

## **RUTH, MOTHER OF OBED**

While most Christians are familiar with the traditional three Wise Men of Christmas, we have chosen to study the following three Wise Women associated with the Christmas story of Matthew – “And to Judah were born Perez and Zerah by Tamar. And to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab; **and to Boaz was born Obed by Ruth**; and to Obed, Jesse.” (Matt.1:3, 5)

- Dec.4            Tamar (Matt.1:3)        Mother of Perez
- Dec.11          Rahab (Matt.1:5a)       Mother of Boaz
- **Dec.18          Ruth (Matt.1:5b)        Mother of Obed**
- **Dec.25 and Jan.1 – There will be no Tuesday classes.**

The story of Ruth is found in the Book of Ruth located between the Books of Judges and Samuel.

**The story behind the story:** It is interesting that Ruth was a Moabite Gentile (Gen.19:30-37) [Moab was the first-born daughter of incest with Lot]. How in the world did this gentile Moabite with this past become part of the lineage of the Son of God? (Gal.3:8-9)

Ruth lived during the period of the Judge Gideon (Judges 6-8). It was a time when Israel was suffering under a seven year oppression by the Midianites. “Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord gave them into the hands of Midian seven years.” (Judges 6:1)

<p><b>We will study FOUR aspects of our final Wise Women, Ruth, the Mother of Obed.</b></p>
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### **1. Once again we have the opportunity to see God working the mission field.**

Just like in the stories of Tamar and Rahab, we see Positive Volition (PV) at God Consciousness (GC) seeking God (Acts 17:24) and God seeking those with PV at GC (Luke 19:10).

Like Tamar and Rahab, Ruth was raised in a culture of polytheistic paganism. This evil culture was a great danger to Israel (Num.25:1-5). They were forbidden to intermarry with any of the Canaanite nations. “For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and He will quickly destroy you.” (Deut.7:4)

Yet Elimelech and Naomi married their sons to Moabite women. This story is filled with so much misery from bad choices and consequences that Naomi changes her name to Mara (bitterness).

Notice that this book is not called Naomi (pleasant) or Mara (bitter) but RUTH (friend, companion). If this book had been called Naomi or Mara it would have been ONE miserable chapter long.

But the true heroine of this story is a young Moabite believer and not an old believer gone into reversionism who has lost her excitement about her relationship with Lord – “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me. I went out full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the Lord has afflicted me?” (Ruth 1:20-21) **[details vs source]**

**2. While the Book of Judges is about the nation of Israel struggling with reversionism, the Book of Ruth is the story of the struggle of one Ephrathite family from Bethlehem and how it affected them personally.**

Elimelech's family was part of the pivot of believers in Israel during the time of Gideon. As a pivot (remnant), they were the salt of the earth and the light to the world (Matt.5:13-16) from Bethlehem to the rest of the nation.

The Book of Ruth shows their personal struggle with their nation in reversionism and its suffering under divine discipline and their choice to take the easy way out of it (Ruth 1:1-2).

A better choice would be the one Peter offered when others were forsaking Jesus and Jesus asks, "You do not want to go away also, do you? Simeon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.'" (John 6:67-68)

**3. We learn from the Book of Ruth that you can't escape divine discipline by changing your mailing address (Ruth 1:3-5).**

The drama of this story begins with three funerals and three widows and a decision by Naomi to return to the Promised Land after 10 years out of the geographical will of God (Ruth 1:3 -7).

The Promise Land was a land flowing with milk and honey whether under divine discipline or blessings. "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit." (Num.13:27; Ex.3:8; Rom.4:20-21; Ps.33:12) [God is the source].

**What Elimelech and his family fled, Gideon and 300 of the pivot fought for in Israel (1 Tim.6:12).**

During the 7-year of oppression in Israel, Elimelech and his 2 sons all died in Moab out of the geographical and operational and mental will of God. We will meet the one male hero of Book of Ruth when Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem (geographical will) and began to pursue the will of God in their daily lives (mental will and operational will).

**4. It is interesting that they returned to Bethlehem (house of bread) at the BEGINNING of barley season (Ruth 1:22).**

This season was a reminder to Believers of new beginnings and new hopes. It was an exciting time for the spiritually advancing believer like Ruth. But it could be a time of reflecting on bad memories for Believers in reversion recovery like Naomi.

Yet this story is about a gentile Moabite convert bringing the light of Christ into the home of a Jewish Mara and becoming a source of comfort and hope for her recovery to Naomi - Believers struggling with negative feelings about God and life.

As this story progresses in Bethlehem, Naomi begins to get excited and engaged again in the plan of God until in the end she holds her firstborn grandson, Obed, and is full of praises for God.

"Then the women said to Naomi, 'Blessed is the Lord who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.'" (Ruth 4:14-15)

"And the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, 'A son has been born to Naomi.' So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David." (Ruth 4:17)