

VV STUDY NOTES: 21st JAN 2023

Andrew Gebbie

HOSPITALITY: BOOK OF RUTH (Please read it in full, more than once if you have the time)

The book of Ruth is a rare insight into the outworking of some of the Mosaic Laws. The social and cultural realities of the time centred around ownership of land, and the preservation of family. Community and social responsibility were critical. The fundamentals of the social structure in an agrarian society were so different to what we deal with in our society that it's looking into an alien world.

What were the pillars of this world:

- **Lev 25: 8-12:** The year of Jubilee: every 50 years there was a general amnesty to DEBT. Families that had sold land because of financial challenge had the opportunity to get their land back.
- **Leviticus 25:25-55:** There was a social structure in which the successful and wealth had to accept responsibility in relationship to their fellow Jews. There were RULES that determined in advance through the principles of Guardian-Redeemers who were allotted to these roles.
- **Deuteronomy 25 5-6:** is directly related to a passage which we have studied. (**Matt 22: 23-33**) defines the role played when brothers are involved.

All the above factors play into the Book of Ruth. Care for the POOR & VULNERABLE is the key factor behind all these rules. **It would be impossible to apply the methods in our modern world, but the PRINCIPLES are eternal.**

Over the last two weeks we have already broadened the principle of HOSPITALITY to include all the ways of protecting the oppressed and vulnerable. Hence the link to Hospitals, Hospices, and multiple other ways of helping people.

Last week we looked at the Parable of the Good Samaritan which contrasts someone who understood this principle, and two spiritual leaders who avoided it. One of the predominant rebukes by the OT prophet against the oppression of the widows, orphans and poor resonate with this reality as being important to God.

Another message from Jesus himself underscores this same reality. **Matt 25: 31-46 (THE SHEEP & GOATS)**

Despite all the CULTURAL ODDITIES found in the OT which are offensive to our modern minds and ways, there is an unyielding framework of CARE AND LOVE for all mankind.

In the REVELATION OF GOD, through the life and ministry of JESUS this reality comes to life.

Today we step into this strange world recorded in the Book of Ruth and see the principles at work in that world of the past.

1. Naomi, her husband and two sons left Israel during a time of famine and went to Moab. The story later reveals that they must have sold their property to fund their move.

If they had ALL returned to Bethlehem, what difference would it have made to their lives?

If they had returned after Elimelek died but the boys were unmarried, what difference would it have made?

I have asked those questions to challenge your comprehension of the Mosaic Regulations.

2. Naomi stayed, her two sons married Moabite women, and the two sons died. All that had happened in a period of 10 years. Neither of the Moabite women had children or the story would have recorded that reality. It probably indicates that the marriages were short enough to explain the absence of children, or the two sons could have been sterile.

3. **1: 8 -15**

What does the story tell us about Naomi and her relationship with her daughters-in-law?

Why would Naomi suggest that they return home to their own families and gods?

4. **1:1-22**
What does this tell us about Ruth?

5. **Chapter 2**
What dangers did Ruth face in going into the fields to glean?
What do we discover about Boaz in this passage?

6. **Chapter 3**
An odd encounter.
Why did Naomi send Ruth to Boaz?
What problems could have come about that would have led Boaz to want to keep her visit a secret?

7. **Chapter 4**
Why did Boaz go through all the protocols that he did in order to become Ruth's husband?

8. **RUTH'S CHILD BECOMES THE ANCESTER OF KING DAVID**

What does that tell us?

PLENTY OF SCOPE FOR DISCUSSION!