - And they ended up in Moab, the land of Israel’s long-standing enemy
 - While in this land, we know that Naomi is eventually left without a husband, made a widow
 - And what of her sons?
 - Mahlon and Chilion, the sons of Naomi
 - Their names foreshadow their life in Moab
 - They succumb to weaknesses and die
 - Just as Lev promised, the sons of Israel, these sons of Elimilech, waste away during their exile, being reduced in number while they live in the land of their enemies
- It’s clear already that the story of Ruth brings with it a parallel, prophetic story of God and Israel
 - We can see how Naomi’s plight in Moab draws our attention to God’s promised judgment upon Israel
- But it’s one thing to draw a simple connection between the various characters in the story of Ruth and the future of the Jewish people as a whole
 - But it’s another thing altogether to suggest that even the smallest details of their lives in the book of Ruth could hold important prophetic meaning as well
 - Do the prophetic connections in the book of Ruth go beyond merely names and places?

- Well, I want to draw your attention to a little word at the end of verse 4
 - The word in Hebrew is ke – meaning about
 - Scripture is careful to tell us that Naomi was in the land of Moab for about 10 years
 - The Bible is never inexact
 - Every Hebrew and Greek word in the original manuscripts was chosen by God and has purpose and meaning
 - So here when we see the author use the term “about 10 years” this is not because he didn’t know the exact date
 - It is because “about” means something important to the story
 - As I’m sure many of you know, numbers in scripture are intentionally loaded with meaning
 - That is not to say that numbers don’t have a true literal meaning
 - They absolutely do
 - But by the way God orchestrates events in the world to result in certain numbers so that He can leave us with important clues concerning His purposes and His plans
 - By observing these patterns carefully, we learn even more than what first meets the eye
- Slide of numbers
- Let’s take a close look at that verse in Ruth 1:4
 - Naomi and her family are living in Moab about 10 years
 - About means they have been there at least 9 years
 - 9 = judgment
 - And it suggests that the tenth year approaches
 - A year of testimony
 - A year of giving a testimony to God’s faithfulness

- Why is this significant?
 - Well, first it reinforces the message in the story of Ruth
 - Naomi and her family were in Moab because they fled a famine during the time of the judges, a time of sinfulness
 - God left them there for 9 years to communicate His sovereign purposes in their exile – they were exiled in judgment for sin
 - But now at about the tenth year, circumstances change and a transition is beginning
 - The period of God’s judgment is coming to an end for Naomi and what’s left of her family (remnant)
 - And redemption, a new testimony, draws near
- But what of our second story? The story of Jehovah and Israel?
 - Do we learn anything about God’s plan to call his wife back to Himself?
 - In fact we do, and here’s where we see how every detail of this story is a gift of prophecy to be unwrapped
 - Just as Naomi’s period of judgment gradually transitions to a new time of testimony
 - So will Israel’s
 - When God wrote “about ten years,” he was also giving insight into the way He would bring an end to His judgment of his unfaithful wife, Israel
- First, let’s understand how the nation of Israel came to be dispersed and to live among her enemies, the Gentiles nations of the world
 - We’ve already seen where God promised to bring a scattering to Israel
 - As a reminder, let’s see another time God assured Israel of a future scattering

[Deut. 28:62](#) You who were as numerous as the stars in the sky will be left but few in number, because you did not obey the LORD your God.

[Deut. 28:63](#) Just as it pleased the LORD to make you prosper and increase in number, so it will please him to ruin and destroy you. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess.

[Deut. 28:64](#) ¶ Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods — gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known.

[Deut. 28:65](#) Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart.

[Deut. 28:66](#) You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life.

- When did this scattering take place>
 - Well, if you know your Bible history, you'll remember there were several scatterings of Israelites
 - The Assyrian captivity and dispersion (721 BC)
 - The Babylonian captivity (586 BC)
 - But neither of those events resulted in a complete scattering of all the Israelites throughout all the world (the nations)
 - Though the Israelites taken by Assyrian never returned
 - The captives from Babylon returned in 70 years
 - So we need to look for a complete and total dispersion of the Jewish nation
- That final dispersion and judgment of Israel took place in a very specific moment in her history
 - Jesus actually predicted it in a discussion with the disciples

[Luke 21:5](#) ¶ And while some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts, He said,

[Luke 21:6](#) "As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down."

- This comment intrigued the disciples, as you might imagine
 - They begin to ask Jesus a series of questions
 - Bombshell comments have that tendency
 - We are going to study this discourse in greater detail later in this course
 - But for now, we only need to look at Jesus' response to one question
 - When will the temple be torn down in Luke 21:7
 - We know from history when and how the temple was destroyed
 - In AD 66 there was Jewish revolt
 - Romans sent Cestus Gallus from Caesarea to put down the rebellion
 - He encamped around Jerusalem
 - Before he could breach the walls, he was forced to leave to stop attacks to his supply lines in AD68
 - He was defeated in a battle before he could return to Jerusalem and returned to Rome
 - During this break in the siege of Jerusalem, a few Jews took the chance to escape
 - In AD 68 Rome sends Vespasian to finish the job
 - By AD70, he breaches the walls
 - Kills 1.1 million Jews

- Now knowing this history, look at how Jesus answered the disciples' questions concerning the destruction of the temple

[Luke 21:20](#) ¶ "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is near.

[Luke 21:21](#) "Then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city;

[Luke 21:22](#) because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.

[Luke 21:23](#) "Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land and wrath to this people;

[Luke 21:24](#) and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

- Jesus gave those who would listen the clues they needed to understand how to escape the coming destruction
 - When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then escape
 - The days when what is written will be fulfilled (Deut 28)
 - And then note that these are the days with the Jews will be led captive into all the nations
 - Jerusalem is trampled under foot by Gentiles
 - And this scattering will continue until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled
- The attacks on Jerusalem in AD 70 initiated a period of judgment upon Israel in keeping with God's promises to His unfaithful wife
 - And so like Naomi in the story of Ruth, Israel has been wandering in the land of her enemies ever since
 - And like Naomi, Israel's time of wandering in judgment must eventually transition to period of regathering in the land in preparation for redemption – in preparation for a new testimony
 - God also spoke prophetically about such a regathering

[Ezek. 20:33](#) ¶ "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you.

[Ezek. 20:34](#) "I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out;

[Ezek. 20:35](#) and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face.

[Ezek. 20:36](#) "As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord GOD.

[Ezek. 20:37](#) "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant;

[Ezek. 20:38](#) and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD.

[Is. 11:11](#) ¶ Then it will happen on that day that the Lord

Will again recover the second time with His hand

The remnant of His people, who will remain,

From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath,

And from the islands of the sea.

[Is. 11:12](#) And He will lift up a standard for the nations

And assemble the banished ones of Israel,

And will gather the dispersed of Judah

From the four corners of the earth.

[Ezek. 36:17](#) "Son of man, when the house of Israel was living in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds; their way before Me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity.

[Ezek. 36:18](#) "Therefore I poured out My wrath on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols.

[Ezek. 36:19](#) "Also I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I judged them.

[Ezek. 36:20](#) "When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD; yet they have come out of His land.'

[Ezek. 36:21](#) "But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went.

[Ezek. 36:22](#) ¶ "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.

[Ezek. 36:23](#) "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.

[Ezek. 36:24](#) "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.

- Friends, we are the privileged generation who is watching this promise being fulfilled
 - Over the past 60 years, the nation of Israel has been returning to her Land, just as God promised
 - Their time of judgment is nearing an end
 - Israel, the forsaken wife of Jehovah has not been forgotten
 - Speaking in the Bible's language of numbers, it's been about 10 years for Israel, figuratively speaking
 - She has seen much despair and misery during her years of wandering under judgment
 - And yet judgment is giving way to testimony even before our eyes
- Oh, but there's so much yet to come