

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 1) 04 Dec 2016 Joshua 1:1-18
- 2) 11 Dec Joshua 2:1 – 6:27
- 3) 18 Dec Joshua 7:2 – 12:24
- 4) 25 Dec Christmas Message Luke 1:26-38
- 5) 01 Jan 2017 Joshua 13:1 – 22:34
- 6) 08 Jan Joshua 23:1 – 24:33
- 7) 15 Jan Sanctity of Life Prov 24:10-12; Mark 10:46-49
- 8) 22 Jan Judges 1:1 – 5:31
- 9) 29 Jan Judges 6:1 – 12:15
- 10) 05 Feb Judges 13:1 – 16:31
- 11) 12 Feb Judges 17:1 – 21:25
- 12) 19 Feb Ruth 1:1 – 2:23
- 13) 26 Feb Ruth 3:1 – 4:22

INTRODUCTION

- Ruth is not quoted in the New Testament. But neither is Judges, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Nahum, Obadiah, or Haggai.
- According to the Jewish Talmud, the prophet Samuel is the probable author, but the Hebrew literary style and the mention of David suggests it was written by someone later than Samuel
- Ruth, born into a heathen culture, through God's providence became a Jewish wife, a daughter-in-law, a widow, a wife for 2nd time, a mother, and finally an ancestress of Jesus (Mathew 1:5)
- Nobody is a waste in God's scheme if they chose to follow Him
- ...and God seems more concerned about our future than our past

Passage	Comments
Ruth 1:1-22	<p>Ruth, like Esther, is a Book of Providential Oversight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The famine drove Elimelech & Naomi into Moab where their sons grew up and married some local girls • v4. Elimelech, the family patriarch dies, & the sons go off and do their own thing and marry foreign women - How often do we see families crumble once the Dad (a stabilizing factor) passes away • Mahlon & Chilion, being Jews, should not have married Orpah & Ruth – unless the girls believed in God first • If they did violate a direct mandate of God not to marry unbelievers, God allowed the situation to develop and turn out to fulfill His will for the birth of the Messiah • Principle to Live By. Never presume God will work things out for you if you chose to follow your own ways • Mahlon & Chilion also died early and forced Naomi to head back home (no social welfare available in Moab, but Jews were commanded to take care of their own) • Ruth proved to be a one-of-a-kind daughter-in-law, willing to assume full time care of her mother-in-law, even at her own expense, discomfort, displacement • Orpah opted to stay within her comfort zone • v22. "...and they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest" – How timely. God orchestrates even the smallest details to accomplish His will
2:1-18	<p>Boaz to the Rescue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It just so happened, Boaz, a wealthy land owner, was a relative who could save the day for Ruth and Naomi • Principle to Live By. Family relationships are so important, including relationships with in-laws • v9. Boaz had to command his servants not to "touch" Ruth (work place sexual harassment was common, and the Jewish state was better than surrounding nations) • v15. Boaz also had to command his servants not to "insult" Ruth. Ruth was not a Jew, so she was also open to racial slurs, bigotry, and prejudice • v16. "...do not rebuke her..." Boaz tried to save Ruth from cruelty for receiving special treatment

Passage	Comments
Note On Benevolence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naomi opted to migrate back to Israel since Israelites were commanded by God to look after their family members – Israel was the first welfare state.. Lev 25:35 • Ruth, a widow, worked in the hot fields to glean enough grain to sustain herself and her widowed mother-in-law until a relative was willing to help them out • Paul told the church not to support widows unless they met very strict criteria 1Timothy 5:3-16 • So, why do churches give unearned handouts to able-bodied young people who can tell a sob story? The first question we should ask them is "Where is your family?"
2:19-23	<p>There is Safety in Numbers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naomi concurred with Boaz about Ruth remaining with his servants to be safe from harassment and rape • Principle to Live By. Do not take God's protection for granted, for we live in a world dominated by sin • Even though Ruth had God's hand of providence on her, her safety depended on heeding wise instruction • Even the Apostle Paul could have suffered needless harm if he had failed to heed the wise instruction of others not to stay in Damascus (Acts 9:22-25); and not to venture into the Ephesian Amphitheater during an uprising (Acts 19:23-31)

CONCLUSION/APPLICATIONS

- Who stands a better chance to serve God to the fullest?
 - ♦ Someone living the life of luxury? e.g., Job
 - ♦ A wheelchair-bound quadriplegic? Joni Eareckson-Tada
 - ♦ An unwilling sex slave locked in a harem Esther
 - ♦ An impoverished widow? Ruth
- Anyone who is sold out to God, no matter what state God has put them in, stands to accomplish much for the His kingdom

NEXT WEEK: **Ruth 3-4.** Ruth basically proposes marriage to Boaz, and Boaz responds positively. Ruth's noble character and boldness become positive traits in many of her progeny – and many became kings over Israel. What will our legacy be to our kids and grandkids?

