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LEST WE FORGET

DEUTERONOMY 6:1-12

MOST CHRISTIANS KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY. IT WAS ONE OF JESUS FAVORITE BOOKS, AS A MATTER OF FACT HE QUOTED FROM THIS BOOK MORE THAN ANY OTHER ONE. THE THREE QUOTATIONS DURING HIS TEMPTATION WERE FROM THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY. THE WORD LITERALITY MEANS "THE SECOND LAW". IT IS THE BOOK OF REVIEW IN WHICH GOD SHOWS THAT ONCE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WERE RELATED TO GOD THROUGH REDEMPTION THEIR RESPONSIBILITY WAS TO OBEY THE LORD. IN ONE SENSE OF THE WORD, DEUTERONOMY IS THE FAIRWELL OF MOSES TO ISRAEL. IT IS THE BOOK WHICH PREPARED A WONDERING NATION TO ENTER INTO THE LAND WHICH GOD HAD PROMISED THEM. AS THE NATION PREPARED TO ENTER THE PROMISED LAND IT WAS NECESSARY TO REVIEW THE LAW WHICH GOD HAD GIVEN AND RENEW THE COVENANT OF GOD TO THE PEOPLE. SIMPLY STATED, DEUTERONOMY SHOWS THE BLESSING OF THOSE WHO OBEY GOD AND THE CURSE ON THOSE WHO DO NOT. EVERYTHING DEPENDED UPON OBEDIENCE TO GOD. PROSPERITY, HAPPINESS AND POSSESSION OF THE PROMISED LAND WERE DEPENDED UPON OBEDIENCE. DEUT. WAS THE BOOK WHICH PREPARED THE PEOPLE TO ENTER THE LAND OF PROMISE. IT COVERS ONLY A 2 MONTH PERIOD OF TIME. THE BOOK OF DEUT. OPENS WITH THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ON THE BORDER OF THE LAND OF CANAAN. IT HAD TAKEN THEM 40 YEARS TO ACCOMPLISH A 2 WEEKS JOURNEY. THEY HAD SPENT AN ENTIRE GENERATION WONDERING AROUND GOING OVER THE SAME TERRITORY AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL A GENERATION OF UNBELIEVERS COULD DIE OUT. BEFORE THEY ENTERED THE LAND, GOD GIVES SEVERAL WARNINGS AND THIS IS THE BASIS FOR OUR STUDY TODAY. ONE OF THE BIG DANGERS WAS THAT OF FORGETTING. THE OLDEST EXCUSE IN THE BOOK IS JUST SIMPLY, "I FORGOT." EVERY INDUSTRIAL PLANT HAS A PERSON WHO ALWAYS FORGETS HIS LUNCH OR MONEY TO PURCHASE IT. EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD HAS A PERSON WHO HAS FORGOTTEN TO PURCHASE SOMETHING AT THE STORE. EVERYONE OF US HAS WAITED FOR ONE REMAINING PERSON FOR A MEETING WHO FAILS TO SHOW UP AND HIS ONLY EXCUSE IS I FORGOT. SELDOM DOES A VACATIONING FAMILY BEGIN THE TRIP WITHOUT SOMETHING BEING FORGOTTEN. A DOOR, WINDOW, NOTE, SUITE CASE SOMETHING HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN. BEFORE THE NATION ENTERED

In Deut. we see that God set aside an entire generation and waited for another one to come into being — the wilderness exp. is the penalty for unbelief. Kadesh-barnea = crucial place — forward/backward in unbelief.

THE LAND THAT GOD HAS PROMISED THEM THERE WERE SOME THINGS WHICH THEY DARED NOT FORGET.

I. DON'T FORGET GOD IN YOUR PERSONAL & RELIGIOUS LIFE - V.2-5

BRAC

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL LIVED IN A WORLD IN WHICH NEIGHBORING NATIONS WORSHIPPED MANY GODS. MEN WORSHIPPED THE GOD OF THE SUN, MOON, SEA, SKY, WIND, FIRE, RIVER, MOUNTAINS, AND EVERY OTHER CREATED THING. OTHER NATIONS HAD TRIBAL GODS MOST OF WHICH INVOLVED SEX AS A SACRED ACT OF WORSHIP. THE KIND OF GOD A MAN WORSHIPS WILL DETERMINE THE KIND OF MAN HE IS. ETHICS BEGINS AT THIS POINT AND A MANS GOD DICTATES HIS CONDUCT. THE GOD OF THE BIBLE WAS A LIVING GOD. (DEUT. 5:26) THE GOD WHOM THE HEBREWS SERVED WAS ONE WHO COULD MEET THE NEEDS OF LIVING MEN BECAUSE HE IS ALIVE. AS ~~OF~~ A MATTER OF FACT, ACCORDING TO V. 4 THERE IS NO OTHER GOD AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WERE TO WORSHIP THE ONE AND ONLY GOD! IT IS FOOLISH TO IMAGINE MEN WOULD BOW DOWN TO SOME KIND OF HEATHEN IDE IN OUR ENLIGHTENED ERA. HOWEVER, MEN DO FIND "OTHER GODS" TO WORSHIP. SOME MEN WORSHIP NATURE, HEALTH, SPORTS, SCIENCE AND LEARNING, WEALTH AND PLEASURE. IN AMERICA, WE ARE RAPIDLY BECOMING EPICUREAN IN OUR PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE. THESE PEOPLE BELIEVED THAT PLEASURE IS THE SUPREME GOOD OF LIFE. EVERYTHING ELSE TOOK 2ND PLACE TO PERSONAL PLEASURE. IN HISTORY, ROME COLLAPSED UNDER THIS KIND OF THINKING. THE "BREAD CIRCUS" PHILOSOPHY DOMINATED ROMES THINKING. PEOPLE WERE ABSORBED WITH FOOD AND SHOWS. PUBLIC HOLIDAYS WHERE EVERYTHING STOPPED AND PEOPLE THROGGED TO STATE PROVIDED AMUSEMENTS. DURING THE TIME OF TITUS THEIR 100 CONSECUTIVE DAYS OF SHOWS AND HOLIDAYS. THE PURSUIT OF PLEASURE WAS THE HARDEST WORK. A PASSION FOR GAMBLING, GLUTTONY, CHARIOT RACING AND BIG TIMES SPORTS OF OUR DAY BARE A CLOSE RESEMBLANCE IN THE LARGE CROWDS OF SPECTATORS AND THE HUGE FINANCIAL REWARDS FOR SPORTS. IT IS INTERESTING THAT CHRISTIANITY CAME INTO THE WORLD SURROUNDED BY A SOCIETY THAT THRILLED TO MURDER IN THE NAME OF SPORT. IF A PERSONS SUPREME LOYALTY IS TO GOD EVERYTHING ELSE WILL TAKE ITS PROPER PLACE. THE WORSHIP OF GOD WAS A MUST IN THE LIVES IN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. UNTIL AND UNLESS THEY LEARNED THE GREAT TRUTH THEY WOULD ALWAYS BE A DISORGANIZED BAND OF SLAVES. GOD HAS A RIGHT TO BE WORSHIPPED ESPECIALLY CHRISTIANS. SUNDAY IS THE LORD'S DAY - ALL DAY LONG. (THE CURRENT ISSUE

"Holy Holes"

OF THE BAPTIST BULLETIN FEATURES AN ARTICLE ENTITLED WEEKEND DESERTERS WHICH IS A SCRIPTURAL EXAMINATION OF HEBREWS 10:25. ILLUSTRATIONS WERE GIVEN IN THE ARTICLE OF A PARTICULAR FAMILY, MEMBERS OF A BIBLE BELIEVING CHURCH WHO TOOK OFF EACH POSSIBLE WEEK-END TO GO TO THE WOODS OR BEACH. HOWEVER, THEY WERE CONVICTED ABOUT BEING AWAY FROM CHURCH BUT ON THE RETURN TRIP CONSTANTLY GRUMBLED AND COMPLAINED ABOUT HAVING TO GIVE UP THEIR WEEK-END IN ORDER TO BE IN CHURCH. THEIR SMALL CHILDREN LISTENED TO THIS GRUMBLING FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS AND SOON AS THEY WERE OLD ENOUGH TO BE ON THEIR OWN LEFT THE CHURCH. WHEN ASK ABOUT IT THEY HELD UP THEIR PARENTS AND THEIR GRUMBLING ABOUT CHURCH AS THE REASON FOR THEIR DEPARTURE. IT IS NOT WHAT WE SAY BUT WHAT WE DO THAT REVEALS OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. WE ARE BEGINNING THE SUMMER SEASON AND SOME UNSUSPECTING FAMILIES LOSE THEIR CHILDREN BECAUSE A NEGLIGENCE APPROACH TO THE WORSHIP OF GOD.) V. 5 BRINGS THE UNSAVED MAN TO A VERY IMPORTANT POSITION. JESUS QUOTED THIS VERSE IN MATTHEW 22:37.

II. DON'T FORGET GOD IN YOUR FAMILY LIFE - V. 6-9

Bd.
Robinson

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, CHILDREN LEARNED TO READ IN ORDER TO READ THE SCRIPTURES. THE JEWS BELIEVED THAT ALL EDUCATION WAS BASED UPON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. TO THE JEW, THE REAL CENTER OF EDUCATION WAS THE HOME. THEY BELIEVED THAT EDUCATION WAS NOT EDUCATION IN JUST THE ACADEMIC OR TECHNICAL SENSE BUT EDUCATION IN THE THINGS OF THE SCRIPTURES. EDUCATION WAS PREPARATION FOR THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL SIDE OF LIFE AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING CHARACTER. THE JEWS BELIEVED THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EDUCATING A CHILD LAY FAIRLY AND SQUARELY ON THE PARENTS. THEY ALSO BELIEVED THAT A TEACHER WAS A MAN OF HIGHEST MORAL QUALIFICATIONS AND WAS THE GREATEST MAN IN THE COMMUNITY. THE JEWS WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE MORAL CHARACTER OF THE TEACHER AS MUCH AS HIS ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS. THEY KNEW THAT ONLY CHARACTER COULD BEGET CHARACTER. WILLIAM BARCLAY SAYS "IN PALESTINE THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER WAS NO HALF DESPISED DRUDGE WITH A THANKLESS TASK: HE WAS THE SERVANT OF GOD AND OF THE COMMUNITY, HELD IN HONOR BECAUSE HE WAS DOING THE GREATEST TASK THAT A MAN CAN DO." THE NEW TESTAMENT SAID LITTLE ABOUT SCHOOLS BUT A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE HOME AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS TO TEACH CHILDREN. THE TRAINING OF THE CHILD

IS A PARENTS DUTY AND IF WE FAIL TO BRING THEM UP PROPERLY WE ADD SORROW TO THE CHILD AND ONES SELF. THE WHOLE TASK OF EDUCATION IS LAID SQUARELY ON THE SHOULDERS OF THE FATHER WHO IS HEAD OF THE HOUSE HOLD AND THE HOME. GOD GAVE PARENTS CHILDREN AND GOD EXPECTS THE PARENT TO BE RESPONSIBLE IN THE TRAINING OF THE CHILD. IN A COMPLEX SOCIETY WHERE SCHOOLS HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED WE HAVE RELEGATED TOO MUCH THE SCHOOL AND TOO LITTLE TO THE HOME. MAY I ALSO SAY, THAT THE CHRISTIAN DAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT IS NO ANSWER TO PARENTAL NEGLECT! WE LIVE IN AN AGE WHEN SOME PARENTS DO NOT CARE MUCH ABOUT RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN. CHILDREN ^{DO NOT} SEE THEIR PARENTS PRAY, READ THE BIBLE, SAY GRACE AT THE TABLE, NEVER HEAR A HYMN SUNG OR SEE A RELIGIOUS PERIODICAL IN THE HOME. THIS IS TRUE EVEN IN HOMES WHERE PARENTS ARE ACTIVE IN THE CHURCH. MANY HOMES TODAY, EVEN AMONG PROFESSING CHRISTIANS ARE SIMPLY PLACE WHERE PARENTS AND CHILDREN CO-EXIST WITHOUT COMMUNICATION. I DARE NOT PRESUME TO INSTRUCT PEOPLE THE PROPER WAY TO ESTABLISH A HOME AND TO TRAIN THEIR CHILDREN BUT SOMETHING IS TERRIBLY WRONG IN OUR HOMES, EVEN THE HOMES OF OUR CHURCH FAMILIES. KIDS REFLECT A CONTEMPT FOR THEIR PARENTS THEY ARE REBELLING AGAINST CONFUSED INSECURE PARENTS WHO SOMEHOW ARE ^{NOT} ABLE TO COMMAND PROPER RESPECT FROM THEIR CHILDREN. A FEELING OF FRUSTRATION AND FAILURE HAS SWEEPED OVER BIBLE PREACHING CHURCHES. FAMILY CONFERENCES ARE HELD HOPING TO AWAKEN CHRISTIAN PARENTS TO RESPONSIBILITY. HOWEVER, THIS SELDOM DOES THE JOB. THIS MESSAGE IN DEUT. SUGGEST THAT INSTRUCTION IN THE THINGS OF THE LORD IS REQUIRED. V. 7 SPEAKS OF TEACH AND TALK. BIBLICAL EDUCATION IS A MUST IN THE HOME. WHAT A CHILD GETS IN SUNDAY SCHOOL IS A BASIC MINIMUM. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER HAS THE IMPOSSIBLE TASK. WERE IT NOT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD IT WOULD BE A FUTILE ATTEMPT. HE CANNOT DO IN A 20 TO 30 MINUTE EACHING PERIOD OR SHOULD I SAY UNDO WHAT THE HOME AND SCHOOL HAS CONCENTRATED ON FOR AN ENTIRE WEEK! CAMP IS VITAL AT THIS AREA. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CAMP IS SEEN IN THE FACT THAT CHILDREN ARE TAKEN OUT OF THE HOME SITUATION! QUESTION: SHOULD I FORCE MY CHILD TO GO TO SUNDAY SCHOOL? QUESTION: DO YOU FORCE HIM TO GO TO PUBLIC SCHOOL? WHICH KIND OF EDUCATION IS MORE IMPORTANT? OUR FAMILIES ARE IN TROUBLE IN AMERICA. OUR CHURCH FAMILIES ARE IN TROUBLE. WE NEED GOOD AND ADEQUATE STAFF MEMBERS IN THE CHURCH.

WE NEED AGGRESSIVE VITAL PROGRAMS FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY. HOWEVER, NONE OF THESE ARE SUBSTITUTES FOR A GOOD WHOLESOME HOME LIFE. AS A MATTER OF FACT, IF THE HOME LIFE IS MISSING NOTHING ELSE WILL STEM THE TIDE - NOTHING! (EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR PARENTS WHO PROVIDED A HOME AS A PLACE WHERE ROOTS WOULD BE PLACED DOWN. THE VALUE OF LIVING IN THE SAME HOME FOR OVER 30 YEARS A PLACE TO WHICH CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN MAY COME, A SPIRIT AND LOVE THAT MAKES LIFE WORTH LIVING COUPLED BY THE FACT THAT CHRIST CHANGED THAT HOME.)

III. DON'T FORGET GOD IN YOUR PROSPERITY - V. 10-12

WE ARE PRONE TO THINK OF THE PERILS OF POVERTY BUT GOD REMINDED ISRAEL OF THE PERILS OF PROSPERITY. GOD GAVE THEM A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY. THAT IS, ALL OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR PHYSICAL PROSPERITY WERE IN THE LAND. IT WAS ALL GOD'S DOING AND NONE OF THEIR OWN. ISRAEL HAD KNOWN WHAT IT WAS TO REBEL AGAINST GOD IN THE WILDERNESS WHEN TIMES WERE DIFFICULT. WITH ALL OF THE BLESSING OF GOD UPON THEIR LIVES, ISRAEL NOW FACED A NEW KIND OF DANGER. I HAVE OBSERVED A FAMILIAR PATTERN IN THE LIVES OF SOME. WHEN INCOME WAS MODEST AND TIMES WERE DIFFICULT THESE PEOPLE WERE REGULAR IN CHURCH, PRAYER MEETING AND OTHER ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO GOD. THEN THERE CAME A PROMOTION INCREASED OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY AT THE JOB WHICH ABSORBED MORE TIME AND ENERGY AND SLOWLY BUT SURELY HOME AND CHURCH RESPONSIBILITIES BEGIN TO SUFFER. THE PERSON FORGETS TO READ THE BIBLE, FORGETS TO PRAY, RETURNS HOME LATE AND TIRED AND SLEEPY AT NIGHT. THEY ARE SO WEARY ON SUNDAY THAT THEY MUST SLEEP IN TO GET THEIR REST. PRAYER MEETING ABANDONED AND BOWLING AND GOLF TAKES ITS PLACE. RECREATION BECOMES PRIMARY IN THE LIFE AND WORSHIP IS CROWDED OUT. THESE FOLK BECOME DISTANT TO THE LORD'S PEOPLE OUT OF TOUCH WITH CHRIST AND THE CHURCH AND THEIR INFLUENCE UPON THE LIFE. SEVERAL YEARS AGO, I RETURNED TO AN AREA WHERE I HAD FORMERLY MINISTERED. I ASK ABOUT ONE OF THE MOST FAITHFUL FAMILIES IN THE CHURCH AND WAS SURPRISED TO DISCOVER THEY WERE NOT DOING WELL. PROSPERITY WAS EVIDENT THEY HAD MOVED TO ANOTHER CITY TO A BETTER JOB INCLUDING ONE FOR MOTHER A NEW HOME, NEW CAR, NEW CLOTHES, NEW FRIENDS - NEW GODS! THE SAME SIN WITH WHICH ISRAEL HAD TO WRESTLE THE DANGER OF FORGETTING

GOD IN THE MIDST OF PROSPERITY IS A TIMELY WARNING AND REMINDER TO EVERY CHRISTIAN. I'M NOT TRYING TO PLAY DOWN THE IMPORTANCE OF FINANCIAL SECURITY IN THE HOME. I AM AWARE OF THE FACT THAT SOMETIMES TOO LITTLE IS AS DANGEROUS AS TOO MUCH. NO HONEST PERSON IS GOING TO SAY THAT MONEY DOESN'T MATTER IN THE HOME, IT DOES. THE QUESTION HOWEVER IS DO I POSSESS MY POSSESSIONS OR DO THEY POSSESS ME? THE STORY OF THE RICH YOUNG RULER IS A FAMILIAR ONE. HIS PROBLEM WAS NOT HIS POSSESSIONS BUT HIS POSSESSIVENESS. THE ONLY CURE FOR THAT SIN WAS A RADICAL CHANGE IN HIS LIFE AND A NEW ATTITUDE TOWARD HIS POSSESSIONS. SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID, "THE WEALTHIER A MAN IS, THE MORE HE NEEDS GOD." IN TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICA WHERE MONEY CAN EASILY BECOME THE ALTAR AT WHICH EVEN CHRISTIANS WORSHIP LET US TAKE GODS WARNING SERIOUSLY TO BEWARE LEST WE FALL INTO THIS QUICK SAND OF MATERIALISM.

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

JULY 4, 1976

See P.m.
A.M.

Jul 1991

GOD OF OUR FATHERS

DEUTERONOMY 26:7

Sunday
Song 80

TODAY WE WILL HEAR A GREAT DEAL ABOUT FREEDOM,
LIBERTY, PATRIOTISM, AND OUR FOUNDING FATHERS
AS WE CELEBRATE AMERICA'S 200TH ANNIVERSARY.
INSTEAD OF TALKING ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTION OF
OUR FOUNDERS, LET ME FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION ON
THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS. # MOST PEOPLE KNOW MORE
ABOUT MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL THAN THEY DO ABOUT
THE GOD OF THE BIBLE! APART FROM THE FACT THAT
GOD IS LOVE MOST PEOPLE KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT
HIM. THEY LOOK UPON GOD VERY MUCH LIKE THE
LITTLE GIRL WHO WAS ASKED BY HER FATHER IF SHE
WANTED TO GO FOR A WALK. WHEN IT WAS ALL OVER
HER FATHER SAID TO HER, "WELL, WASN'T THAT LOVELY?"
"AREN'T YOU GLAD YOU WENT FOR A WALK?" HER ANSWER
WAS SIMPLY, "I HAD TO COME. YOU ARE BIGGER THAN
I AM!" THIS IS ABOUT ALL MOST PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT
GOD, NAMELY, HE IS BIGGER THAN WE ARE AND IN SOME
RESPECTS IS A GLORIFIED "KILL-JOY" JUST WAITING
TO POUNCE ON THOSE WHO MAKE A MISTAKE. THE
THEOLOGICAL LIBERAL LIKES TO USE THE WORD
"FATHERHOOD" WHEN TALKING ABOUT GOD. FOR SOME REASON
MEN LIKE TO SPEAK OF THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD
BECAUSE IT GIVES THEM SOME CLAIM TO HIM. HOWEVER,
THIS IS ONE OF THE GREAT ERRORS CONCERNING THE
DOCTRINE OF GOD. NOWHERE IN THE BIBLE ARE WE
TAUGHT THAT GOD IS THE FATHER OF UNSAVED MEN.
SIR ROBERT ANDERSON HAS MORE ACCURATELY REFERRED
TO THE "GODHOOD" OF GOD CONCERNING THE UNSAVED.
IF GOD WERE THE FATHER OF ALL MEN, ALL MEN WOULD
LOVE JESUS CHRIST. MEN LIKE TO SPEAK OF THE
FACT THAT BEING CREATURES OF GOD GIVES THEM SOME
KIND OF CLAIM UPON HIM, BUT FORGET THAT A SPIRITUAL
RELATIONSHIP TO GOD, AS OPPOSED TO A PHYSICAL
RELATIONSHIP DEPENDS UPON OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH
JESUS CHRIST. (GALATIANS 3:26) STRICTLY SPEAKING,
THE MAN WHO REJECTS JESUS CHRIST FORFEITS ANY
CLAIM TO GOD FROM A SPIRITUAL POINT OF VIEW.
AS A CREATURE OF GOD, ALL MEN ARE RESPONSIBLE TO
HIM BUT NOT IN A FATHER - SON RELATIONSHIP.

'SOAP'
"Simple"
world
"turns"
not "Dante"
who
turns
it!

"God's"
light
He is!

Popular
cler
"mishand"
now

*
Jn. 8:42

IN OUR STUDY TODAY WE WILL LOOK AT THREE ATTRIBUTES OF THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS:

I. THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS IS FAITHFUL-PSALM 36:5

THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT, THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD SHINES AS A BEACON LIGHT TO A SIN DARKENED WORLD. FOR EXAMPLE IN LAMENTATIONS 3:22-23 WE READ THESE WORDS, "IT IS OF THE LORD'S MERCIES THAT WE ARE NOT CONSUMED, BECAUSE HIS COMPASSIONS FAIL NOT. THEY ARE NEW EVERY MORNING: GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS." JEREMIAH, THE WEeping PROPHEt, HAD PREDICTED THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. HE WATCHED THE NATION CAUGHT IN THE GRIPS OF MORAL AND SPIRITUAL DECAY AND PREDICTED THAT BABYLONIAN ARMIES WOULD SWEEP DOWN UPON THE NATION AND BRING JUDGMENT. IN THE MIDST OF A NATIONAL CRISIS, INSTEAD OF GIVING UP IN DESPAIR, JEREMIAH POINTED GOD'S PEOPLE TO THE FAITHFUL GOD WHOSE VERY DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY OF JERUSALEM WAS PROOF OF HIS FAITHFULNESS TO HIMSELF AND HIS WORD. JEREMIAH KNEW FULL WELL THAT GOD IS ABSOLUTELY CONSISTENT IN KEEPING HIS PROMISES AND THUS HE EMPHASIZED THE ONLY HOPE FOR A FICKLE AND FAITHLESS PEOPLE WAS TO FLING THEMSELVES UPON THE UNFAILING, FAITHFUL GOD. THIS TERM HAS SPECIAL MEANING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AS IT RELATES CHRISTIANS. "AND I THANK CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD, WHO WITH ENABLED ME, FOR THAT HE COUNTED ME FAITHFUL, PUTTING ME INTO THE MINISTRY," (1 TIMOTHY 1:12) "AND THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST HEARD OF ME AMONG MANY WITNESSES, THE SAME COMMIT THOU TO FAITHFUL MEN WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS ALSO." (11 TIMOTHY 2:2) "IF ANY BE BLAMELESS, THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE, HAVING FAITHFUL CHILDREN NOT ACCUSED OF RIOT OR UNRULY," (TITUS 1:6) THE NEW TESTAMENT SPEAKS OF THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD IN THREE BASIC WAYS:

A. HE IS FAITHFUL IN CALLING THE SAINTS -
1 CORINTHIANS 1:9

"GOD IS FAITHFUL, BY WHOM YE WERE CALLED INTO THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD." THE CALL OF GOD TO THE BELIEVING SINNER IS NOT BASED UPON THE MERIT OR FAVOR OF THE SINNER, BUT

RATHER UPON THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD AND HIS MARVELOUS GRACE. THE CALL OF GOD TO THE SINNER REQUIRES SIMPLY THAT HE RESPOND YES OR NO. SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID THAT EVERY MAN MUST ANSWER ONE OF TWO CALLS FROM GOD. HE MUST ANSWER THE CALL OF GOD TO SALVATION IN CHRIST OR THE SUMMONS OF GOD BEFORE THE COURT OF ETERNAL RETRIBUTION. THIS VERSE ALSO TEACHES THAT WE ARE CALLED NOT JUST TO ESCAPE HELL AND GO TO HEAVEN BUT TO ENJOY THE FELLOWSHIP OF GOD'S SON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

B. GOD IS FAITHFUL IN TIMES OF TEMPTATION -
1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

THE PHILLIPS TRANSLATION SAYS "NO TEMPTATION HAS COME YOUR WAY THAT IS TOO HARD FOR FLESH AND BLOOD TO BEAR. BUT GOD CAN BE TRUSTED NOT TO ALLOW YOU TO SUFFER ANY TEMPTATION BEYOND YOUR POWERS OF ENDURANCE. HE WILL SEE TO IT THAT EVERY TEMPTATION HAS A WAY OUT, SO THAT IT WILL NEVER BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO BEAR IT." MOST YOUNG CHRISTIANS BELIEVE TWO WRONG IDEAS ABOUT TEMPTATION. (1) THEY BELIEVE THAT TEMPTATION IS SIN. (2) THEY BELIEVE THAT THERE TEMPTATION IS UNIQUE. ONE REASON FOR THIS DEFECTIVE THINKING COULD BE THE UNREALISTIC ATTITUDE OF MANY WRITERS WITH REFERENCE TO THE GREAT SAINTS OF THE PAST. THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND VICTORIES OF THE SAINTS ARE BROUGHT OUT BUT NEVER THEIR TEMPTATIONS AND FAILURE. MANY NEW CHRISTIANS BECOME DISCOURAGED BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THAT TEMPTATION HAS COME TO THEM BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT LIVING THE WAY THEY SHOULD. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE GREATER OUR SPIRITUAL INTERESTS, THE GREATER OUR EXPOSURE TO TEMPTATION. THIS VERSE IN 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 TEACHES THREE BASIC TRUTHS ABOUT TEMPTATION. (1) OUR TEMPTATION IS NOT UNUSUAL. WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU HAS PROBABLY HAPPENED TO THE MAN SITTING RIGHT BESIDE YOU IN CHURCH. HAVE YOU BEEN TEMPTED TO LIE, STEAL, BE UNFAITHFUL, SO HAS HE! (2) NO TEMPTATION IS BEYOND YOUR ABILITY TO WITHSTAND IT - GOD WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO BE TESTED ABOVE YOUR ABILITY TO RESIST. WHEN YOU THINK YOUR TEMPTATION IS TOO GREAT SIMPLY READ THIS VERSE AGAIN. WHOSE RIGHT, YOU OR GOD?

(3) THERE IS ALWAYS A WAY OUT OF TEMPTATION. -
 THERE ARE NO BLIND ALLEYS OR BOX CANYONS IN
 THE WORLD OF TEMPTATION. THE WAY OF DELIVERANCE
 WILL COME ALWAYS ON TIME AND BY GOD'S DIRECTION.
 THE WAY OF DELIVERANCE MAY BE TO FLEE WHEN
 WE HAVE A TEMPTATION TO FLIRT WITH IT. THE
 BIBLE DOES NOT SHIELD US FROM TEMPTATION BUT
 DOES SUSTAIN US AND STRENGTHEN US IN ORDER TO
 OVERCOME IT. GOD KNOWS FULL WELL THAT THE
 VALUABLE EXPERIENCES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
 OFTEN COME IN THE HEAT OF TESTING WHICH WILL
 BRING HARDNESS IN SERVICE. I AM IMPRESSED WITH
 THE FACT THAT THERE IS A KIND OF LIGHT HEARTED
 APPROACH TO TEMPTATION REFLECTED IN THE WORLD
 OF THE UNREDEEMED. YOU REMEMBER THE STORY OF
 THE HUSBAND WHO WAS MOANING OVER THE FACT THAT
 HIS WIFE WHO PROMISED THAT SHE WOULD NOT BUY
 ANY NEW CLOTHES CAME HOME ONE AFTERNOON WITH
 A NEW DRESS. HIS QUESTION TO HER WAS "WHAT
 MADE YOU DO IT?" HER REPLY WAS "THE DEVIL MADE
 ME DO IT!" HE RESPONDED "WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY TO
 THE DEVIL, GET BEHIND ME, SATAN?" "I DID," SAID
 THE WOMAN, "BUT THEN HE WHISPERED OVER MY
 SHOULDER, 'MY DEAR, IT FITS YOU BEAUTIFULLY IN
 THE BACK!'" GOD IS FAITHFUL TO DELIVER HIS OWN
 IN THE TIME OF TEMPTATION.

C. GOD IS FAITHFUL IN CLEANSING THE LIVES OF
THE SAINTS - 1 JOHN 1:9

OUR SUSTAINED FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD IS BASED UPON
 OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD SIN AND A WILLINGNESS TO
CONFESS IT BEFORE HIM. ONE REASON WHY GOD SAYS
 IN EPHESIANS 4:26 "LET NOT THE SUN GO DOWN ON
 YOUR WRATH." IS BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT WE MUST
 DEAL WITH TODAY'S PROBLEMS TODAY, SIMPLY BECAUSE
TOMORROW WE WILL BE INSENSITIVE TO OUR FAILURES,
BECAUSE TOMORROW'S PROBLEMS WILL SOON BE UPON US.
FAILURE TO CONFESS OUR SINS AND TO BE CLEANSED
BY GOD RESULTS IN LOSS OF FELLOWSHIP AND LOSS
OF SPIRITUAL VICTORY. THIS VERSE TEACHES THAT
 WE SHOULD BE MORE CONCERNED WITH OUR OWN SIN
 AND LESS CONCERNED WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S SINS.
 ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, IF THERE IS NO CONFESSION,
 THERE WILL BE NO CLEANSING, AND NO COMMUNION, AND
 NO CONTENTMENT.

"Devil
made
me
do it!"

④

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ALL OF THESE VERSES REMIND THE BELIEVER THAT THE GOD WHOM WE SERVE IS INDEED A FAITHFUL GOD; WE CAN COUNT ON HIM, AND HE IS WORTHY OF OUR CONFIDENCE AND TRUST. WHY NOT TRUST HIM COMPLETELY?

II. THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS IS AN UNCHANGEABLE GOD - JAMES 1:17

IF YOU PICK UP A BOOK ON THEOLOGY YOU WILL DISCOVER THAT THIS GREAT CHARACTERISTIC OF GOD IS CALLED THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD. SIMPLY STATED, THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT GOD WILL NEVER BE TOMORROW WHAT HE WAS NOT TODAY. MOST PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE FAMILY OF GOD LOOK UPON THE GOD OF THE BIBLE AS A FINITE GOD OR SOMETHING LESS THAN TRUE DEITY. ONE REASON WHY THE MODERN AMERICAN HAS DIFFICULTY WITH THIS ASPECT OF GOD'S CHARACTER IS THE UNWHOLESOME INFLUENCE OF RELATIVISM IN OUR WAY OF THINKING. WE LIVE IN A CHANGING WORLD WHERE VALUES CHANGE FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION AND NOT ALWAYS FOR THE GOOD. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO IMAGINE GOD AS BEING UNCHANGEABLE IN NATURE AND CHARACTER. HODGE HAS SAID IT THIS WAY "HE CAN NEITHER INCREASE NOR DECREASE. HE IS SUBJECT TO NO PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT, OR OF SELF EVOLUTION. HIS KNOWLEDGE AND POWER CAN NEVER BE GREATER OR LESS. HE CAN NEVER BE WISER OR HOLIER, OR MORE RIGHTEOUS OR MORE MERCIFUL THAN HE EVER HAS BEEN AND EVER MUST BE. INFINITE IN WISDOM, THERE CAN BE NO ERROR IN HIS CONCEPTION: INFINITE IN POWER THERE CAN BE NO FAILURE IN THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENT." ONE OF THE IMAGINED CONTRADICTIONS OF SCRIPTURE HAS TO DO WITH I SAMUEL 15:10-11, 28-29. SOMETIMES THE WORD "REPENT" IS USED TO DESCRIBE GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MAN. HE MUST SOMETIMES CHANGE HIS WAY OF DEALING WITH SINFUL MEN IN ORDER TO REMAIN UNCHANGEABLE IN HIS OWN NATURE AND CHARACTER. SOMEONE HAS SAID THAT ALL CHANGE IS FOR EITHER BETTER OR WORSE. IF GOD IS ABSOLUTE PERFECTION AND NO CHANGE TO THE BETTER IS POSSIBLE THEN CHANGE TO THE WORSE WOULD BE EQUALLY INCONSISTENT WITH PERFECTION. ONE MIGHT WELL ASK WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SUCH A DOCTRINE.

GOD DOES NOT CHANGE IN ESSENCE AND BEING WITH A CHANGING WORLD. GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES AND THEREFORE THE PROMISES AND WARNINGS OF THE BIBLE SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN LIGHTLY. GOD ALWAYS DOES WHAT HE SAYS HE WILL DO. HE CANNOT DO OTHERWISE! RELATE THE SIGNIFICANCE AND THEOLOGY OF THE SONG "ABIDE WITH ME." (419 #2)

III. THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS IS A TRUE GOD - JOHN 17:3

I WISH IT WERE POSSIBLE TO TALK ABOUT MANY OF THE OTHER GREAT ATTRIBUTES OF GOD SUCH AS THE FACT THAT HE IS FREE, LIVING, ETERNAL, LOVING, MERCIFUL, AND RIGHTEOUS. HOWEVER, IN THE INTEREST OF TIME WE MUST LIMIT OUR CONSIDERATION TO THIS GREAT ASPECT OF GOD'S CHARACTER. THE WORD TRUTH IN THE BIBLE HAS TO DO WITH SOMETHING THAT IS OPEN OR NOT CONCEALED. THE HEBREW WORD FOR TRUTH REFERS TO THAT WHICH DOES NOT FAIL OR DISAPPOINT OUR EXPECTATIONS, THAT WHICH IS REAL AS OPPOSED TO THE IMAGINARY. GOD IS THE TRUE GOD BECAUSE HE IS THE REAL GOD WHILE OTHER GODS OF THE HEATHEN HAVE NO ATTRIBUTES OF PERSONALITY. THE TRUE GOD OF THE BIBLE COMES UP TO ALL HE CLAIMS TO BE. GOD IS TRUE BECAUSE HE REALLY IS WHAT HE DECLARES HIMSELF TO BE. ALL HIS CLAIMS ABOUT HIMSELF MAY BE DEPENDED UPON. THEY DO NOT FAIL, CHANGE, OR DISAPPOINT US. THIS IDEA IS BEDROCK IN RELATIONSHIPS. WHAT GOD SAYS MAY BE RELIED UPON. HE IS EXACTLY WHAT HE OUGHT TO BE AND ALL TRUTH IS GROUNDED IN HIS NATURE AND BEING. HE CANNOT LIE. WITH THIS IN MIND, LET US EXAMINE TWO PASSAGES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN - JOHN 17:3, JOHN 18:37-38. IN THE JOHN 17 PASSAGE, JESUS SIMPLY DECLARES THAT THE GOD OF THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY REAL OR TRUE GOD. ALL OTHERS ARE FAKES AND NOT GODS AT ALL. THE SECOND PASSAGE JESUS WAS STANDING BEFORE PILATE. WHEN PILATE SAID "WHAT IS TRUTH?" I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER HE WAS BEING SKEPTICAL, SARCASTIC, OR INDIFFERENT. MAYBE ALL OF THESE. HOWEVER, PILATE REVEALED HIS OWN IGNORANCE OF TRUTH FOR BEFORE HIM STOOD TRUTH INCARNATE AND IN LIGHT OF THIS FACT, HE CHOSE NOT TO ACCEPT EITHER TRUTH OR JUSTICE, BUT CONDEMNED AN INNOCENT MAN.

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~~THE ANSWER TO PILATE'S QUESTION STOOD BEFORE HIM IN FLESH. JESUS WAS SAYING TO HIM, IF YOU ARE REALLY SEEKING TRUTH, YOU WILL LISTEN TO ME! COMPARE JOHN 14:6. THE GREAT QUESTION TODAY IS THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS IS YOUR OWN PERSONAL GOD IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.~~

1 Jn. 5:20

Revised - A.M.
Jul
1988THE SCARLET WOMAN AND THE SCARLET CORD

JOSHUA 2

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA DEALS WITH THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN. THE LAND BELONGED TO ISRAEL BY DIVINE GRANT AND COULD BE POSSESSED BY SIMPLY MOVING IN. ISRAEL HAD BEEN DELIVERED BY BLOOD FROM THE BONDAGE OF EGYPT. AFTER 40 YEARS OF FLOUNDERING IN THE WILDERNESS, THE NATION WAS ~~NOT~~ PREPARED TO MOVE INTO CANAAN. TYPICALLY SPEAKING, EGYPT IS A TYPE OF THE WORLD, THE PLACE OF THE NATURAL MAN IN THE BONDAGE OF SIN. THE WILDERNESS DEPICTS THE WANDERING LIFE OF THE CARNAL, DEFEATED CHRISTIAN. CANAAN IS THE PLACE OF VICTORY, THE ABODE OF THE SPIRITUAL, VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN. CLAIMING HIS INHERITANCE AND POSSESSIONS IN CHRIST. GENERAL JOSHUA SENT TWO SCOUTS OR SPIES TO SECURE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE LAND IN ORDER THAT PROPER MILITARY STRATEGY COULD BE FORMED. JERICHO WAS A WALLED CITY AND JOSHUA WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ITS DEFENSES. THE CAANANITES WHO WERE LIVING IN THE LAND WERE WICKED AND GODLESS PEOPLE AND WOULD NOT GIVE UP THE LAND EASILY. JOSHUA HAD HIMSELF PERFORMED SUCH AN ASSIGNMENT WHEN MOSES WAS THE LEADER IN ISRAEL. (NUMBERS 13) WHEN THE TWO SPIES CAME TO JERICHO, THEY STOPPED AT THE HOUSE OF A HARLOT NAMED RAHAB. WE WILL CENTER OUR STUDY AROUND THIS WOMAN AND HER RELATIONSHIP TO GOD. FOR IN THIS STUDY WE WILL LEARN A GREAT DEAL ABOUT HUMAN NATURE AND DIVINE FORGIVENESS.

I. RAHAB WAS A CONDEMNED WOMAN (vs. 1-9)

RAHAB WAS CONDEMNED ON AT LEAST 2 ACCOUNTS. (1) SHE WAS CONDEMNED FOR HER OCCUPATION. SHE WAS CONDEMNED FOR HER LOCATION. RAHAB WAS CONDEMNED FOR WHAT SHE WAS AND FOR WHERE SHE LIVED. RAHAB LIVED AMONG A PEOPLE OF LOW OR NO MORALS. THE ENVIRONMENT IN JERICHO MADE VIRTUE DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE. THE PEOPLE OF JERICHO WERE CRUEL, IDOLATROUS, DEMON-TYPE WORSHIPPERS. PART OF THEIR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY INVOLVED WORSHIPPING THE GODS OF FERTILITY, BAAL, AND ASHTAROTH THROUGH SEXUAL LICENSE AND PROMISCUITY. THE CAANANITE RELIGION HAD ITS TEMPLE PRIESTESSES AND A PUBLIC HARLOT WAS NOT CONSIDERED WRONG OR AN OUTCAST IN THAT CULTURE. IT IS INTERESTING TO OBSERVE THAT HERE WAS AN IMMORAL WOMAN WHO HAD NOTHING IN HER

CONDUCT AND CHARACTER TO COMMEND HER TO GOD, AND YET SHE AND HER FAMILY WERE SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION WHEN JERICO WAS DESTROYED! ~~BY THE WAY~~, IN MY EXPERIENCE, IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN EASIER TO DEAL WITH A PERSON WHO WAS LIVING IN FLAGRANT SIN THAN THE RELIGIOUS HYPOCRITE WHO BELONGS TO THE CHURCH, NOT TO GOD! ~~JERICO~~ WAS A CITY SCHEDULED FOR DIVINE JUDGMENT. IT HAD BEEN DECLARED CONDEMNED BY GOD, AND IT WAS SIMPLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL JUDGMENT WOULD BE EXECUTED AGAINST THE CITY. EVERYTHING IN THE CITY WOULD BE DESTROYED. (JOSHUA 6:21) THE CITY WAS UNDER CONDEMNATION REGARDLESS OF HOW THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY FELT. THEY MAY HAVE HAD A SENSE OF FALSE SECURITY AND MAY HAVE BEEN LIVING IN CONFIDENT TRANQUILITY, BUT JUDGMENT WAS JUST AROUND THE CORNER. RAHAB WAS LIVING IN A DOOMED CITY. RAHAB IS GOD'S ANSWER TO ALL PEOPLE WHO THINK SALVATION IS BY CHARACTER AND CULTURE. THE OLD EXCUSES: "I'M NOT SO BAD, I DO THE BEST I CAN, I MAY NOT BE AS GOOD AS I SHOULD BE BUT I'M NOT AS BAD AS SOME OTHERS," ALL IGNORE THE SIMPLE BIBLE FACT THAT ALL MEN OUTSIDE OF CHRIST ARE LIKE RAHAB CONDEMNED NOT ONLY BY WHAT THEY ARE BUT BY WHERE THEY ARE. JOHN 3:19 STATES THAT MEN ARE CONDEMNED BECAUSE JESUS CHRIST CAME INTO THE WORLD AND MEN PREFER THE DARKNESS OF THEIR OWN EVIL DEEDS TO THE LIGHT OF GOD'S SON! AS A MATTER OF FACT, JESUS EMPHASIZED CLEARLY THAT THE LOWEST OF MANKIND WILL MAKE IT TO HEAVEN LONG BEFORE RELIGIOUS HYPOCRITES: "VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT PUBLICANS AND THE HARLOTS GO INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD BEFORE YOU. FOR JOHN CAME UNTO YOU IN THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND YOU BELIEVED HIM NOT; BUT THE PUBLICANS AND THE HARLOTS BELIEVED HIM: AND YE, WHEN YE HAD SEEN IT, REPENTED NOT AFTERWARD, THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE HIM." (MATTHEW 21:31-32) ANOTHER REMARKABLE ASPECT OF THIS STORY IS OF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN JERICO, WE KNOW THE NAME OF ONLY ONE - RAHAB. TO BE SURE, SHE WAS A WOMAN OF IMMORAL PRACTICES, BUT THE ONLY WOMAN SAVED OUT OF THAT GODLESS CITY! ALSO, WHEN WE SPEAK OF OUR ANCESTORS AND FAMILY TREE, WE LIKE TO BRAG ABOUT THE PROMINENT PEOPLE, THE PROFESSIONAL OR WEALTHY PEOPLE WHO LEFT LARGE SUMS OF MONEY TO CHARITIES AND INSTITUTIONS. SELDOM, IF EVER, DO WE SPEAK OF THE DISTANT COUSINS, UNCLES, OR RELATIVES WHO WERE "TARRED AND FEATHERED AND RUN OUT OF TOWN ON A RAIL". THESE WE CONVENTIENTLY OVERLOOK BECAUSE THEY DO NOT MAKE THE SOCIETY PAGE OF THE LOCAL PAPER. WHEN GOD SELECTED THE ANCESTORS FOR HIS SON, A CAANANITE WOMAN WHO WAS NOT ONLY OUTSIDE THE PALE OF HEBREW RELIGION, BUT

OUTSIDE THE PALE OF HUMAN DECENCY AND SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY, WAS INCLUDED IN THAT ILLUSTRIOUS COMPANY OF PEOPLE IN THE MESSIANIC LINE! IN THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST RECORDED IN MATTHEW, THERE ARE 5 WOMEN LISTED. THREE OF THESE ARE NOT NOTED FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING VIRTUES AS WOMEN. ONE MIGHT WONDER WHY SUCH PEOPLE WERE INCLUDED IN THE GENEALOGICAL RECORD OF THE SON OF GOD. ONE REASON, I THINK, IS TO LET MEN KNOW WHAT GOD DOES WITH REFERENCE TO PERSONAL SIN - HE FORGIVES THE REPENTANT SINNER WHO TRUSTS HIM BY FAITH. THESE WOMEN WERE SIMPLY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN DEPRAVITY WHICH EXTENDS TO EVERY HUMAN BEING, AND GOD'S FORGIVENESS WHICH EVERY PERSON MAY KNOW BY FAITH. AS A MATTER OF FACT, OUR BLESSED LORD CAME NOT TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT SINNERS, TO REPENTANCE. (LUKE 5:32) WHEN THE SPIES CAME TO JERICHO, IT WAS RAHAB WHO HID THEM ON THE ROOF OF HER HOUSE, AND LIED TO PROTECT THEM. SOME FOLK HAVE FASTENED ONTO THIS FACET OF THE STORY TO CONDEMN SCRIPTURE. QUESTION: IS A LIE EVER JUSTIFIED OR RIGHT? THE FLAX PLACED ON THE ROOFTOP TO DRY WAS OFTEN STACKED AS HIGH AS 3 FEET. IT WAS USED FOR MAKING CLOTH AND SOME TYPES OF OIL. THE ROOFTOPS WERE FLAT AND WERE USED FOR MANY PURPOSES, INCLUDING MEDITATION AND PRAYER. (II SAMUEL 11:2, ACTS 10:9) DR. JAMES GRAY HAS CORRECTLY POINTED OUT THAT GOD WAS NO MORE PLEASED WITH RAHAB'S LIE THAN HE WAS WITH HER UNCHASTITY, BUT IT WAS HER FAITH THAT PLEASED HIM. LYING WAS SUCH A WIDESPREAD VICE AMONG PAGAN PEOPLE THAT I'M SURE THAT RAHAB FELT NO PANGS OF GUILT FOR THE DECEIT SHE USED AGAINST THE CITY OFFICIALS. AS A MATTER OF FACT, IN ORIENTAL ETHICS, TO PROTECT ONE'S GUESTS FROM HARM WAS THE HIGHEST VIRTUE. EASTERN HOSPITALITY REQUIRED A MAN TO PRESERVE THE LIFE OF HIS HOUSE GUEST, EVEN A BITTER ENEMY, AT ANY EXPENSE, EVEN TO THE LOSS OF HIS OWN LIFE. THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS RECORD TO SHOW THAT GOD CONDONED OR APPROVED RAHAB'S LIE. HE DID NOT NEED RAHAB TO LIE IN ORDER TO PROTECT HIS SERVANTS. HE COULD HAVE SAVED THEM A DOZEN OTHER WAYS, BUT THE POINT OF THE STORY IS HER COURAGE, BRAVERY, AND UNSELFISH ACT AND NOT EMPHASIS ON THE LIE. HERE WAS A WOMAN WHO TOOK HER LIFE IN HER OWN HANDS, RESISTED THE AUTHORITIES OF HER OWN CITY IN ORDER TO KNOW MORE ABOUT GOD AND SAVING FAITH. RAHAB IS A BIBLE EXAMPLE TO SHOW US THAT ALL MEN ARE CONDEMNED REGARDLESS OF HOW THEY FEEL. ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, MEN OUTSIDE OF CHRIST ARE NOT GOING TO BE LOST, THEY ARE LOST NOW! THE SENTENCE OF CONDEMNATION OR JUDGMENT HAS ALREADY

BEEN PRONOUNCED! "HE THAT BELIEVETH ON HIM IS NOT CONDEMNED: BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT ON HIM IS CONDEMNED ALREADY, BECAUSE HE HAS NOT BELIEVED ON THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD."
(JOHN 3:18)

II. RAHAB WAS SAVED BY HEARING AND BELIEVING GOD'S WORD - vs. 8-11

1 Jn 5:11-13

THIS GREAT TRUTH IS ABSOLUTELY VITAL TO THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL. RAHAB HAD BELIEVED THE RECORDS OF WHAT GOD HAD DONE IN DELIVERING ISRAEL FROM EGYPT. SHE SIMPLY BELIEVED THE RECORD. MEN ARE SAVED BY HEARING THE MESSAGE OF THE WORD OF GOD AND NO OTHER WAY! (ROMANS 10:17, JOHN 5:24 - "HE THAT HEARETH...." JOHN 10:27 "MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE...." REVELATION 3:20 "IF ANY MAN HEAR MY VOICE...." REPEATEDLY IN JESUS' MINISTRY, HE USED THIS PHRASE: "HE THAT HATH EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR." WE ARE LISTENING TO THE WRONG VOICES TODAY, QUESTION: "HOW MAY I KNOW IF GOD IS SPEAKING TO ME?" IS IT A SMALL VOICE IN THE SOUL? IS IT THROUGH SOME EARTHLY VICAR OR MEDIUM? EXPERIMENT: SIT DOWN IN A QUIET ROOM, OPEN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND BEGIN TO READ, AND YOU WILL HEAR THE VOICE OF GOD CLEARLY, SIMPLY, AND EMPHATICALLY POINTING THE WAY OF SALVATION IN JESUS CHRIST! IT IS POSSIBLE TO PLACE ONE'S FAITH IN A WRONG OR POOR CAUSE OR PERSON. HOWEVER, FAITH PLACED IN AND RESTING UPON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS NEVER MISPLACED AND IT IS ALWAYS FOR OUR GOOD AND THE GLORY OF GOD.

III. RAHAB PROVED HER FAITH BY HER WORKS - vs. 15

JAMES 2:25 SPEAKS OF RAHAB AS BEING "JUSTIFIED BY WORKS". THE BOOK OF JAMES DECLARES EMPHATICALLY THAT ALTHOUGH ONE IS JUSTIFIED IN THE EYES OF GOD BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, THAT JUSTIFICATION IN THE EYES OF MEN MUST BE DEMONSTRATED BY DEEDS. IN OTHER WORDS, WE PROVE THE GENUINE QUALITY OF OUR FAITH BY THE DEEDS WE DO. IF WE DO NOT LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, WE HAVE NO BIBLE REASON FOR CLAIMING CHRISTIAN FAITH! (ONE OF THE IRONIES OF OUR TIME IS THAT MANY PEOPLE ARE QUICK TO EMBRACE CHRISTIAN FAITH, AT LEAST VERBALLY, BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE NO APPARENT CHANGE IN THE LIFE. THESE PEOPLE WANT THE BEST OF TWO WORLDS - THEY WANT TO BE SAVED FROM ETERNAL CONDEMNATION, BUT THEY ALSO WANT TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD, WITH THE DEVIL'S CROWD, GOING WITH THEM AND DOING WHAT THEY DO WITH NO SEMBLANCE OF A SEPARATED OR DISTINCT CHRISTIAN LIFE.) THE

EMPHASIS OF THE JAMES 2 PASSAGE IS THAT IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHAT WE SAY ABOUT OUR FAITH. THAT IS, WE MAY CLAIM TO HAVE BIBLE FAITH ALL WE CARE TO, BUT IF THERE IS NO CHANGED LIFE AND DEMONSTRATION OF THAT FAITH IN PRACTICAL DEEDS, SUCH A PROFESSION IS SIMPLY EMPTY, INTELLECTUAL AND MEANINGLESS. CREED WITHOUT CONDUCT IS FUTILE. FAITH IS THE GROUND OF WORKS, AND WORKS IS THE PROOF OF FAITH. TRUE FAITH MAY BE PROVEN. A CHANGED LIFE FROM EVIL TO GODLINESS DEMONSTRATES THAT THE FAITH WE PROFESS TO HAVE IS IN FACT GENUINE BIBLE FAITH. IN THIS CHAPTER, JAMES REFERS TO TWO OLD TESTAMENT ILLUSTRATIONS OF FAITH: ABRAHAM, THE BEST OF JEWISH MEN, AND RAHAB, THE WORST OF GENTILE WOMEN. BOTH WERE SAVED THE SAME WAY AND DEMONSTRATED THE GENUINENESS OF THEIR SAVING FAITH BY THE DEEDS THEY DID.

IV. RAHAB WAS INTERESTED IN WINNING OTHERS - vs. 12-13

ONE OF THE FIRST GENUINE REACTIONS TO SAVING FAITH IS THE DESIRE TO SHARE THAT FAITH WITH OTHERS, ESPECIALLY ONE'S LOVED ONES. (JOHN 1:35-42, MARK 5:18-20) I RELATE OBSERVATION OF CLARK BRYAN TO ME AT FUNERAL REGARDING NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WHO WERE LED TO CHRIST BY HIMSELF AND DAD IN VARIOUS HOMES. MY OWN EXPERIENCE ATTESTS TO THIS FACT. THE GOSPEL WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE HOARDED; IT WAS MEANT TO BE SHARED. IT IS UNTHINKABLE THAT WE HAVE THE GREATEST NEWS IN THE WORLD AND YET IT NEVER ESCAPES FROM THE LIPS OF SOME PROFESSING CHRISTIANS. TO BE SURE, SOME ARE DOUBTFUL OF THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE, OTHERS ARE TIMID AND POORLY TAUGHT ABOUT THEIR FAITH, BUT THIS IS NO REASON TO RESTRICT THE FLOW OF THE GOSPEL FROM OUR OWN EXPERIENCE. IN MY JUDGMENT, THERE IS GRAVE QUESTION ABOUT THE QUALITY OF FAITH OF A PERSON WHO NEVER FEELS CONCERNED TO SHARE HIS FAITH WITH ANYONE ELSE.

V. RAHAB WAS SAVED WHEN JERICO WAS DESTROYED - JOSHUA 6:22-25

THE JUDGMENT OF JERICO WAS TWOFOLD: FIRST THE SHAKING THAT DESTROYED IT, AND THE FIRE THAT DESTROYED ITS CONTENTS. RAHAB'S HOUSE WAS ON THE WALL, ACCORDING TO 2:15, BUT APPARENTLY THAT SECTION OF THE WALL DID NOT FALL. AFTER RAHAB AND HER LOVED ONES WERE TAKEN FROM THE HOUSE, JOSHUA COMMANDED THE REST OF THE CITY BE SET ON FIRE. SHE AND HER FAMILY MAY HAVE BEEN FRIGHTENED WHEN THE

CITY BEGAN TO SHAKE, BUT THEY WERE ~~SAFE~~ IN THE HANDS OF GOD. SO IT IS WITH CHRISTIANS WHEN THIS WORLD BEGINS TO SHAKE. OUR RESCUE IS NOT ONLY IMMINENT, BUT SURE. ~~THE SYMBOL OF RAHAB'S SECURITY WAS A SCARLET CORD.~~ THIS WAS THE INSTRUMENT USED TO SAVE THE MEN FROM THE CITY AUTHORITIES. THE CORD WAS THE INSTRUMENT OR MEANS OF BOTH ~~DELIVERANCE AND IDENTIFICATION.~~ THIS PARTICULAR CORD REMINDS THE CHRISTIAN OF A SCARLET THREAD OR CORD RUNNING THROUGHOUT THE PAGES OF SCRIPTURE, BEGINNING WITH ~~GENESIS 3:21~~ AND CONCLUDING IN ~~REVELATION,~~ THE STORY OF THE ~~BIBLE REDEMPTION~~ IS THE SCARLET CORD OF BLOOD SHED FOR SINNERS. ~~"WHOM GOD HATH SENT FORTH TO BE A PROPITIATION THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD, TO DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS THAT ARE PAST, THROUGH THE FORBEARANCE OF GOD."~~ (ROMANS 3:25) ~~"TAKE HEED, THEREFORE, UNTO YOURSELVES AND TO ALL THE FLOCK, OVER WHICH THE HOLY GHOST HATH MADE YOU OVERSEERS, TO FEED THE CHURCH OF GOD, WHICH HE HAS PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD."~~ (ACTS 20:28) ~~QUESTION: HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION IN THE JUDGMENT OF JERICO?~~ ~~ANSWER: ONE FAMILY AND ONE FAMILY ALONE.~~ DO YOU SUPPOSE THERE WERE ANY RELIGIOUS OR MAYBE EVEN MORAL PEOPLE LIVING IN JERICO? PERHAPS, BUT THE DIFFERENCE IS BOUND UP IN ONE WORD. THERE IS ONLY ONE THING THAT WILL PLEASE GOD WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR SINS AND MINE, AND THAT ONE THING IS FAITH! ~~HEBREWS 11:6.~~ ~~THE LESS ONE'S FAITH IS RESTING ON JESUS CHRIST, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD!~~ THE STORY OF RAHAB IS ONE OF THE ASTONISHING AND INCREDIBLE STORIES OF THE BIBLE. HER ~~EVIL DEEDS HAD EARNED HER THE REPUTATION OF BEING A HARLOT.~~ SHE WAS RESIDING IN THE LOWEST POSSIBLE SOCIAL POSITION. THERE WAS ~~ABSOLUTELY NOTHING~~ IN HER CHARACTER TO MERIT FAVOR FROM GOD. YET, SHE AND HER FAMILY WERE THE ONLY ONES ~~SAVED~~ FROM DESTRUCTION IN JERICO. HOW AND WHY, THEN, WAS SHE SAVED? IT WAS BECAUSE SHE HAD THE ~~RIGHT KIND OF FAITH IN THE RIGHT KIND OF PERSON.~~ HER FAITH WAS DEMONSTRATED BY LOWERING THE SCARLET CORD OUT OF THE WINDOW. ~~SIMPLY STATED, RAHAB WAS SAVED BECAUSE SHE DID WHAT GOD TOLD HER TO DO.~~ THIS IS ALWAYS TRUE OF PEOPLE OF FAITH. ~~NOAH WAS SAVED FOR BELIEVING THE PROMISE OF GOD AND DOING WHAT GOD TOLD HIM TO DO, EVEN WHEN WHAT GOD TOLD HIM TO DO HAD NEVER BEEN WITNESSED IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE.~~ WHAT KIND OF FAITH DO YOU HAVE IN GOD? ~~MANY YEARS AGO, A MAN WAS TALKING TO ANOTHER MAN, AND THE SECOND MAN WAS FROM A FOREIGN COUNTRY. THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION WAS SAVING FAITH. THE SECOND MAN CLAIMED TO BE A CHRISTIAN, BUT WHEN PRESSED ON THE MATTER OF~~

BEING BORN AGAIN, OR ACCEPTING CHRIST, HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND AND SIMPLY STATED: "I BELONG TO A LONG LINE OF CHRISTIAN PEOPLE." THE FIRST MAN ASKED THE SECOND IF HE WAS MARRIED. "OH, YES; YOU SEE, I BELONG TO A LONG LINE OF MARRIED PEOPLE, MY MOTHER WAS MARRIED, MY GRANDMOTHER AND HER MOTHER WERE MARRIED, I BELIEVE MARRIAGE IS A WONDERFUL INSTITUTION." HOWEVER, THE FIRST MAN REMINDED THE SECOND THAT HIS QUESTION WAS "ARE YOU MARRIED?" "NO, BUT I BELIEVE IN MARRIAGE." KNOWING ABOUT MARRIAGE, BELIEVING IN IT, DOESN'T MAKE ONE MARRIED. NEITHER DOES KNOWING ABOUT GOD OR BELIEVING THAT HE IS AND THAT ONE OUGHT TO BE A CHRISTIAN EQUAL TO SALVATION. THE PLACE WHERE YOU AND I RESIDE IS JUST AS CONDEMNED AS JERICO. THE OUTCOME FOR YOU AND ME DEPENDS ON WHETHER OR NOT WE TAKE SERIOUSLY THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

" WAITING FOR THE DEAD"
Judges 5:28 ff.

The Book of Judges has been called the saddest book in the O.T. It is sad because we expect great and wonderful things to follow the efforts of a great men like Moses and Joshua. But the book is full of the failures of the children of Israel. The nation failed to drive the enemies from within their borders the result being a 350 year period of ups and downs for the nation. During this time God raised up some national leaders called Judges to rule over the nation. Their main function seems to have been to deliver God's people from the tyranny of their enemies and it was usually done by warfare. This would usually last for the duration of the life of that judge--then more oppression and apostacy. Of all the sad features, the failure of the people to remember the Lord and to forget their purpose in the land is most discouraging. The Book is full of rebellion of the people of God, and the misery which follows those who ignore the truths of God. It provides instructive backdrop for the people of God in any generation--the sorrows which accompany disobedience.

The chapter before us today pictures the children of Israel under the domination of a Canaanite king named Jabin(4:2). His military commander was called Sisera which is a word meaning "the leader." Sisera was a mighty man on the battle field. The primary weapon in his arsenal was the "iron" chariot,(4:3) Of which there were 900. For 20 years these people had dominated and terrorized the children of Israel. It would appear from 4:2 that such a situation had been the direct result of disobedience. Into this time and circumstance came a woman judge named Deborah and with her a military novice who would forge the men of Israel into some kind of army to fight against the forces of the Canaanites. This would be no easy task in the light of the disheartened attitude of the people. (5:6). The nation was virtually paralyzed under the domination of Sisera. In time Barak enlisted 10,000 troops and brought them to Mt. Tabor to do battle with Sisera.(4:6) This particular terrain of mountains and trees would have some definite advantages in a battle against chariots--but the deciding factor was the work of God against Sisera. The forces of Sisera were thrown into total confusion according to 4:15. In the victory Song of Deborah 5:20-21 there is an indication of a flood and other forces of nature used of the Lord to defeat the Canaanites. In fact, the battle was so bad for Sisera that he fled on foot for his life... sheer panic and confusion.

Sometimes men scoff at the idea that God would use the forces of nature to rout the plans and programs of evil men but it has happened many times in human history let alone a time when the national safety of his ancient people was at stake!

For example: The Spanish Armada enroute to England with the blessing of the Pope with the sole object of destroying the liberties of the land and uprooting the religion of the country, 130 vessels as opposed to only 80 for England and of this # only 30 were of true naval quality. Without distracting from the ability of some of the great English naval heroes--the real destruction to the Spanish fleet took place to the north of Scotland on the rocky islands and shoals and the mighty winds that brought ship after ship to its doom. In fact, Queen Elizabeth attributed the winds of destruction as being from the hand of God. "God blew upon them and they were scattered" was the inscription to commemorate the victory.

2. Napoleon invaded Russia and went all the way to Moscow with 600,000 crack troops. Unable to bring the Russians to defeat he was caught in an early winter which upset his plans. The winter reduced his troops to 150,000 in its bitter cold and blinding snow.

3. Hitler had a similar experience.

✓ Sisera came to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber. The story that follows is incredible yet as was predicted by Deborah in 4:9! The defeat of these Canaanites was as swift and sure as was the Lord's working at the Red Sea.

The scene shifts from the place of Sisera's death to the place where his mother and her ladies in waiting stands looking out the window waiting for her son's return. For years he had been coming back from the battles with the spoils of victory in display. It would appear to his mother that he is overdue--and she is concerned. As she expressed this concern, the ladies of the court were quick to assure her that all was well and the sure booty was the best ever. Surely Sisera would return with many costly items. But in this these wise ladies were mistaken and their lighthearted spirits could not change the situation--Sisera was dead. In Sisera's mother we have an illustration of a principle men need to consider: Sisera's mother was waiting for something to happen that never would/ could happen....she was waiting for the dead!

Apr. 13, 1974 - 100 Tornados
11 States - 329 dead - 4000 injured
700 million

There are many people in this world who are just like this woman: they are waiting for something to happen before they come to Christ. They have no real excuse for not being saved...they are just waiting!

*** I was startled by a news story which came out of the shattering circumstances of Camelle-- recent hurricane. In one of the little gulf towns in Mississippi a 3 story apartment bldg. As the warnings came of the power of the storm people were asked to flee to inland. This apt. house decided to have a "hurricane party!" Police chief pled with them to leave...they were drinking and not concerned...they would wait out the storm. 20 of them died in the wake of the storm that leveled the apartment house.

Let me suggest several areas in which people are waiting for things that will never happen before they receive Christ and are saved.

1. SOME PEOPLE ARE WAITING FOR A FEELING

In certain areas people are emotionally oriented. They measure everything by the emotion involved.
How much one weeps--great repentance. - Turkey
How much one shouts--great spirituality.
How loud one prays--great power with God
How loud one sanctions--great interest in what is being said.

Let me hasten to say I do believe in emotions. Like the elderly lady who said she knew she was not saved by feelings but it sure does feel good to be saved and it ought to affect our emotions after we are saved. But if a man waits until he feels like being saved he probably never will be. (Poem 3 fs.)

The need of salvation is not based on feeling. Before receiving Christ I felt awful when in church. It was as if the pastor preaching directly at me all the time--so in order to feel better--I stayed away from the church. Look at the Scripture.

"By grace are ye saved thru feeling???????"

(How some read it!) "And that of yourselves....! Remember this "feelings" come after salvation not before.

A certain man
Let us suppose I ~~have~~ just spent a miserable night--insomnia. Wake up in the morning with a terrible headache, sore back, eat break-fast too quickly and add heartburn to the many aches already have. Fight my way to work--feeling terrible. Man is ushered into my office in mid morning--how do you feel? Terrible! Good news--a wealthy relative died left you a check for \$ 50,000. Now I feel better... after I get the good news!

Change illness
To doctor at
times: New
vitamin
New headache
Relief

when I have a convenient season
I will call for thee.

The Bible warns about waiting for another time.
2 Cor. 6:2, James 4:14

Felix... Agrippi- ~~almost~~

~~The young person~~ is especially prone to this
~~fatal philosophy~~. Reason--a misunderstanding about
being a Christian. No fun, friends, future.

(keys)

Don't
Berey

V. SOME PEOPLE ARE JUST WAITING

Some folk really have no excuse/that is do not
attempt to make an excuse for not being saved. They
are just existing...no goals in life or if for life
no hope for the future. I am currently reading a
book entitled "Escape From Reason" by Dr. Fransis
Schaeffer in which he discusses modern man who has
adopted a pessimistic view of life. He feels hope-
less--a mere cog in a machine...passing thru life
living in time moving toward eternity not knowing
anything for sure about the hereafter--if indeed
there is such a thing. How else can one explain some
of the happenings of our time--look at art, music,
literature, obsession with drugs by intelligent
people--in despair his aspirations long ago broken
by the complexity of the problems of the world in
which he lives.

Like Sisera's mother modern man outside of Christ
is waiting for some ship to come in that will never
dock---some event to happen that never happens....

WAITING FOR THE DEAD.

There is a Jewish legend or fable most have heard.
permit its repetition for one who might not have
heard...."There is no hurry."

Emergency Surgery: 1974

Dr. Luce...

Something must
be done now to
wait = death.

II. WEAKNESS: God's Method In Selection of Leaders

6:11-40

Even a casual glance at the list of Judges will show that they were not an impressive group from the standpoint of natural leadership--- Ehud was a left-handed assassin. Gideon from an obscure family--an unknown. Samson--too little self-control but used such weapons as the jaw bone of an ass to engage the enemy in combat. However, in all of these persons, the presence of the Holy Spirit made the difference!

A. Hiding--v.11

The threshing was done on top of a hill-- to thresh at the winepress rather difficult to do--grain in the air--down the neck. I am not sure "it" should be the emphasis of the text--Gideon was more concerned for Gideon than anything else!(God took the initiative when Gideon was called. God can take a man who is fearful of the times and turn him into a hero for God.) The point of the verse is: You would not expect God to use a man who was hiding! THE Unlikely MAN.

B. Humor--v.12

Some folk look upon the Bible as a dark and serious book. As we study it see much humor. If there was anything Gideon was not at this time--a mighty man of valour! The angel was no doubt speaking of what Gideon would become not what he was.(cf. Peter.) Gideon probably look around to see if anyone else was standing near by--"Who me?"

C. Hinderances--v.13

What kind of potential leader is this--- cowardly skeptical, doubting if the Lord is with Israel-- all he can do is think about things as they use to be-- not as they ought to be or are going to be. Lack of vision and trust in the Lord's ability. Times have changed. God had not forsaken them--they had forsaken him.

D. Humility-- v15

Gideon did not believe God could use him. He felt he was not fit for God's service. There was nothing in his family or background to warrant success. When God looks for a man he does not turn to the man who thinks he can do the job. It is possible to be too capable for God to use! God chooses the weak things of this world to accomplish his goals so men can know that it was God not man who did the job! (1 Cor. 1:26-29)

God will not let men take credit for what He has done! God's method: cf. Moses--educated in Egypt. Thought God would use him but neither Moses/people ready. 40 years on desert--then Moses was not ready but God was!

Compare Pharaoh and Moses--God's man.

Compare Paul and Nero. History has proven this principle.

*Jeremiah - hard message
man w. a tender heart - God's way - I would have chosen to go with Jn. Bap.*

Gideons army was indeed anything but what we would call an army--300 men whose weapons were pitchers, lamps and trumpets! There was not one hand that held a sword! It seemed utterly impossible to go against 135,000 men in such a fashion. (About as "silly as marching around a city til the walls fall down--or buiding an ark when it has never rained a day in all of recorded history.)

These men went into battle outnumbered 450 to one! Judged in the terms of human aritimetic they did not have a chance--defeat was sure. God gives a lesson in psychological warfare. Panic in the night for the lights and trumpets spoke of far more to these men than 300 it meant multiplied thousands in their mind. Look at what they carried: Pitchers--just ordinary vessels. (2 Cor.4) "He remembers we are dust--some-times we forget it and when dust gets stuck on itself its mud." Needed to be broken to let the light shine. Light--this is what God uses to deal with the enemy. Trumpet-- certain sound in the battle. Need a sure message.

Victory is not dependent on more and better equipment but our greatest need is for men of Gideons calibre. It is difficult to admit but surely true that more than we realize we are just too big for God to use.

GOD'S UNUSUAL WAYSJUDGES 6 & 7

THE WAYS OF GOD ARE FOREIGN TO MOST MEN. THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WORKINGS IN HIS UNIVERSE CAN BE SUMMED UP IN THE LITTLE CAPSULE EXPRESSION, "GOD MOVES IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS HIS WONDERS TO PRE-
FORM." ISAIAH EXPRESSED IT IN THESE TERMS, "FOR MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS, NEITHER ARE YOUR WAYS MY WAYS, SAITH THE LORD." (ISA. 55:8)

THE ONLY MANNER IN WHICH MEN CAN BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH THE WAYS OF GOD IS TO KNOW HIS WORD AND SPEND TIME IN HIS PRESENCE. EVEN WITH MANY PROFESSING CHRISTIANS, THEIR ACQUAINTANCE WITH GOD IS A MERE NODDING ACQUAINTANCE AND A DEEP KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOD WHOM THEY PROFESS TO LOVE AND SERVE IS ABSENT FROM THE LIFE. IF ASKED TO GIVE A DEFINITIVE

PARAGRAPH ABOUT THE GOD OF THE UNIVERSE, THE FACT THAT GOD IS LOVE AND CREATOR WOULD BE ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THE DESCRIPTION. IN THE CHAPTERS BEFORE US, WE WILL LEARN SOME INTERESTING WAYS IN WHICH GOD PLEASSED TO WORK IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES.

CHAPTER 6 OPENS WITH THE STORY OF A SEVEN-YEAR MIDIANITE OPPRESSION. TWO CHIEFS BY THE NAME OF ZEBAH WHICH MEANS "THE MAN KILLER", AND ZALMUNNA, WHICH MEANS "THE PITILESS", WHOSE SUBORDINATES WERE SHIEKS NAMED OREB, WHICH MEANS "THE RAVEN" AND ZEEB, WHICH MEANS "THE WOLF". THESE WILD MARAUDERS WERE INVADING ISRAEL, CARRYING AWAY ALL THEY COULD STEAL AND SPOIL. IT WAS A TIME OF

GREAT INSECURITY OF LIFE AND PROPERTY AND THE SPIRIT OF ISRAEL WAS SO LOW THAT ANY KIND OF ORGANIZED DEFENSE WAS NEAR IMPOSSIBLE. THE PEOPLE WERE HIDING IN THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL, TRYING TO EKE OUT AN EXISTENCE UNDER SUCH DIRE CONDITIONS.

IT WAS IN THIS GREAT DISTRESS THAT THE NATION BEGAN TO CRY UNTO THE LORD. GOD SENT A NAMELESS PROPHET TO THE NATION TO REMIND THEM THAT THIS WAS EXACTLY THE KIND OF CONDITION THEY WERE IN WHEN HE DELIVERED THEM FROM EGYPT'S BONDAGE. AND, HE REMINDED THEM THAT THEY WERE IN THIS PLIGHT BECAUSE THEY HAD REFUSED TO OBEY GOD'S COMMANDS. THIS CHAPTER REMINDS US OF A PRINCIPLE ESTABLISHED IN THE O. T. WITH MEN LIKE NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND AHAB, NAMELY, GOD SOMETIMES SENDS AFFLICTION UPON PEOPLE IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY

TURN FROM THEIR SINS AND SEEK THE LORD. THIS WAS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES. ISRAEL WOULD SIN AND BECOME OPPRESSED BY NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, GOD WOULD SEND A STRONG NATIONAL LEADER IN THE FORM OF A JUDGE WHO WOULD DELIVER THE NATION FROM THEIR OPPRESSION, AND ONCE DELIVERED, THE CYCLE OF DISOBEDIENCE AND APOSTASY WOULD BEGIN ALL OVER. THAT IS WHY THE BOOK OF JUDGES IS THE DARKEST PERIOD IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY.

I. GOD'S UNUSUAL MAN NAMED GIDEON - 6:11-18

THE WORD "GIDEON" LITERALLY MEANS "TREE CUTTER". ^(Lumberjack) HOWEVER, HIS PROFESSION WAS NOT A WOOD SPLITTER, BUT RATHER HE WAS A FARMER. BECAUSE OF THE TIMES, HE WAS THRASHING WHEAT IN AN UNUSUAL PLACE. A WINEPRESS IS VERY SMALL FOR SUCH ACTIVITY AND LOCATED AT THE WRONG AREA. THRASHING WAS DONE AT THE TOP OF THE HILL. HERE WE ARE INTRODUCED TO GOD'S UNUSUAL WAY OF CALLING MEN IN THE TIME OF NATIONAL CRISIS. IF YOU WERE GOING TO LOOK FOR A LEADER FOR SUCH A PERILOUS HOUR, YOU WOULD NOT LOOK FOR A MAN NERVOUSLY THRASHING WHEAT IN HIS FATHER'S WINEPRESS IN ORDER TO ESCAPE DETECTION FROM THE MIDIANITE MARAUDERS!! THE NEXT SURPRISING ASPECT OF THE STORY IS IN VERSE 12 WHERE WE DETECT SOMETHING OF GIDEON'S UNKNOWN VALOR. APPARENTLY, HE HAD ALREADY DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF IN THE EYES OF THE ANGEL, OR, THE ANGEL SAW SOMETHING IN HIM WHICH IS NOT APPARENT IN THE TEXT!! IT WOULD APPEAR AT THE MOMENT AS IF GIDEON WAS ANYTHING BUT A MIGHTY MAN OF VALOR!! BY HIS OCCUPATION, IT WOULD SEEM LIKE HE WAS A BIT COWARDLY AND NOT TERRIBLY INTERESTED IN THE NATION AS A WHOLE. BEGINNING WITH VERSE 13, GIDEON REFLECTS AN UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE OF NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND A DEEP SENSE OF PERSONAL INADEQUACY FOR THE JOB WHICH GOD IS CALLING HIM TO. GIDEON REMINDED THE ANGEL THAT HE WAS FROM THE SMALLEST OF THE CLANS OF MANASSEH, THAT HE WAS FROM A POOR FAMILY AND REALLY HAD NOTHING NATURAL IN ABILITY TO OFFER AS A MEANS OF DELIVERANCE FOR THE NATION. PERHAPS, IN ADDITION TO HIS OWN FEELING OF WEAKNESS, GIDEON SENSED SOMETHING OF THE DEFEAT FILLING THE HEARTS OF HIS FELLOW COUNTRYMEN. ONE OF THE SURPRISING FEATURES OF THE BIBLE HAS TO DO WITH GOD'S USE OF THE UNUSUAL AND THE UNEXPECTED. GOD SELDOM

GOD'S UNUSUAL WAYS - CONT.

mx. Lorraine at Salem.
(Ch. filled with impressive
people - Too busy with
their careers) 3

USES THE PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE ARE IMPRESSED. OFTEN TIMES THE GREAT SOUL WINNERS IN A CHURCH ARE THE SHY, QUIET PEOPLE LACKING THE GIFT OF GAB AND THE POWER OF PERSONALITY ONE WOULD EXPECT NECESSARY TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THIS AREA. GOD MOVES UPON THE UN-LIKELIEST OF MEN AND USES THEM MIGHTILY FOR HIS GLORY, IN ORDER THAT NO MAN CAN GLORY IN THE FLESH, BUT RATHER IS DEPENDENT UPON THE GOD OF THE BIBLE FOR SUCCESS IN SERVICE.

II. GOD'S UNUSUAL LEADING IN GIDEON'S LIFE - 6:36-40

Peter Newberg
THE USAGE OF THE FLEECE AS A MEANS FOR DETERMINING GOD'S LEADING IN HIS LIFE, WAS UNIQUE TO GIDEON AND GIDEON ALONE. GEIKIE POINTS OUT THAT THE NIGHT WIND FROM THE SEA IS LADENED IN PALESTINE WITH MOISTURE WHICH FALLS HEAVY, DEW-LIKE ABUNDANCE ALL OVER THE LAND. ONE WRITER REMEMBERS AT CAESAREA THAT THE DEW WAS SO HEAVY THAT IT DRIPPED FROM THE LEAVES OF THE VINEYARD LIKE RAIN. IN AN UNUSUAL TIME OF NATIONAL CRISIS AND A DEMORALIZED NATION, GOD RESORTED TO THIS SPECIFIC SITUATION ONLY ONCE IN THE BIBLE. IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN SHEER UNBELIEF OR WEAKNESS OF FAITH TO CAUSE GIDEON TO ASK SUCH A SIGN FROM THE LORD, BUT RATHER A WAY OF BEING ASSURED OF GOD'S PRESENCE ONCE GIDEON ASSUMED THE REIGNS OF NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. I FULLY AGREE WITH OSWALD SANDERS WHO SAYS, "IN SEEKING GUIDANCE FROM GOD, SOME CHRISTIANS MAKE A PRACTICE OF PUTTING OUT THEIR FLEECE; THAT IS, ASKING GOD TO GIVE THEM SOME TANGIBLE SIGN TO CONFIRM THEIR GUIDANCE. IN REALITY, THIS IS A MARK OF SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY, THE DESIRE TO WALK BY SIGHT INSTEAD OF FAITH ALONE." THIS PORTION OF THE BIBLE BRINGS TO OUR ATTENTION ONE OF THE IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE BIBLE IN OUR LIVES. IS IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO KNOW GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIFE? THE ANSWER IS, "YES". HOWEVER, ONE OF THE GREAT PROBLEMS IS THAT EVERY CHRISTIAN WHO PROFESSES TO HONESTLY WANT TO KNOW GOD'S WILL DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN WHAT HE SAYS!! IT IS SOMEWHAT LIKE AN ARCHITECT WHO IS ASKED TO DESIGN A HOUSE FOR A CLIENT, BUT THEN LEARNS TO HIS AMAZEMENT THAT THE CLIENT ALREADY HAS THE DESIGN IN MIND. WHAT THE CLIENT WANTS IS FOR THE ARCHITECT TO SANCTION OR AGREE WITH THE PLAN HE ALREADY HAS IN MIND. MANY BELIEVERS HAVE A PLAN FOR THEIR OWN LIFE AND ARE SIMPLY TRYING TO FORCE GOD TO SANCTION THAT PLAN. THE BELIEVER SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT

GOD HAS A PERFECT PLAN FOR EVERY BELIEVER'S LIFE. HOWEVER, WE LEARN THAT PLAN ONLY ONE STAGE AT A TIME. FOR THOSE WHO THINK GOD'S GUIDANCE IS NOT IMPORTANT, REMEMBER THIS VERSE, "IT IS NOT IN MAN THAT WALKETH TO DIRECT HIS STEPS," (JEREMIAH 10:23) HISTORY AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ATTEST TO THE TRUTHFULNESS OF THIS VERSE OF MAN'S ABILITY TO GUIDE HIS OWN LIFE SUCCESSFULLY WITHOUT CONSULTING GOD. WHEN THE BELIEVER KNOWS GOD'S WILL IN HIS LIFE, IT BRINGS PEACE AND HARMONY IN HIS SOUL. WHENEVER HE MISSES GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS LIFE, THE RESULT IS INWARD RESTLESSNESS AND TURMOIL. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO CAUTION THE SPIRITUALLY ZEALOUS TO BE CAREFUL ABOUT USING THESE EXPRESSIONS, "THE LORD TOLD ME...", OR "THE LORD REVEALED TO ME..." LEST YOU BE EMBARRASSED LATER ON WHEN IT BECOMES OBVIOUS THAT WHAT YOU ATTRIBUTED TO GOD WAS YOUR OWN SELF-WILL!! JOHN WESLEY ADVOCATED THAT GOD USUALLY GUIDED HIM BY PRESENTING REASONS TO HIS MIND FOR ACTING IN A CERTAIN MANNER. WESLEY WOULD OBTAIN ALL OF THE FACTS POSSIBLE, WEIGHING BOTH SIDES OF THE ISSUE AND THEN PRAYERFULLY STUDYING GOD'S WORD, AND SEEKING THE LEADERSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WOULD BE A STEADILY, DEEPENING CONVICTION THAT A CERTAIN COURSE WAS THE WILL OF GOD. AS THE CONVICTION DEEPENED, THE WAY WOULD SEEM TO OPEN CLEARLY TO HIM. IT WOULD SEEM THAT GOD USED OUTWARD SIGNS SUCH AS THE FLEECE IN GIDEON'S DAY AND THE URIM AND THUMMIM IN THE DAYS OF ISRAEL'S IMMATURITY. HOWEVER, TODAY WE ARE IN-DWELT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND NEED NOT RESORT TO SUCH PRACTICES. THE BELIEVER MAY CLING TO VERSES SUCH AS PROVERBS 3:5-6, ROMANS 8:14, PSALM 57-23 AS A SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR THE ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LEADERSHIP IN THE LIFE.

III. GOD'S UNUSUAL METHOD IN WARFARE - 7:1-7 AND 16-18

GOD PLANS TO OVERTHROW OUR ENEMIES. HE DOES IT IN SUCH A WAY THAT THERE IS NO DOUBT AS TO PERSON BRINGING THE VICTORY. COMPARE JOSHUA 6:2 - THE CONQUEST AT JERICO UNDER JOSHUA'S LEADERSHIP WAS GOD'S DOING. "AND THE LORD SAID UNTO JOSHUA, SEE, I HAVE GIVEN UNTO THINE HAND JERICO..." JERICO WAS THE GATEWAY TO CANAAN. IT MUST BE TAKEN IN ORDER FOR ISRAEL NOT TO LEAVE AN ENEMY ON HER FLANK. THE CLOSED GATES OF THE CITY WERE OPEN DEFIANCE TO GOD. GOD'S VICTORY OVER

② PHARAOH IN EGYPT WAS DONE IN SUCH A MIRACULOUS WAY THAT THERE WAS NO HUMAN EXPLANATION IN THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA AND THE DESTRUCTION OF PHARAOH'S TROOPS. IN JUDGES 5:20, THE DESTRUCTION OF SISERA WAS ATTRIBUTED TO GOD'S USE OF THE FORCES OF NATURE IN OPPOSING ISRAEL'S LONG ENEMY. THE CHAPTER BEFORE US RELATES WHAT MAY BE THE STRANGEST AND MOST AMAZING BATTLE IN THE HISTORY OF WARFARE. IT CONSISTED OF TWO UNIQUE FEATURES UNKNOWN TO GENERAL WARFARE. (1) THE REDUCTION OF AN ARMY TO A MERE SCOUTING EXPEDITION IN SIZE. (2) THE ENTRANCE INTO COMBAT WITHOUT WEAPONS. THIS CHAPTER SUGGESTS THERE IS A KIND OF "HEAVENLY ARITHMETIC" THAT REDUCES RATHER THAN RECRUITS FORCES OF GOD. WHEN IT COMES TO DECISIVE BATTLES, GOD SEPARATES AND SELECTS HIS CHOICE WORKERS. OUR BLESSED LORD CHOSE TWELVE MEN INTO WHOSE HANDS HE COMMITTED HIS WORK ON EARTH. IT IS OUT OF APPARENT WEAKNESS THAT GOD'S STRENGTH IS MANIFESTED. THE ARMY OF GIDEON WAS REDUCED FROM 32,000 TO 300 IN ORDER TO GET THE JOB DONE. GOD KNEW THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY IN HIS ARMY. IN THE TEST, GOD SENT THE COWARDS HOME AS HE DISMISSED THE CARELESS IN THE WATER TEST. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DRINKING TEST HAD TO DO WITH DISCIPLINE. THE 300 REVEALED CHARACTER IN THE SMALL THINGS OF LIFE. THEY TOOK PRECAUTION AGAINST SURPRISE ATTACK. THEY DEMONSTRATED THEY COULD PUT PERSONAL AND PHYSICAL NEEDS IN SECOND POSITION IN THEIR LIVES AND STAND THE STRESS OF PROLONGED WARFARE. THESE MEN PUT THEIR CAUSE FIRST AND COMFORT SECOND. THEY DID NOT FORGET THEY WERE IN ENEMY TERRITORY AND THEIR MILITARY OBJECTIVE WAS THE SUPREME PRIORITY IN THEIR MIND. THE WEAPONS USED BY THESE WARRIORS IS UTTERLY UNTHINKABLE. THEY WERE OUTNUMBERED 450 TO 1. HUMANLY SPEAKING, THERE WAS NO WAY THEY COULD OVERCOME SUCH ODDS. IN MODERN LANGUAGE, THIS WOULD BE AN EXAMPLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE. THE STRATEGY OF GIDEON SENT THE MIDIANITES INTO UTTER PANIC AND DEFEAT. THERE MAY BE MANY LESSONS OBVIOUS FROM THIS PORTION OF THE WORD OF GOD, BUT THE TRUTH OF II CORIN. 10:4 STANDS OUT IMMEDIATELY, "FOR THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT CARNAL, BUT MIGHTY THROUGH GOD TO THE PULLING DOWN OF STRONG HOLDS." THE VICTORY OF A CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD OF SPIRITUAL DARKNESS IS A LIGHT, A BROKEN PITCHER AND AN INSTRUMENT SOUND. THE LIGHT FOR THE WORLD'S DARKNESS IS THE GOSPEL, THE SURRENDERED LIFE OF THE BELIEVER IS A MIGHTY WEAPON IN THE HAND OF GOD. THE TRUMPET

OF GOD'S MESSAGE MUST BEAR A CLEAR SOUND IN THE NIGHT OF SPIRITUAL DARKNESS. THE BELIEVER HAS A SECRET WEAPON WITH WHICH HE IS ABLE TO COMBAT ANY OBSTACLE AND THAT WEAPON IS YIELDEDNESS TO GOD. WITH MOSES, GOD TOOK A SIMPLE ROD, A SHEPHERD'S STAFF AND USED IT MIGHTILY TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE DELIVERANCE OF THE NATION. WITH JOSHUA, GOD USED A RAM'S HORN FOR THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN. THERE WERE NO HORSES, NO BATTERING RAMS, CHARIOTS OR MIGHTY WEAPONS, SIMPLY A RAM'S HORN!! WITH SAMPSON, GOD USED THE JAW BONE OF AN ASS; WITH DAVID, A SLING. ALL OF THESE WERE MIGHTY INSTRUMENTS OF WARFARE FOR VICTORY WHEN SIMPLY YIELDED TO GOD. IN OUR DISPENSATION, GOD IS LOOKING FOR TORCH BEARERS IN EARTHEN VESSELS, MEN WHO WILL SOUND FORTH THE TRUMPET OF THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD WITH CLARITY AND BOLDNESS.

IV. GOD'S UNUSUAL VICTORY OVER THE MIDIANITES - 7:21-22

ON THIS MEMORABLE NIGHT, GOD WON THE VICTORY FOR ISRAEL IN AN UNEXPECTED WAY. THE RESULT OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD BROUGHT COMPLETE CONFUSION AND DEFEAT TO THEIR ENEMIES. HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO DOUBT IN ANYONE'S MIND THAT THE VICTORY WAS GOD'S DOING. BEFORE THE TIME OF GIDEON, THE MIDIANITES HAD PLAGUED ISRAEL FOR OVER 200 YEARS. AFTER THIS DEFEAT, THEY WERE NEVER MENTIONED AGAIN AS ENEMIES. THE VICTORY WAS COMPLETE.

RECENTLY, I HAVE BEEN DEEPLY IMPRESSED IN THE WORD OF GOD WITH THE VARIOUS PRINCIPLES MENTIONED IN THIS CHAPTER TODAY. GOD HAS A REMARKABLE WAY OF SORTING OUT HIS WORKERS AND USING ONLY THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO TRUST HIM AND NOT THEIR OWN SKILLS. THERE IS A LESSON FOR ALL BELIEVERS TO LEARN THAT OUR OWN JUDGMENTS AND IMPULSES AND BACKGROUND AND TRAINING ARE POOR SUBSTITUTES FOR THE LEADERSHIP AND DIRECTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THIS HAS COME WITH RENEWED FORCE IN MY OWN THINKING IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS REGARDING OUR CURRENT LONG-RANGE PROGRAM. SOME OF OUR BEST THINKING AND PROFESSIONAL ADVICE HAS BEEN REVERSED BY GOD. THE LORD WOULD TEACH US AS A CHURCH THAT OUR ABSOLUTE DEPENDENCE FOR SPIRITUAL MINISTRY AND PHYSICAL GROWTH IS DEPENDENT UPON HIM AND HIM ALONE!!

The Man Who Became Careless About Spiritual Things

"THE LOST TOUCH" Judges 14-16

This past week I enrolled in a noon time physical fitness program. The first session was very easy. However, the second day was another story---sore muscles and stiffness to the point hardly able to move. I was complaining to someone about these difficulties and they jokingly replied: "You just aren't the man you use to be!" This sentence lingered in my thinking all week long-- "not the man you use to be." // Think of how this applies to so many Christians who are not the Christians they use to be. Once they lived a life of joy and peace before the Lord. They delighted in the Bible, prayer, Church, witnessing and all that goes together to make for effective Christian living---and then something happened, either by deliberate sin or sheer neglect ^{this} a person loses touch with God. The Bible is no longer a delight, prayer is rare except in an emergency and life become a burden as fellowship with the Lord is no longer a vital part of the life. Somewhere along this road the person becomes so accustomed to being out of touch with God that it takes a sudden reversal or tragedy to awaken them from their spiritual slumber. One of the greatest and gravest mistakes a believer can make is to assume that he or she may take the blessing of God for granted. That good old God will just go along with whatever we do and continue to smile upon us. This is not the case--there is a terrible cost to pay for loss of fellowship with God. Loss of personal peace and blessing, loss of power in service, loss of influence with family and friends, loss of meaning and purpose in life. For the child of God who has known the experience of closeness to the Lord, nothing in life can be substituted for fellowship with Him and one is never joyful until the breach has been spanned. Samson is the classic Bible example of a man who got out of touch with God without knowing it. Slowly but surely sin strangled Samson's power with God. He gave up everything that was spiritual in his life for personal desire and comfort only to learn too late that there is a terrible price to pay for disobedience to God. He who was once the champion in Israel became the clown in Philistia. From Samson's sad experience we may learn some profitable lessons.

I. THE SUBTILITY OF SIN IN SAMSON'S LIFE

When Samson steps forth on the pages of Scripture he is a man of great physical strength. However, his strength was from God and immediately Samson begins to sow the seeds of his own failure.

A. Samson Married Out Of The Will Of God--14:1-7

This has been the first step downward for many a professing Christian. It is easy to get ones attention fastened on curley hair, color of eyes, dimples, manners family background, ie. physical attractiveness and forget that the primary consideration in marriage is spiritual compatability. First question for a Christian thinking about marriage: "Is he/she born again?" If not, make sure before you are married. Samson was attracted to a Philistine woman in Timnath on one basis alone-- she was physically beautiful. His parents were distressed with his choice and deeply troubled that he would seek to make friends with the enemies of Israel. His wife became the first of several women who would lead to Samson's downfall. God had warned Israel that inter-marriage with pagan peoples would lead the nation into idolatry and many other sins that would drag the nation down.

B. Samson Failed To Keep His Nazarite Vows

Samson was a marked man. He was required as a Nazarite to live a different kind of life from other men.

(1) He could drink no fruit of the vine. This represented the fact that he would refrain from sensual pleasure. What others could do, he was forbidden to do. Much like an athlete who in training gives up what many others do readily--smoke, little sleep--but for the sake of the game he accepts the restrictions. (2) Long hair--by wearing long hair, the Nazarite was giving up his pride in personal appearance. It is obvious in all of history that long hair on a man is a distasteful matter and the Nazarite in letting it grow was saying I am willing to be the marked man, easily recognizable in public. Willing to not conform to the generally accepted ideas of the day. (3) Not to touch the dead--a picture that a Nazarite put God even above earths closest ties. (Numbers 6:3-7) Samson's problem was that he did not live up to his vows.

The subtlety of sin in Samson's life is seen in how he thought he could live carelessly as a Nazarite--professing to live by the vows and yet failing to do so. The word for this is hypocrisy. He ignored all advice for his parents and others to the point going too far. He tampered with some Biblical principles concerning personal separation to God. God says in His word that we cannot be loyal to God and His standards of conduct and to a world that neither appreciates nor understands God. (This is a hard lesson to learn. (Point: I am not talking about Christian witness-- I am talking about friendships and standards.) (James 4:4) "You are like unfaithful wives, flirting with the glamour of this world, and never realising that to be the world's lover means becoming the enemy of God." (Phillips Translation)

II. THE SORROW OF SIN IN SAMSON'S LIFE

Judges 16:20 is one of the saddest verses in the Bible. For years Samson had been slipping spiritually. He had been keeping company with the wrong crowd, he had paid little attention to his own relationship to God. He was more concerned about personal interest than the glory of God. Samson had made a fatal mistake--he had exhausted God's patience over his playing around with sin. Now in the moment of crisis he tried to call on the power that had always been there but now it was gone! Now that he needed the Lord as at no other time but Samson had trifled with God once too often. There is a terrible price to pay for playing with sin. Noah--thought he could drink with no serious problems and it ruined his family for generations. David--thought he could commit adultery and get by but it made him a liar and murderer. He paid a price with his own family and with his fellowship with God. Read Psalm 51 --the cry of a desperate, broken man!

Samson's loss of spiritual power was a gradual and unnoticed thing. If you had asked him about his spiritual condition he would have spoken with great confidence and mentioned other times when his strength was great but other times, other successes will not do in today's emergency. You and I may have been a great force for God in years gone by but that is not guarantee for today. God is not interested in what we use to be, it what you are now. (How many times have you said to yourself--tomorrow I will begin to read my Bible, tomorrow I will begin to pray more, tomorrow I will live better than today---but tomorrow has never come--you are still on the outside looking in. There is no sense of the presence and power of God in your life.)

God has warned us repeatedly in the Bible about the danger of clinging to pet sins. Do you remember the familiar story of the man who found a jaguar kitten and decided to take it home with him. He fed it from a baby bottle. Soon became a household pet and the talk of the neighborhood. All of this happened in Mexico and hunters had warned the man that such an animal would never be tamed and safe in the home. A jaguar is one of the animals that does not submit association with man. However, the cat seemed quite harmless and was indeed a delightful pet. One evening as the man sat in his favorite easy chair reading a book he felt the cat at his knee. Casually he reached out to stroke its head when he felt its tongue on his hand. Then he remembered he had scratched his hand on some thorns earlier in the day. Looking down he was surprised to see the blood flowing from the cat's rough tongue. Startled the man commanded the cat to go and then with a sharp blow saw the animal slink to the far corner of the room. Then he settled back to the book.

After a few moment the man grew uncomfortable. The silence was eerie and the feeling of danger filled the room. He looked toward the jaguar to see it lying close to the floor, its tail twitching in short angry jerks. The thirst for blood was in its eyes. In a moment it would spring upon him. Breathlessly the man moved his hand toward the table drawer at his side to remove a heavy caliber pistol. Trying his best to be calm, he aimed the revolver at the cat's head and pulled the trigger just as it sprang. Sin is this way--it will overpower us if we play with it!

III. THE SPECTACLE OF SIN IN SAMSON'S LIFE

Satan is a hard taskmaster. He promises happiness, thrills, adventure but he pays off in broken lives, marriages and hopes. What a sad picture to see this national hero grinding at the mill, blind and without mercy or pity. The man who takes God for granted had better get ready for just such a fall. The feast to Dagon was set as the time to make Samson the sport--the comedy of the feast. Even though Samson's eyes were gone--the scars fo sin that remain--God did renew and forgive Samson for his sin. His hair did begin to grow again--v.22. In this little verse God leaves hope for the failures. There is a price to pay for sin but we need not die a failure, the Lord can and will restore us to Himself.

Genesis has been called the most monotonous chapter in the Bible--it is a record of nobodies. The only distinction many of these people possessed was the fact that they were born and they in turn begat children which requires not special recognition in the annal of Scripture. Amidst that dry record of births and deaths we discover the record of a man who was different. In many respects all men can be seen pictured in this chapter. Those who live and die with not great distinction recorded about them. The thing that made Enoch was the fact that he walked in fellowship with God... and he did so in one of the most wicked and difficult time in all of history, just before the Flood when men were as godless as they have been to date in history. Everything about him was designed to drag him down but in spite of his circumstances he walked with God. He did not do this in some remote area of the world or in some some super, special, spiritual atmosphere. From these two men a valuable lesson. When Samson was strong and full of himself he failed miserably. He neglected God in his life and it led to misery and failure. God wants us to be like Enoch--walk with God in close fellowship before we fall into the prisonhouses of this world.

"A CARELESS JUDGE"
Judges 16

Recently, the Detroit papers carried the story of a judge in that city who for over 10 years had not paid his income tax -- (Amazed re a judge in N.Y. Son went free.

Samson was among the last of the judges in Israel. (Reluctant to mention Samson because of the Hollywood concept!)

The Book of Judges is one of Israel's spiritual decline. Israel had failed to become a separated nation -- they inter-married with corrupted pagan peoples and this led to idolatry. They would turn away from God -- in distress, they would repent, cry out for help and this help came to the nation thru men whom God raised up called--Judges. (period covered 300 yrs of Israel's history: ^(Saviors or Deliverers) sin, punishment, repentance, deliver.)

In Samson, a picture of history of Israel: strong when kept the vows to God -- prone to strange loves--defeat and slavery.

I. THE SUBTILITY OF SIN IN THE LIFE OF SAMSON

A. Failure to Live a Separated Life.

Israel was a nation wholly separated unto God.

1. Denominational--doctrine--apostasy.

2. Personal--2 Cor. 6:17==Rom. 12:1

Godly, holy life. Our goals not same as the unsaved.

Vow of Nazarite, v. 17 (3 restrictions)

a. Abstain from fruit of the vine

(Num. 6:3) A life of self-discipline.

b. Abstain from cutting the hair.

His separation not concealed, a marked man, distinguishable in any group. A lack of conformity.

c. Abstain from contact with dead.

B. Failure to Choose a Godly Companion.

Samson headed for sorrow -- how could a godless Philistine know anything about the God of the Bible. (Story after story--it just won't work! Nancy at Buckfield--children often suffer.

II. THE SORROW OF SIN IN THE LIFE OF SAMSON.

v. 20-21.

A. Loss of Power.

Samson was unaware of his weakness until the crisis hour! Application.

He thought he could safely sin because he appeared to get away with it a few times. He thought the power there regardless of his action.

Compromise with Sin:

1. Noah--wine
2. David--adultery
3. Uzziah--power
4. Diotrefes--position
5. Korah--attacking God's ordained leaders.

This loss was gradual. An inch here--a foot, a yard.

Persistence, the Devil's great weapon.

This loss was unnoticed.

He trifled with God once too often!

Nothing for the emergency! A pathetic picture -- prodigal son!

Remember the days of victory--joy was in the life--now--

Jaguar kitten
Mexico - Wilden
pg. 80
Sin will overpower
those who play with it.

III. THE SPECTACLE OF SIN IN THE LIFE OF SAMSON.

Satan a hard taskmaster. Promises joy, thrills, adventure--pays off with broken lives, marriages, despair.

Binds--grinds--(Nickels)

Hope--when by faith seek God's forgiveness--

O.T. example of principle N.T.

(1 Cor. 9:27)

Withdrawal of God's blessing--

try to do work of God--no power!

See
"little
Sins"

One of the most pitiable sights one can see is that of someone who has once known some outstanding position trying to continue on when they are not capable of doing so. An outstanding example of this was Joe Louis in his old age trying to be the devastating champion he had once been.

This was exactly the situation which faced Samson. He had once been strong. Now his idea was to arise and in the power which had been available, conquer his foes with little or no effort--but this time the power was gone! Samson's great mistake was that he forgot that his strength was given by the Lord and it could be withheld when Samson failed to keep his vows. Failure and defeat were hard pills for Samson to swallow but ones he needed to experience before he could know his greatest hour. (But we are getting ahead of the story.)

I. SAMSON'S DEFEAT BEGAN WHEN HE WENT TO THE WRONG PLACE AND SAW THE WRONG THING--14:1ff.

- A. Samson married the wrong girl. He thought he knew more than God. There is a principle of separation in the Bible--Samson ignored it and started down a road that could lead but one way---"down".

II. SAMSON'S DEFEAT CONTINUED WHEN HE SOUGHT TO DEFEAT HIS ENEMY IN THEIR OWN TERRITORY 16:1

- ✓ A. Gaza the greatest of the Philistine cities.

- ✓ B. Samson was a Nazarite-- Numb. 6:2

1. Long hair
2. Strict diet
3. Ceremonially clean

- C. Samson's fall at the hands of Delilah

1. Samson remembered the ropes, gates, and felt him-self strong.
2. "shake ourselves"-- I can remember souls, times of victory. We cannot see our own loss of power.
 - a. Samson a man of strength and wit--but no match for the Philistines and Delilah.
 - b. Samson could not detect danger--kept drawing nearer the danger point. (Sometimes is better to "flee" rather than stay.--1 Tim. 6.
 - c. Yesterdays power and victory will not win today's battle.

(Explain the ministry of the Holy Spirit in O.T.)

III. SAMSON'S PUBLIC DISGRACE 16:23

The route has never changed--Gaza to the prison house! Samson's way back was by way of death. Was this suicide? No, God gave him the power--more like a man dying for his nation--Israel. Heb. 11:32? FAITH TO SAVE

Lesson: Don't miss the power-- Woodstock bowling--
"out of shape--not what use to be! How about it?

Print
App.

POWER FAILURE
Judges 16:20

In the story of Samson we see a picture of the history of Israel. Strong when they kept their covenant with God. Prone to follow strange loves in forbidden territory, resulting in defeat and slavery. However, there is a principle here that extends to any day--lack of power comes because of our strange loves.

I. SAMSON THE SEPARATED-- Judges 13:5

A Nazarite was one who was "consecrated" or dedicated to the Lord. It involved a vow of separation, self-denial and discipline for the purpose of special service. Numbers 6:1ff. 13:5

Background of chapter 13--Samson's parents and the Angelic announcement.

Principle of Separation in the Bible:

For those who would know the blessing of God on the life separation from things that dishonor His name is essential.

Two types of separation:

1. Denominational--God holds us responsible for where we put our support. Reason for an age of substitution--substitute for the gospel--winning souls-- knowledge of Bible. Separation from apostasy.
✓ (My own experience with A.B.C.)
Great mistake to think you can reform it--never do--just get caught up in the web--Paul Settle--now in the machinery of the denomination.*

2. Personal-- Often misunderstood. It does not mean to go off and hide. It means to be "in" the world but not "of" it. Our motives and desires are not the same as theirs. 2 Cor. 6:17 and Romans 12:1
Godliness and holiness of life. Such is impossible for the believer who is taken up with the same pursuits as the unsaved.

II. SAMSON THE STRONG--

1. Slaying a lion--14:5-7
2. Slaying 1000 with jawbone of an ass 15:15
3. Carrying away gates of a city 16:3

But his strength was in the Lord not in himself and because he forgot this he started a downward course:

cf. 14:1 DOWNWARD PATH

Lovcd

women:

- A. Married the wrong girl:

14:3 "she pleaseth me well!" Not does she please the Lord-- a selfish motive.

How important this point is: Strange we can trust the Lord to save us and take us to heaven, but not wait upon the Lord for a companion for life.

****Own case-- greatest sorrow of life.

✓ Nancy at Duckfield. Linda Locke. **Story rope--leg.

B. Mixed with the Wrong Crowd: 16:1 "Gaza"

Stay out of the Devil's territory. * If you have been a drunkard--stay away from the tavern.

The story of Delilah.

C. Revealed His secrets to the enemy.

Samson's discernment was dulled by his associations.

He began to think they were his friends--not such a bad crowd after all.

III. SAMSON THE SLEEPER-- 16:20

Samson assumed that because he was once strong that he would always be thus. Forgot that to use the power of God for selfish purposes is dangerous. When the symbol of his vow is gone--so is his power. (A pityful sight to see a champion in defeat---Joe Lewis)

Application:

⊗ Believers who were once strong in the Lord--witness and Bible, regular in attendance at Church then some strange love captures their attention--the crisis comes when they need that old power---but it is gone-- helpless!

IV. SAMSON THE SPORT-- 16:25

Samson the mighty becomes a public spectacle. Doing the labor of a slave. (This is the devil's pay.) He is a hard taskmaster.

V. SAMSON THE SAVED--Heb. 11:32-34

Samson no coward and had learned his lesson. Ready to die for the cause. 16:22 Hair began to grow again! Thank God we do not have to take defeat!

"JEPHTHAH"
JUDGES 11:1-40See P.M.
Feb. 88

(RELATE DISCUSSION OF TITLE AND RESPONSE OF JEFF WHO?) THE BOOK OF JUDGES HAS BEEN CALLED THE "DARK AGES OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY". IT COVERS APPROXIMATELY 330 YEARS BETWEEN THE TIME OF MOSES AND THE ESTABLISHING OF THE KINGDOM IN HISTORY. DURING THAT TIME, THE PEOPLE OF GOD FOLLOWED A VICIOUS CYCLE. ISRAEL WOULD FORSAKE GOD AND HIS COMMANDMENTS, GET INTO TROUBLE THROUGH OPPRESSION OF HEATHEN NATIONS, CRY OUT TO GOD, AND RECEIVE DELIVERANCE. THE DELIVERANCE WAS IN THE FORM OF SOME 15 MEN AND WOMEN WHOM GOD RAISED UP TO GOVERN ISRAEL DURING THOSE DAYS. THEY WERE INDEED "SAVIORS" TO DELIVER GOD'S OPPRESSED PEOPLE. THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SPENT THIS PERIOD OF TIME FOLLOWING THE CYCLE WITH VERY LITTLE PROGRESS FOR GOD. ONE COMMENTATOR REFERS TO THE PERIOD OF JUDGES AS THE SADDEST CHAPTER IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY, WHEN THERE WAS NO CENTRAL AUTHORITY, AND EVERY MAN DID THAT WHICH WAS RIGHT IN HIS OWN EYES. IN THIS BOOK, BETWEEN GIDEON AND SAMSON WE ARE INTRODUCED TO A MAN WHOSE LIFE AND MINISTRY IS NOT WELL KNOWN - HE WAS THE NINTH JUDGE. HE RULED THE NATION FOR SIX YEARS.

I. JEPHTHAH: A MAN WITH FAMILY PROBLEMS - vs. 1-3

EVERY FAMILY HAS PROBLEMS. SOME ARE MORE SEVERE THAN OTHERS AND SOME ARE DEALT WITH MORE SUCCESSFULLY THAN OTHERS, BUT ALL HAVE PROBLEMS. NONE ESCAPE. THE PEOPLE IN THE BIBLE WERE NOT IMMUNE FROM SUCH DAILY DIFFICULTIES. FOR EXAMPLE, DAVID HAD REBELLIOUS SONS. ABRAHAM HAD DIFFICULTIES WITH HIS NEPHEW, LOT. ESAU AND JACOB WERE THE CLASSIC BROTHER ANTAGONISTS. AS A MATTER OF FACT, FAVORITISM BY REBEKAH CONCERNING JACOB WAS A SEVERE PROBLEM IN THAT FAMILY. TODAY, DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN HUSBANDS AND WIVES, CHILDREN AND PARENTS, CHILDREN AND CHILDREN, IN-LAWS, FINANCIAL, CIRCUMSTANCES, AND A THOUSAND OTHER DIFFICULTIES EXIST IN THE HOMES REPRESENTED HERE TODAY. JEPHTHAH'S MOTHER WAS A HARLOT. HE WAS NOT ACCEPTED BY THE REST OF THE FAMILY AND HIS ILLEGITIMACY RESULTED IN HIS BEING EXCLUDED OR EXPELLED FROM THE FAMILY CIRCLE BY HIS HALF-BROTHERS. (RELATE JOSEPH'S EXPERIENCE WITH HIS BROTHERS.) JEPHTHAH'S BROTHERS WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR INHERITANCE, HIS EXPULSION HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH CHARACTER OR ABILITY, FOR HE HAD DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF AS A MILITARY MAN.

Adam
Can
also

SIMPLY STATED, JEPHTHAH WAS RESTRICTED FROM THE FAMILY CIRCLE, NOT FOR SOMETHING WHICH HE HAD DONE, BUT FOR SOMETHING OVER WHICH HE HAD ABSOLUTELY NO CONTROL - HIS BIRTH. JEPHTHAH FLED TO TOB, WHICH IS A TOWN IN SYRIA, AND THERE GATHERED AROUND HIM A GROUP OF UNEMPLOYED ROGUES, AND OUT OF THIS WILD, RECKLESS, OUTLAW BAND WELDED AN EFFECTIVE FIGHTING FORCE OVER WHICH HE BECAME THE CHIEF LEADER. IT IS INTERESTING TO OBSERVE THAT JEPHTHAH'S HEREDITY AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS DID NOT PERMANENTLY RESTRICT HIS CAREER, FOR HE SOON TOOK AN HONORABLE PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL. (BY THE WAY, FAMILY PROBLEMS ARE "IN" NOW. IT IS IN VOGUE TO BE A FAMILY COUNSELOR, AND OUR COUNTRY IS RAPIDLY FILLING UP WITH EXPERTS ON THE FAMILY, PEOPLE WHO CHARGE OTHER PEOPLE TO TELL OTHER PEOPLE HOW TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS WHICH THE COUNSELOR HIMSELF HAS OFTEN FAILED TO RESOLVE!)

"Too CUTE"



Too Slick

II. JEPHTHAH: A MAN FOR THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY - VS. 4-11

THE AMMONITES WERE THREATENING WAR WITH ISRAEL. THERE WAS GREAT CONCERN IN THE LAND CONCERNING ISRAEL'S DEFENSE POSTURE. THE NATIONAL NEED WAS FOR A SKILLED WARRIOR TO FORGE SOME KIND OF NATIONAL DEFENSE POLICY AND FORCE TO DEAL WITH THE THREAT OF AMMON. THE LEADERS OF THE NATION WENT TO JEPHTHAH AND REQUESTED HIS ASSISTANCE IN DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM. IN THE PRESENCE OF NATIONAL DANGER, JEPHTHAH'S BACKGROUND AND HEREDITY, OR HIS INFERIOR STATUS AND STIGMA IN SOCIETY, WAS QUICKLY FORGOTTEN. THEY NEEDED HIM, AND WITH "HAT IN HAND" THEY ASKED FOR HIS ASSISTANCE. IN TIME OF DANGER, HIS LEGITIMACY AND POSITION OF A SOCIAL REGISTER WERE OF ABSOLUTELY NO CONCERN - BIG PROBLEM WAS COULD HE FIGHT! (STORY OF BOXER) JEPHTHAH'S CONDITION FOR ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE WAS IF HE WON, HE WOULD RETAIN HIS LEADERSHIP IN ISRAEL AFTER THE VICTORY. JEPHTHAH'S APPROACH TO THE CHILDREN OF AMMON DISPLAYS HIS DIPLOMACY AND ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE. JEPHTHAH WAS NO WAR-MONGER. EVEN THOUGH HE HAD PROVEN HIMSELF TO BE A COMPETENT WARRIOR, HE STILL SOUGHT A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. HE TRIED TO AVOID WAR AND WAS COURTEOUS YET FIRM EVEN IN DEALING WITH AGGRESSIVE ENEMIES. THE KING OF AMMON CHARGED THAT ISRAEL POSSESSED THEIR LAND THROUGH IMPERIALISTIC OR CONQUEST EFFORTS. HOWEVER, JEPHTHAH REMINDED THE KING THAT THE LAND CAME TO ISRAEL 300 YEARS BEFORE AND WAS GIVEN TO THEM BY GOD. HIS QUESTION WAS WHY HAD NOTHING BEEN SAID OR DONE

v. 12-14

FOR 300 YEARS. NOW, ALL OF A SUDDEN, IT IS A BIG MATTER, WHEN IN FACT THEY HAD RECEIVED THE LAND BY DIVINE GRANT. WHEN THE AMMONITES REFUSED TO NEGOTIATE, JEPHTHAH LED ISRAEL INTO A FULL AND COMPLETE VICTORY OVER THE AMMONITES, CAPTURING 20 CITIES IN THE PROCESS. HOWEVER, BEFORE HE WENT INTO BATTLE, HE MADE A VOW TO GOD, AND THIS IS THE HEART AND KEY STUDY IN THE CHAPTER.

III. JEPHTHAH: A MAN WHO MADE AND KEPT HIS VOW TO GOD - vs. 30-40

THERE IS WIDE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION CONCERNING THE EXECUTION OF JEPHTHAH'S VOW. THERE ARE BASICALLY 2 VIEWS: (1) JEPHTHAH FULFILLED HIS VOW BY SACRIFICING HIS DAUGHTER'S LIFE. (2) JEPHTHAH FULFILLED HIS VOW BY SETTING HIS DAUGHTER ASIDE TO SERVICE IN THE SANCTUARY AND TO PERPETUAL VIRGINITY, THUS ELIMINATING THE POSSIBILITY OF ANY HEIRS IN HIS FAMILY. THE LATTER VIEW SEEMS TO BE MORE IN KEEPING WITH THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF GOD, AS REVEALED IN THE BIBLE. THE TERM "BURNT OFFERING" SUGGESTS A WHOLE OFFERING, AND HUMAN SACRIFICES WERE NEVER USED AS BURNT OFFERINGS, ALWAYS ANIMALS. THE PRACTICE OF LIVING SACRIFICES WAS A PAGAN PRACTICE, AN ABOMINATION TO GOD AND FORBIDDEN IN SCRIPTURE. (DEUT. 12: 31) THE LATTER VERSES OF THE CHAPTER SEEM TO STRENGTHEN THE IDEA THAT VOW INVOLVED CONSECRATION OF JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER TO TEMPLE SERVICE IN ACCORDANCE WITH LEVITICUS 27:1-8. HER SORROW WAS THAT OF DISGRACE INVOLVING CHILDLESSNESS. THERE WOULD BE NO POINT IN WEeping OVER HER VIRGINITY IF SHE WAS GOING TO LOSE HER LIFE IN SUCH A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME! SHE WAS AN ONLY CHILD, AND THUS JEPHTHAH WOULD NEVER HAVE GRANDCHILDREN, NO HEIRS WHICH WERE LOOKED UPON AS A BLESSING FROM GOD, AND, THEREFORE, THIS ACT ON HIS AND HER PART WAS A GREAT SACRIFICE TO BE SURE. WHERE NO ANIMAL SACRIFICE WAS MADE, THE PRIEST ASSESSED MONETARY PAYMENT AND, IN THIS CASE, THE MONETARY OFFERING COULD BE MADE AND THE PERSON DEDICATED TO SERVICE IN THE SANCTUARY. W.G. MOORHEAD HAS SAID: "IN SPITE OF THE STRONG ARGUMENTS HEARD IN SUPPORT OF THE VIEW THAT HE ACTUALLY OFFERED HIS DAUGHTER IN SACRIFICE TO GOD, IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS VOW, THERE IS ENOUGH GROUND IN THE SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS NARRATIVE TO JUSTIFY A MORE HUMANE INTERPRETATION. IT SEEMS MORE IN HARMONY WITH THE PLACE GIVEN JEPHTHAH AMONG THE SAINTS, AND WITH HER BEWAILING HER VIRGINITY THAT THE FATHER DEVOTED HIS DAUGHTER TO A LIFE OF CELIBACY AND SECLUSION." INVOLVEMENT WITH THE TEXTUAL AND CRITICAL ASPECTS OF THIS PROBLEM MAKE IT EASY

① Sacrifice View

② Service View

Key:
TO FORGET THE HEART OF THE PASSAGE. THE POINT IS THAT THE FATHER WAS A MAN OF INTEGRITY AND HONOR. EVEN THOUGHT IT MEANT CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL SACRIFICE AND HEART-RENDING ON HIS PART, HE KEPT HIS VOW TO GOD. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, VOWS WERE ALWAYS VOLUNTARY AND NEVER MANDATORY. (DEUT. 23: 22) HOWEVER, WHEN A VOW WAS MADE, GENERALLY AS AN EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE TO GOD, & OFTEN DONE IN TIME OF DISTRESS, THESE VOWS WERE ALWAYS LOOKED UPON WITH GRAVITY BY GOD. THEREFORE, IT WAS WISE FOR A PERSON NOT TO MAKE A VOW LIKELY OR WITHOUT SOMBER REFLECTION. BETTER NOT TO MAKE A VOW THAN TO MAKE IT WITH NO INTENTIONS OF CARRYING IT OUT. VOWS OFTEN INCLUDED PROMISES TO PERFORM CERTAIN THINGS OR TO MAKE CERTAIN OFFERINGS IN RETURN FOR CERTAIN BENEFITS FROM GOD. ALSO, FATHERS COULD VETO THE VOWS OF CHILDREN AND HUSBANDS THE VOWS OF WIVES; BUT IF A HUSBAND CAUSED HIS WIFE TO BREAK A VOW, THE SIN WAS HIS, NOT HERS. (NUMBERS 30)
MC
(THE STORY IS TOLD OF A MAN IN ANCIENT TIMES WHO WENT ON A VOYAGE TO ANOTHER COUNTRY. ENROUTE THEY ENCOUNTERED STORMY SEAS, AND DURING THE STRESS OF THE STORM IN FEAR OF DROWNING, THE MAN PRAYED TO HIS GOD AND VOWED TO SACRIFICE 10 FAT OXEN IF HIS LIFE WERE SPARED. THE STORM PASSED AND THE SEA BECAME CALM AGAIN. WHEN HE LANDED AT THE PORT, AND AS HE THOUGHT ABOUT HIS PROMISE TO SACRIFICE 10 OXEN, THE THOUGHT OCCURRED TO HIM THAT 5 MIGHT SATISFY HIS GOD JUST AS WELL AS 10. AS HE MADE HIS WAY HOME AND CONTINUED TO THINK ABOUT THE VOW, HE RESOLVED TO REDUCE THE NUMBER FROM 5 TO 2 OXEN. HAVING REACHED HOME WITHOUT MISHAP, AND AS HE LAY ON HIS BED THINKING OF HIS VOW, THE IDEA OF ONE FAT BULLOCK SEEMED FAR MORE APPROPRIATE AND REALISTIC. AWAKING LATE IN THE NIGHT, HE CHANGED HIS MIND AGAIN, FROM AN OX TO A GOAT. NEXT DAY, WHILE TALKING TO HIS WIFE ABOUT HIS INTENDED OFFERING OF ONE GOAT TO HIS GOD IN GRATITUDE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HIS LIFE, SHE OBJECTED AND SUGGESTED THAT HE OFFER THE GOD IN THE TEMPLE A LARGE BASKET OF NUTS. AFTER ALL, SURELY THE GOD WOULD BE MORE PLEASED WITH NUTS THAN WITH ANIMAL SACRIFICE. SO, HE PREPARED A BASKET OF NUTS, AND, WHILE ON HIS WAY TO THE TEMPLE, HE BECAME HUNGRY. AND AS HE WALKED ALONG, HE PROCEEDED TO SHELL AND EAT THE NUTS. SO WHEN HE ARRIVED AT THE TEMPLE, ALL HE HAD LEFT TO PAY HIS VOW WAS THE BASKET OF HUSKS. (THIS FANCIFUL STORY REMINDS US OF THE SHALLOW COMMITMENT OF MANY PEOPLE WHEN IT COMES TO VOWS OR OATHS BEFORE GOD. WE ARE QUICK TO ASK GOD FOR HIS ASSISTANCE, AND EVEN MAKE COMMITMENTS IN TIMES OF CRISIS. HOWEVER, WHEN THE CRISIS IS OVER, WE OFTEN FORGET OUR

(See Burch)

VOWS. (IT WAS NOT UNTIL JONAH GOT INTO DEEP TROUBLE THAT HE WAS WILLING TO PAY HIS VOW - JONAH 2:9) THE MOST FAMILIAR VOW MOST OF US TAKE HAS TO DO WITH MARRIAGE. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT MARRIAGE IS FOR LIFE. CHURCHES DIFFER IN THEIR INTERPRETATION OF DIVORCE, BUT MOST GROUPS SEE DIVORCE MORE LIKE THE LOSS OF A LIMB IN A SURGICAL OPERATION THAN A BUSINESS DEAL BROUGHT TO A CONCLUSION! WE LIVE IN AN AGE WHERE LEGISLATION TO MAKE DIVORCE EASY HAS BROUGHT TO OUR SOCIETY A CASUAL APPROACH TO LIFE TO THE EXTENT THAT THE WORD COMMITMENT HAS BEEN TAKEN OUT OF THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP. AS A MATTER OF FACT, A CHILD IN THE FAMILY IS A SIGN OR PROOF OF A LOVE COMMITMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY OF ONE MARRIED PARTNER TO THE OTHER. IN THE SCRIPTURES, THESE TWO PEOPLE ARE VIEWED AS ONE FLESH, JUST AS ONE WOULD VIEW A VIOLIN AND BOW OR LOCK AND KEY AS TWO HALVES OF A SINGLE UNIT. DIVORCE WOULD BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT IF EACH PARTNER IN THE MARRIAGE AGREEMENT VIEWED MARRIAGE FOR LIFE, AND THEIR VOWS AS AN AGREEMENT TO DO WHAT THEY HAVE SAID THEY WILL DO. HOWEVER, WE TEND TO TREAT GOD AS WE DO OUR FELLOW MAN IN THE SENSE THAT OUR WORD DOESN'T MEAN MUCH ANY MORE. THE PROBLEM IS THAT GOD DOES NOT VIEW PROMISES, OATHS, AND VOWS AS LIGHTLY AS WE DO. WHAT WE PROMISE GOD WE WILL DO, WE'D BETTER DO! SANDERS MAKES THIS STARTLING STATEMENT IN HIS BOOK ENTITLED PEOPLE JUST LIKE US: "VOWS ARE VERY UNFASHIONABLE TODAY.... THIS IS AN AGE WHEN MORAL COMMITMENTS AND PLEDGES TO GOD ARE SELDOM ASKED FOR. SO LOW IS THE CONDITION OF MODERN CHRISTENDOM THAT VOWS ARE BROKEN; THEY ARE BROKEN IN MARRIAGE NOW MORE FREELY THAN EVER IN THE HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY, THEY ARE BROKEN BETWEEN NATIONS WITH IMPUNITY."

IV. JEPHTHAH: A MAN OF SAVING FAITH - HEBREWS 11:

32

I WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THIS JUDGE IN GOD'S GREAT HALL OF FAME OF FAITH. APPARENTLY, JEPHTHAH'S FAITH ENABLED HIS TO CONQUER KINGDOMS, BE MIGHTY IN BATTLE, AND PUT TO FLIGHT FOREIGN ARMIES - HEBREWS 11:33-34. THERE WAS ONE ASPECT OF JEPHTHAH'S LIFE WHICH LIFTED HIM OUT OF THE ORDINARY INTO THE EXTRAORDINARY, AND THAT HAD TO DO WITH HIS BELIEF IN GOD. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THAT SAME ELEMENT WILL DO THE SAME FOR EVERYONE WHO TRUSTS GOD. SANDERS SAYS: "FAITH ENABLES THE BELIEVING SOUL TO TREAT THE FUTURE AS PRESENT AND THE INVISIBLE AS SEEN. IT IS A HOME IN THE REALM OF THE IMPOSSIBLE AS WELL AS IN THE REALM OF THE

POSSIBLE, FOR IT RELIES ON A GOD WHO KNOWS NO LIMITATIONS." FAITH ENABLES THE BELIEVER TO FASTEN HIS GAZE ON UNSEEN THINGS AND APPROPRIATE THE PROMISES OF GOD AS IF HE WERE SEEING. FAITH IS TO THE SOUL WHAT EYES ARE TO THE BODY. GOD HAS MADE CERTAIN PROMISES IN THE BIBLE. THESE PROMISES DEPEND UPON THE CHARACTER AND RESOURCES OF THE GOD WHO MADE THE PROMISE. THESE PROMISES ARE JUST AS VALID AS A BANK NOTE WHICH DEPENDS UPON THE RESOURCES OF A BANK UPON WHICH IT IS DRAWN. GOD'S CHARACTER IS INVOLVED IN THE PROMISES IN THE BIBLE. FAITH ENABLES ONE TO GRASP THESE PROMISES AND ACT UPON THEM. (COMPARE JOHN 6:37) AN ELDERLY CHRISTIAN LADY CONFIRMED HER FAITH IN GOD BECAUSE OF THE PLAIN DECLARATION IN SCRIPTURE. AN ATHEIST ASKED HER: "BUT WHAT IF GOD DOES NOT KEEP HIS PROMISE?" "IF HE DOES NOT KEEP HIS PROMISE, I WILL LOSE MY SOUL, BUT GOD WILL LOSE HIS CHARACTER AND CREDIBILITY." FAITH IS NOT A LEAP INTO THE UNKNOWN HOPING GOD IS THERE AND WILL CATCH YOU; IT IS RESTING YOUR CONFIDENCE UPON GOD'S PROMISES AND COMMITMENTS TO US. NOAH BELIEVED GOD WHEN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASIER TO BELIEVE MAN. GOD IS NOT ASKING US TO DO SOMETHING SILLY OR GOOFY. HE IS ASKING US TO BELIEVE HIS WORD AND ACT UPON IT.

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

JANUARY 1, 1984

AM Feb 1992

TO MOAB AND BACK

"the move TO
MOAB - AND
Back."

RUTH 1:1-22

The Misery of Moab

My INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF RUTH WAS IN SEMINARY WHEN DR. MCGEE WAS A VISITING LECTURER. SEVERAL BOOKS IN THE BIBLE BEAR THE NAMES OF MEN BUT ONLY TWO THE NAMES OF WOMEN. IN ESTHER, THE GREAT DOCTRINE IS THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD. IN RUTH, THE DOCTRINE IS REDEMPTION SET FORTH IN A LOVE STORY EVEN THOUGH THE WORD LOVE DOES NOT APPEAR IN THE BOOK! THE STORY REVEALS HOW A GENTILE GIRL, CONDEMNED BY LAW, WAS BROUGHT INTO THE FAVOR OF A JEW NAMED BOAZ. THIS WAS ALL DONE THROUGH GRACE. IT IS A PICTURE OF GOD'S LOVE AND GRACE EXTENDED TO MANKIND. THE BOOK TAKES PLACE IN THE TIME OF THE JUDGES. THERE ARE THREE KEY WORDS TO HELP UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BOOK.

RK

(1) DOCTRINALLY - REDEMPTION IS THE THEME. MCGEE IS CORRECT IN CALLING THE BOOK "THE ROMANCE OF REDEMPTION". REDEMPTION FOR RUTH DID NOT COME THROUGH HER WORKS NOR WAS IT A COLD BUSINESS DEAL BUT RATHER IT WAS AN AFFAIR OF THE HEART - A LOVE AFFAIR IF YOU PLEASE. (A love story - But the word love does not appear in the text.)

(2) DISPENSATIONALLY - RUTH IS A TYPE OF A CHURCH, BOAZ A TYPE OF CHRIST.

IN THIS LOVE STORY, WE SEE A PICTURE OF GOD'S SALVATION BROUGHT TO GENTILES IN SPITE OF ISRAEL'S FAILURE.

their love
story = a
picture of a
greater
love
story.

(3) DEVOTIONALLY - THERE ARE MANY APPLICATIONS OF BIBLE TRUTHS SUITABLE FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING.

OUTLINES OF BOOKS AND CHAPTERS ARE DIFFICULT TO REMEMBER, EVEN THOUGH NECESSARY. LET ME SUGGEST 4 WORDS AROUND WHICH WE WILL CENTER OUR CONSIDERATION OF CHAPTER 1:

(1) DEPARTURE: AN IMMIGRANT JEWISH FAMILY MOVED FROM BETHLEHEM TO MOAB - V. 1-5

IT WAS A TIME IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY WHEN MEN WHO WERE CALLED JUDGES THAT IS, DIVINELY APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVES WHO ACTED FOR GOD IN RELIGIOUS AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS IN ISRAEL, WERE IN POWER. THEY WERE DIVINE DELIVERERS OR GENERALS OVER THE NATION. IT WAS A TIME OF FAMINE. FOR ANY JEWISH FAMILY, GOD'S BLESSING WAS UPON THE LAND OF PALESTINE. TO MOVE FROM THAT DIVINELY DIRECTED AREA INTO OTHER COUNTRIES SURROUNDED BY PAGAN PRACTICES WAS UNTHINKABLE EVEN IN TIMES OF DIRE NECESSITY. THE TERM FAMINE SUGGESTS MORE THAN HARD TIMES BUT A DIRE NEED. HUMANLY SPEAKING, ONE CAN UNDERSTAND THE DESIRE TO ESCAPE THE DISCOMFORTS OF LIFE BUT SOMETIMES GOD IS TRYING TO TEACH US AND TEST US EVEN IN THE SEVERE CIRCUMSTANCES. THIS IS SOMETHING ELIMELECH DID NOT TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION. MOAB IS A FERTILE LAND EAST OF THE DEAD SEA. IT IS APPROXIMATELY 50 MILES LONG, 30 MILES WIDE ON A HIGH LEVEL TABLELAND 3000 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL, 4300 FEET ABOVE THE DEAD SEA. IT WAS A COUNTRY WHERE CHEMOSH WAS WORSHIPPED AS DIETY - A GOD TO HUMAN SACRIFICES WERE OFFERED. THE MEANING OF

Norman
Shaw's legs

A time of
testing -

Gen 12:10
Abraham

ISA.
30:1-2
31:1

Bounded by
Dead Sea
Desert

NOT A
Flower pot!

MOAB = outcasts - wasteland?
Psa. 108:9 "Moab is my washpot"
60:8 - garbage can
"gubsville"
(From hunger
break to promise to =
prophetic
symbol)

THE NAMES IS SIGNIFICANT. **ELIMELECH** MEANS GOD IS KING. **NAOMI** MEANS PLEASANTNESS. **MAHLON** MEANS SICKLY AND SO DOES **CHILION**. THE MARRIAGE OF THESE TWO BOYS TO MOABITE GIRLS WAS SPECIFICALLY FORBIDDEN IN THE LAW. (DEUTERONOMY 7:3, 23:3) WHEN WE LOOK AT THESE VERSES IN A CONTEMPORARY SETTING OR TERMS, IT SPELLED HARD TIMES FOR ELIMELECH AND HIS FAMILY BUT IT MAY ALSO SPEAK OF THEIR LACK OF FAITH. IF GOD PERMITTED THE FAMINE, THEN HE WOULD ALSO PROVIDE THE FOOD. BUT, TECHNICALLY SPEAKING, IN THE HOUSE OF BREAD, THERE WAS NO BREAD IN THE HOUSE! ELIMELECH'S SECURITY WAS THREATENED AND HE MOVED TO ANOTHER LAND AND TECHNICALLY SPEAKING, INTO A VERY STRESSFUL SITUATION. DURING THE 10 YEARS IN MOAB THERE WAS ONE MOVE, TWO WEDDINGS, THREE FUNERALS. (EXPLAIN) A PSYCHIATRIST HAS DEVELOPED A STRESS CHART REGARDING LIFE CHANGES. CERTAIN LIFE SITUATIONS ARE RATED FROM 10 TO 100. FOR EXAMPLE, A MINOR VIOLATION OF THE LAW SUCH AS A PARKING TICKET RATES 11. THE DEATH OF A SPOUSE RATES 100. ACCORDING TO THE CHART, LIFE-CHANGING SITUATIONS IN EXCESS OF 200 IN A SINGLE YEAR MAY CAUSE PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS. FOR EXAMPLE, TROUBLE WITH THE BOSS EQUALS 23, ILLNESS EQUALS 53, A JAIL TERM EQUALS 63, FINANCIAL WOES EQUALS 38, TROUBLE WITH IN-LAWS EQUALS 29, VACATION EQUALS 13, CHRISTMAS EQUALS 12. ACCORDING TO THE CHART A MOVE EQUALS 20, A MARRIAGE OF TWO SONS EQUALS 106, DEATH OF A SPOUSE EQUALS 100, DEATH OF A FAMILY MEMBER EQUALS 63. IF YOU ADD ALL THESE FACTORS TOGETHER ONE DISCOVERES THAT THE STRESS FACTOR IN A SINGLE YEAR FOR THIS FAMILY WAS TWICE THE ACCEPTED LEVEL OR MORE! DOWN IN MOAB,

Today that there's diff times

THIS FAMILY HAD NO CHURCH OR RELIGIOUS TIES BUT WERE EXPOSED TO HEATHEN GODS AND STRANGE THINGS DONE IN THE NAME OF RELIGION. IF NAMES MEAN ANYTHING, IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND HOW TWO MOABITE BEAUTIES WOULD MARRY THE "SICK BROTHERS". IN SIMPLE SUMMARY, IN A 10 YEAR PERIOD THIS FAMILY FELL APART - ALL OF THE MEN DIED! IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF THESE DEATHS. THE WIDOWS HAD NO VISIBLE MEANS OF SUPPORT AND THERE WERE NO OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT OR SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE FOR THE NEEDY. IT WOULD BE HARD TO IMAGINE A WORSE SITUATION FOR THREE WOMEN. HUMANLY SPEAKING, THEY WERE IN BIG TROUBLE WITH SUCH THINGS AS WHERE THEIR NEXT MEAL WAS COMING FROM. IT WAS A QUESTION OF SURVIVAL.

The Job Syndrome

Survival I

II. DECISIONS: THREE WIDOWS WHO MADE Difficult DECISIONS - V. 6-15

A FAMILY SHATTERED BY DEATH AND DECISIONS REQUIRED.

A. NAOMI = *the end of Bad mother-in-law jokes! closeness*

SHE WAS LEFT WITHOUT A HUSBAND OR SONS WITH TWO DEPENDENTS, NO JOB, NO PROSPECTS, A WIDOW IN A FOREIGN LAND. FAR FROM HOME AND FRIENDS AND IN DEEP NEED, THIS WIDOW BEGAN TO THINK OF HOME AS SHE HEARD OF NEWS CONCERNING THE FAMINE BEING OVER. SIMPLY STATED, THERE WAS NOTHING IN MOAB FOR HER. (SOMEONE SUGGESTED THAT IN CONTEMPORARY TERMS WHILE IN MOAB, NAOMI

mac Donalds

STOPPED IN AT A LOCAL TRUCK STOP, HEARD "COUNTRY ROADS" ON THE JUKE BOX AND GOT HOMESICK!) A PRODIGAL FAMILY THINKING OF HOME. HOWEVER, NAOMI BELIEVED THAT THE POSSIBILITIES FOR HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY FOR HER DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW WAS BETTER IN MOAB THAN IN ISRAEL. IN AN UNSELFISH GESTURE, SHE MADE NO ATTEMPT TO HOLD ON TO THESE TWO GIRLS. NAOMI APPEARED TO BE AN UNSELFISH PERSON WHOSE DESIRE WAS TO DO WHAT WAS BEST FOR RUTH AND ORPAH. IN A "ME FIRST" GENERATION, THIS KIND OF SELFLESSNESS IS RARE, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT CONCERNS SURVIVAL!

Not thinking of herself - then well for her not for them well for.

(MOAB & ISRAEL -
not much to do with ea. other
"no deal" - not Red deal!)

B. ORPAH -

A COMPARISON OF VERSE 10 AND VERSE 14 WOULD SUGGEST THAT ORPAH BEGAN THE JOURNEY BACK TO JERUSALEM BUT WAS EASILY PERSUADED TO TURN BACK. (LIKE PLIABLE IN PILGRIM'S PROGRESS) ORPAH TURNED BACK AND WAS NEVER HEARD OF AGAIN! SHE REPRESENTS A CLASS OF PEOPLE WHOSE FAITH AND DEVOTION TO GOD AND OTHERS WILL NOT STAND THE TEST OF HARD TIMES AND POVERTY. THEY MOVED ON THE BASIS OF WHAT THEY CAN SEE AND HAVE. SHE CHANGED HER MIND AND HER LOYALTY SHIFTED FROM NAOMI TO HER HOME COUNTRY OF MOAB.

C. RUTH

RUTH WOULD NOT TURN BACK. SHE REPRESENTS PEOPLE OF FAITH WHO WILL NOT TURN BACK EVEN THOUGH ADVERSITY IS EVERYWHERE. SHE WAS WITH NAOMI NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED.

this woman - no negatives mentioned
Beauty, charm, spirituality

Relocation II

Back to her gods! ← To her old life. never heard of again! How many little girls read?

Mk. 4:16
Strong so: L

III. DEVOTION: RUTH A PERSON OF DEEP LOYALTY AND DEVOTION - V. 16-18

THERE IS SOMETHING INCREDIBLE ABOUT RUTH'S VOW TO NAOMI, NAMELY, RUTH ASKED FOR NOTHING IN RETURN. IT WAS HER VOW THAT NO IF'S, AND'S OR MAYBE'S - SHE HAD NO CONTINGENCY PLAN. IT WAS SIMPLY A 7-POINT RESOLUTION:

Woman's nature
1. WHERE YOU GO - I GO - RUTH HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING WHERE NAOMI MIGHT GO. IT MIGHT BE TO BETHLEHEM AND BEYOND AND NAOMI MADE NO PROMISES OR GUARANTEES CONCERNING THE FUTURE. AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT LOOKED LIKE "POVERTYVILLE" FOR BOTH OF THEM FOR LIFE. IT LOOKED AS IF RUTH WAS CHOOSING A LIFE OF POVERTY AND REJECTION IN ORDER TO BE NEAR NAOMI. *→ NOT A PASSPORT TO PROSPERITY!*

2. WHERE YOU LODGE - I LODGE - RUTH DID NOT ASK WHAT THE CONDITIONS OR ACCOMMODATIONS MIGHT BE. AS A MATTER OF FACT, IT MIGHT INVOLVE NO HOUSE AT ALL. FOOD WOULD BE SCARCE BUT WHAT WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR NAOMI WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR RUTH. SHE WOULD TAKE WHATEVER NAOMI HAD.

3. THY PEOPLE - MY PEOPLE - THE CUSTOMS OF JEWS AND THE IDENTITY OF THEIR HOMELAND WOULD BE RUTH'S. LOSS OF ALL NATIONAL IDENTITY, SHE WAS NO LONGER A MOABITESS. *Citizenship*

4. THY GOD - MY GOD - THE FAITH OF NAOMI WOULD BE THE FAITH OF RUTH. THERE WOULD BE NO IDOLS, NO FALSE GODS BUT THE ONE TRUE GOD. *→ the spiritual over the material = a must for ministry!*

III Devotion

-7-

like

(of "alt. side"
of Hostage -
short temple
& depressed)

5. ~~IF~~ YOU DIE - I WILL DIE - NAOMI'S CEMETERY WOULD BE RUTH'S. SIDE BY SIDE, PLOT BY PLOT.

6. WHERE YOU ARE BURIED - I WILL BE BURIED - HUSBANDS AND WIVES ARE OFTEN SENSITIVE AND CAREFUL ABOUT THIS VERY THING.

Ma.H.
4:19-20 7. ONLY DEATH WILL PART US - SUCH WAS THE DEVOTION OF A REMARKABLE WOMAN. RUTH'S DEVOTION WAS REVEALED BY FOLLOWING NAOMI TO BETHLEHEM. ~~FOLLOWING IS ALWAYS A TEST OF FAITH~~ JESUS SAID, "FOLLOW ME!" HE WILL LEAD IF WE WILL FOLLOW. (EXPLAIN IN LIGHT OF A PUBLIC INVITATION) RUTH SAW MORE THAN THINGS - COMFORTS - FAMILY - SHE PUT HER HAND IN THE HAND OF GOD AND BY FAITH SHE SAW BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE CIRCUMSTANCES.

IV. DESPAIR: NAOMI SAW HER PRESENT SITUATION AS BAD BUT SHE WAS WRONG - V. 19:22

I Departure
II Decisions
III Devotion

THE WORDS EMPTY, BITTER AND AFFLICTED ARE WORDS TO DESCRIBE NAOMI'S FEELINGS. A SERIES OF CALAMITIES HAD CAUSED HER FAITH TO COLLAPSE. TO HER, THINGS HAD GONE FROM BAD TO WORSE. WHEN HER NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS SAW NAOMI THEY WERE SURPRISED AT NOT EXPECTING TO SEE HER OR THE TEN YEARS IN MOAB MAY HAVE TAKEN TOLL AND NAOMI WAS PREMATURELY WEARY AND WORN. JUST AS THE PRODIGAL SON RETURNED HOME TO HIS FATHER'S HOUSE, SO NAOMI RETURNED A PRODIGAL DAUGHTER. THE PATH TO MOAB AND BACK HAD BEEN ONE FROM FULLNESS TO EMPTINESS! IN GENESIS 42:36, JACOB EXPRESSED A SIMILAR SENTIMENT. IN JACOB'S LIFE, THERE HAD BEEN MANY DARK HOURS BUT THIS WAS THE DARKEST! IT WAS THE STRAW

IV. Despair

THAT BROKE HIS BACK. JACOB BELIEVED THAT EVERYTHING WAS AGAINST HIM - JOSEPH WAS DEAD, SIMEON A PRISONER IN EGYPT AND NOW A PLEA FOR BENJAMIN. COUPLED WITH THIS FAMILY PROBLEM WAS A SEVERE FAMINE. IN JACOB'S EYES, EVERYTHING WAS AGAINST HIM!

WE, LIKE JACOB AND NAOMI, HAVE SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES IN LIFE. A SINGLE EVENT MIGHT BE OVERCOME BUT THE ACCUMULATED WEIGHT OF ONE SITUATION AFTER ANOTHER SOMETIMES SEEMS MORE THAN THE SOUL CAN BEAR. EVERYONE HAS SUCH CRISES. THE

ACCUMULATED THINGS OF LIFE SEEM TO BE TOO MUCH. (JOB HAD SUCH A DAY WHEN HE LOST EVERYTHING IN A MATTER OF HOURS.

RELATE I.E.S. REGARDING LOSS OF HUSBAND, BROTHER, SISTER IN A ONE YEAR PERIOD!)

THE POINT OF THIS STORY IS THAT BOTH JACOB AND NAOMI WERE WRONG! GOD'S PATH FOR US MAY APPEAR TO BE BITTER AND EMPTY BUT WAIT 'TIL THE PICTURE CLEARS. NEVER DESPAIR OF LIFE, GOD IS WORKING IN WAYS WE CANNOT SEE BRINGING GOOD OUT OF WHAT MAY APPEAR TO BE EVIL. (GENESIS 50:20) THE

PROBLEM IS OUR RESTRICTED VISION AND FAITH. HOW YOU AND I REACT AND DEAL WITH THE DARK DAYS AND HARD CIRCUMSTANCES IS ONE OF THE GREAT TESTS OF CHARACTER.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, FOR BOTH JACOB AND NAOMI EVERYTHING WAS REALLY WORKING FOR THEM AND THEIR GOOD, NOT AGAINST THEM!

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE WOULD SOON TURN AROUND COMPLETELY AND THEY WOULD SEE LIFE FROM A DIFFERENT VANTAGE POINT. DON'T MISS THE LAST SENTENCE IN VERSE 22 - "IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF BARLEY HARVEST." A NEW BEGINNING WAS JUST AROUND THE CORNER.

ARE YOU READY TO QUIT? GIVE UP? DO YOU

Few months move too!

FEEL THAT EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE IS AGAINST YOU? THE BEST MAY BE JUST AROUND THE CORNER. GOD HAS GOOD THINGS IN STORE FOR HIS PEOPLE IF THEY WILL SIMPLY BE PATIENT AND WAIT ON HIM! IF YOU ARE A BELIEVER, YOU AND I ARE IN GOD'S SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT. WE MUST LEARN THE LESSONS OF KINDERGARTEN, FIRST GRADE AND UP THROUGH THE GRADES BEFORE POST-GRADUATE STUDIES! GOD NEVER PUTS US IN ANOTHER CATEGORY UNTIL WE HAVE LEARNED THE LESSONS DESIGNED FOR US. SIMPLY STATED, HE NEVER PUTS A KINDERGARTEN PERSON IN GRAD SCHOOL! GOD USES CIRCUMSTANCES AND SITUATIONS OF LIFE TO BRING PRODIGAL SONS AND DAUGHTERS HOME AGAIN!

①

McBee at
Cove

The Book of Ruth

Political
Correct
Commentary

Books - Men's Name

20 in O.T. 12 NT (32)

Book =
M.S.

2 Women - Esther + Ruth!

I. ^{THE} Move to Moab^{V.1-6}

"From famine to funeral!"

Family fell apart -

Survival = the question!

0 means of Support!

II. The Return To Judah - V.7

~~Orpah~~ Orpah =

returned home = could ①

~~not~~ not stand the test of
hard times / poverty ②

Both = would not go back
to the old life in the face
of adversity

A Person of
faith

②

III. Naomi's Wrong View of Her Situation v. 13 ~~and~~ 21

Everyone has crises
in life. (Job, Jacob,
Abraham, Adam)

God is working in ways
we do not see.

Circumstances ^{change} turn around.

(Rom 8:28 true - period!!)

IV. A New Beginning - v. 22.

Always too soon to quit! (^{Edman} ~~An.~~)

When everything seems to be
against us, the best may already
be on the way! Circumstances =
God way to develop character -
maturity. (Gen. 50:20)

Rom 8:31
Since God
is for us
who ~~can~~
be against
us?

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

JANUARY 8, 1984

BCC. Am.

Feb. 1982

BACK HOME IN BETHLEHEM

RUTH 2

"A Kinsman A
mighty Man OF WORTH"
2:1 = "Hero"
OF the
Story

Review

unhappy
widow

List the
BASIC OF
Characters

WHEN NAOMI AND RUTH RETURNED TO BETHLEHEM FROM MOAB, THEY HAD NO VISIBLE MEANS OF SUPPORT. THE BASIC QUESTION WAS HOW WOULD THEY SURVIVE? TWO WIDOWS WITH NO FINANCIAL RESERVES LIVING IN A TIME AND COUNTRY WHERE THERE WERE NO SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS TO HELP THE POOR. THE TEXT REVEALS THEIR PLAN OF ACTION. = Ruth finds work!

I. RUTH GLEANING IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ - V. 1-7 LABOR Day For Ruth

RUTH DETERMINED TO BECOME THE BREAD WINNER IN THE FAMILY. GLEANING WAS THE ANCIENT CUSTOM OF ALLOWING THE POOR TO FOLLOW THE REAPERS IN THE FIELD AND RETRIEVE FALLEN PORTIONS OF GRAIN. THE GENEROSITY OF THE CROP OWNER AFFECTED THE AMOUNT LEFT ON THE GROUND. ACCORDING TO LAW, THE CORNERS OF THE FIELD WERE TO BE LEFT UNREAPED. GENEROUS LANDOWNERS OFTEN REMOVED ALL SUPERVISION FROM THE HARVEST FIELDS TO PERMIT THE POOR ACCESS TO HIS FIELDS AND VINEYARDS. UNDER SUCH A SYSTEM, THE POOR WERE HELPED WHILE RETAINING THEIR SELF RESPECT AND DIGNITY - THERE WERE NO HANDOUTS. ALSO, IT PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY FOR THOSE WHO WERE ABLE-BODIED TO BE INVOLVED IN THEIR OWN SUPPORT. (LEVITICUS 19:9-10, DEUTERONOMY 24:19-22) RUTH, THE GLEANER, REVEALED SOMETHING ABOUT HER CHARACTER. SHE WAS NOT AFRAID OF HARD WORK. SHE WAS NOT TOO LAZY OR TOO PROUD TO ENGAGE IN THE LOWLIEST KIND OF WORK, NAMELY GLEANING IN THE FIELD.

Olson/Eckard
Book

(2 Thess. 3:10)

V. 1-2
Work
to
Survive
TWO
LAWS:

- (1) Gleaners
- (2) GOEL

"Bumper Sticker" W. R. R.

(THE BUMPER STICKER ON RUTH'S CAMEL MIGHT HAVE READ: "I FIGHT POVERTY: I WORK!")

TO BE SURE, THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO THE IDEA OF WORK, THAT IS, IT MAY BE PUNATIVE IN NATURE BUT IT IS ALSO A PRIVILEGE. EVEN WHEN ONE IS UNDERPAID AND UNAPPRECIATED THERE IS VALUE IN HONEST LABOR. RUTH DID HER WORK OUT OF LOVE AND DEVOTION FOR NAOMI AND WELL AS FOR HER OWN SURVIVAL. WHEN RUTH WENT TO WORK, GOD WAS ALSO WORKING.

IN THE PROCESS OF HARVEST AS THE WOMEN FOLLOWED THE REAPERS WHO CUT THE GRAIN BY TYING IT INTO SHEAVES, THE GLEANERS FOLLOWED THE WOMEN AND THIS PROCESS LED TO THE FIELDS OF BOAZ. THE TEXT OF VERSE 3 SAYS HAP

FROM WHICH WE GET THE ENGLISH WORD HAPPENED. ONE MIGHT MISUNDERSTAND THE TEXT IN SUPPOSING THAT QUITE BY CHANCE OR ACCIDENT RUTH MADE HER WAY TO THE FIELD OF BOAZ. NOT SO.

UNSEEN HANDS WERE GUIDING RUTH'S STEPS ALONG GOD'S PURPOSE FOR HER LIFE. SHE STARTED TO WORK AND GOD STARTED MOVING IN HER BEHALF. HER EXAMPLE IS A LESSON TO THE LORD'S PEOPLE IN GUIDANCE. THERE WAS NO PIOUS TALK OR UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THE LORD SIMPLY LED IN THE EVERYDAY EVENTS OF LIFE. I THINK THIS IS THE EXPERIENCE OF MOST BELIEVERS. WE ARE NOT THE CHILDREN OF CHANCE BUT OF CHOICE - HIS CHOICE FOR US.

ONE HAS TO BE IMPRESSED WITH THE WORK RELATIONSHIP MENTIONED IN VERSE 4. THE LORD WAS AT THE CENTER OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF EMPLOYER TO EMPLOYEE. THERE WAS AN OBVIOUS FRIENDLY, CORDIAL CARING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BOAZ AND HIS WORKERS. HE CARED FOR THEM AND THEY RESPECTED HIM. THE LORD SHOULD MAKE THE WORKPLACE A BETTER PLACE TO LABOR. THEIR RELATIONSHIP CARRIED OVER INTO EVERY DAY

There was good feeling on both sides because God was in the middle. (Courtesy in conversation)

"Pers"

V.3.
(Guidance)

V.4.
(Work Relationship)

LIFE, BOTH WERE NOT ASHAMED TO SPEAK THE LORD'S NAME IN THE WORKPLACE. ALSO, THIS WAS A TIME OF GREAT SPIRITUAL DECLINE BUT THEY DID NOT FORGET OR NEGLECT THE USAGE OF HIS NAME. GOD WAS NOT JUST A CURSE WORD TO THIS LABOR FORCE. THERE WAS GOOD FEELING ON BOTH SIDES BECAUSE GOD WAS IN THE MIDDLE. HERE WAS A WEALTHY MAN WHO WAS UNASHAMED OF GOD IN HIS LIFE. (APPLY SUCH GREETING TO THE WORKPLACE TODAY.) BOAZ INQUIRED ABOUT RUTH IN VERSE 5. HE WAS THE TOWN'S WEALTHIEST AND MOST ELIGIBLE BACHELOR. I CANNOT BELIEVE HIS INQUIRY WAS AS CASUAL AS THE TEXT MIGHT IMPLY. THE TONE AND EMPHASIS OR INFLECTION OF HIS VOICE MIGHT CHANGE THIS INTERESTING PHRASE. THE WORK CLOTHES AND DIFFICULT WORKING CONDITIONS COULD NOT CONCEAL THE OBVIOUS BEAUTY OF RUTH. WHEN BOAZ SAW HER SOMETHING HAPPENED! HE SAW HER IN THE MORNING AND INVITED HER TO LUNCH! (DEFINE LOVE ACCORDING TO HOMER HAMMONTREE IN POEM REGARDING LIZARD AND GIZZARD.) DR. MCGEE SAID IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT! HERE IS THE BEGINNING OF A LOVE STORY ARRANGED BY GOD! I AM IMPRESSED WITH WHAT WAS NOT HAPPENING - RUTH WAS NOT BOY CRAZY, RUNNING AFTER THE REAPERS TRYING TO CATCH THEIR ATTENTION. BOAZ WAS A MATURE, SENSIBLE MAN AND RECOGNIZED RUTH'S CHARACTER AND THAT IMPRESSED HIM!

(TALKING WITH BOAZ)

II. RUTH BENEFITTING FROM THE KINDNESS OF BOAZ - V. 8-17 + BOAZ DIRECTING THE HARVEST.

WHEN RUTH LEFT MOAB FOR ISRAEL, SHE EXPECTED TO BE TREATED AS A FOREIGNER AND STRANGER. SHE ALLUDED TO THE FACT IN VERSE 10. SHE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHY BOAZ

v. 5
Strikingly beautiful
... invisible
+ out!
who is that!

McGee's "free hand"

me Too!

X

(Nathan's Day For Boaz)

u why?
Look in the
mirror!

-4-

WOULD BE SO KIND TO HER. HE INVITED HER TO WORK IN HIS FIELD WITH HIS WORKERS AND NOT TO FEAR FOR THE YOUNG MEN WOULD NOT HARM HER. HE PROVIDED WATER AND FOOD AND ALSO INSTRUCTED THE WORKERS TO LEAVE BEHIND EXTRA GRAIN IN ORDER THAT RUTH'S WORK WOULD BE MORE FRUITFUL - VERSE 16. RUTH WAS SURPRISED THAT SHE SHOULD BE TREATED WITH SUCH RESPECT AND KINDNESS. DR. MCGEE SUGGESTS THAT THE ANSWER TO RUTH'S QUESTION WAS SIMPLY THIS: "RUTH, GO HOME AND LOOK IN THE MIRROR." THIS IS A TERRIFIC QUESTION: "WHY HAVE WE FOUND GRACE IN HIS EYES?" THERE IS NOTHING IN ANY OF US TO CALL FORTH THE LOVE OF GOD. GRACE HAS BEEN EXTENDED FREELY TO THE BELIEVING SINNER THROUGH CHRIST, (ROMANS 3:24) RUTH'S HUMILITY IS BECOMING TO HER CHARACTER. (ONE SOMETIMES GETS THE IMPRESSION THAT SOME FOLK REALLY BELIEVE GOD GOT A PRIZE WHEN THEY CAME TO HIM. THERE IS NOTHING ATTRACTIVE ABOUT US. ALL WE HAVE TO BRING TO GOD IS OUR SINS - THAT'S ALL! COULD IT BE THAT RUTH'S FAITH IN GOD WAS THE GREATEST ATTRACTION OF ALL? MOST OF US ARE ATTRACTED BY BEAUTY BUT GODLINESS AND CHARACTER ARE FIRST AND FOREMOST IN A MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP.

III. RUTH RETURNING HOME FROM THE FIELDS - V. 17-23

(Naomi Rejoicing) v. 20
(Joy Day for Naomi)

✓ WHEN RUTH RETURNED HOME WITH OVER A BUSHEL OF BARLEY, NAOMI KNEW SOMETHING UNUSUAL WAS IN THE WIND. A SOLITARY WOMAN JUST SIMPLY DID NOT GLEAN THAT MUCH GRAIN IN A DAY, OR TWO OR THREE! NAOMI KNEW THAT RUTH HAD RECEIVED SPECIAL TREATMENT SOMEWHERE THAT DAY. THE NAME BOAZ AND KINSMAN ARE KEYS TO UNLOCKING THE CHAPTER. JEWISH LAW REQUIRED THE NEAREST ELIGIBLE OR QUALIFIED

Jewish Law

RELATIVE OF A DEAD HUSBAND TO BECOME A LEGAL SUBSTITUTE OR GOEL IN THE HEBREW. THAT IS, HE WOULD BE BOUND TO DISCHARGE ALL OF THE DUTIES OF PROTECTION, MARRIAGE, THE AVENGER OF BLOOD, ETC. FOR THE DEAD MAN. ALSO INVOLVED IN THIS PROCESS WAS BUYING BACK THE INHERITANCE OF THE DECEASED AND MARRYING HIS WIDOW IF SUCH WERE POSSIBLE. NAOMI INSTANTLY RECOGNIZED THAT BOAZ WAS THE GOEL OF RUTH'S DEAD HUSBAND! WE USE THE TERM KINSMAN IN A RATHER LOOSE SENSE IN REFERRING TO A CLOSE OR DISTANT RELATIVE. IN ISRAEL, THERE WAS A LAW OF REDEMPTION TO HELP THE UNFORTUNATE. WHEN A PERSON LOST HIS ESTATE, A NEAR KINSMAN HAD THE RIGHT AND EVEN THE OBLIGATION TO HELP GET HIS PROPERTY BACK. HE COULD PAY THE HOLDER A FAIR PRICE FOR THE ESTATE BASED ON THE LAND'S INCOME ON THE REMAINING YEARS BEFORE THE JUBILEE YEAR. LET ME EXPLAIN: ORIGINALLY IN ISRAEL, EVERY FAMILY EXCEPT THE LEVITES WAS GIVEN AN ALLOTMENT OF LAND. (NUMBERS 26:52-56) THE TITLE TO THE LAND REMAINED IN THAT FAMILY PERMANENTLY MOVING FROM ONE DESCENDENT TO ANOTHER. A PERSON COULD FARM, RENT OR SELL THE LAND BUT IT COULD NOT BE TAKEN AWAY PERMANENTLY. THE LEGAL SAFEGUARD TO THE OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY WAS BOUND UP IN WHAT WAS CALLED THE JUBILEE YEAR. (LEVITICUS 25) THE SABBATICAL YEAR OR EVERY SEVENTH YEAR WAS A TIME WHEN ALL DEBTS WERE DELAYED FOR A YEAR. (DEUTERONOMY 15:1-3) HOWEVER, AFTER 7 SABBATH YEARS, OR 49 YEARS, THE GREAT HOPE FOR THE POOR WAS THE YEAR OF JUBILEE, WHEN SLAVES WENT FREE, ALL DEBTS ON REAL PROPERTY CANCELLED AND LAND REVERTED TO ITS ORIGINAL FAMILY OWNERS. THIS GREAT TIME GAVE PEOPLE A NEW START AT LEAST ONCE IN A LIFETIME. IT ALSO REDUCED THE TENDENCY

FOR REAL ESTATE TO WEALTH TO REMAIN IN THE HANDS OF A FEW. RUTH WAS RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF SUCH AN ECONOMIC SITUATION. HER HUSBAND HAD LOST HIS ESTATE BUT BOAZ WAS A KINSMAN WHO HAD THE LEGAL RIGHT AND THE FINANCIAL ABILITY TO BUY IT BACK - THAT WAS WHAT NAOMI WAS ALL EXCITED ABOUT! KEEP IN MIND THAT THE BOOK OF RUTH IS A BOOK OF REDEMPTION. IT TELLS IN THE FORM OF A LOVE STORY GOD'S GREAT LOVE AND CONCERN FOR MAN. VERSES SUCH AS ROMANS 3:24, I PETER 1:18, REVELATION 5:9 AND THREE VERSES IN EPHESIANS, THAT IS EPHESIANS 1:7, 1:14, AND 4:30 ALL SPEAK OF THE SUBJECT OF REDEMPTION. I KNOW OF NO ILLUSTRATION MORE TO THE POINT ON THIS SUBJECT THAN THE FOLLOWING STORY: "A SMALL BOY MADE A SAIL BOAT WITH HIS OWN HANDS. IT WASN'T MUCH IN THE WAY OF CRAFTSMANSHIP BUT HE MADE IT AND WAS PROUD OF IT. HE TOOK IT DOWN TO THE LAKE, TIED A STRING TO IT, AND SET IT AFLOAT. AS THE BREEZE BLEW STRONGER HE TUGGED AT THE FRAIL STRING, THE STRING BROKE AND THE BOY SAT HELPLESSLY ALONG THE SHORE WATCHING HIS PRIZED BOAT DRIFT AWAY FROM HIS GRASP, ULTIMATELY OUT OF HIS SIGHT. A FEW DAYS LATER WALKING BY A SHOP HE SAW TO HIS AMAZEMENT, HIS BOAT IN THE WINDOW. ENTERING THE SHOP HE LAID CLAIM OR TITLE TO THE BOAT ONLY TO DISCOVER IT COULD BE HIS BY PURCHASE ONLY. GOING HOME COLLECTING ALL OF HIS MONEY HE RETURNED TO THE SHOP AND PURCHASED THE BOAT WITH EVERYTHING HE HAD. AS HE LEFT THE SHOP HE WAS HEARD TO SAY: "LITTLE BOAT, YOU ARE MINE, TWICE MINE, ONCE BECAUSE I MADE YOU, TWICE BECAUSE I BOUGHT YOU." THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT GOD HAS A TWO-FOLD CLAIM ON US. ONE CLAIM AS CREATOR - BECAUSE HE MADE US; ANOTHER CLAIM AS REDEEMER BECAUSE HE DIED

Tangled web-

FOR US AND REDEEMED US, BOUGHT US WITH HIS OWN BLOOD. YOU SEE, MAN IS A SLAVE TO SIN. HE IS IN BONDAGE TO HIS SIN TO THE POINT HE CANNOT BREAK THE SINS THAT BIND HIM TO DELIVER HIMSELF. THE LONGER HE LIVES THE MORE TANGLED THE WEB OF SIN IS ABOUT HIM. HE NEEDS SOMEONE LIKE BOAZ - A TYPE OF CHRIST - TO GET HIM OUT OF HIS SPIRITUAL POVERTY AND DILEMMA. THAT SOMEONE FOR YOU AND ME IS JESUS CHRIST.

Boaz = the only example of a kinsman redeemer in Scripture.

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

JANUARY 15, 1984

Bec Am
Feb. 1992

THE THRASHING FLOOR OF BOAZ

RUTH 3

REVIEW RUTH. CHAPTER 1 CONCLUDED WITH RUTH RETURNING WITH NAOMI TO BETHLEHEM. CHAPTER 2 DEALT WITH RUTH GLEANING IN THE FIELDS OF BOAZ. CHAPTER 3 PRESENTS RUTH REVEALING HER FEELINGS TO BOAZ. IT WAS HARVEST TIME AND NAOMI KNEW IT WAS ALSO TIME FOR SOMETHING TO BE DONE IN ORDER FOR BOAZ TO KNOW RUTH'S WILLINGNESS TO BECOME HIS WIFE. INTERWOVEN WITH THE DRAMA OF THIS LOVE STORY ARE SEVERAL UNUSUAL LAWS, THAT IS, UNUSUAL TO THE WESTERN WORLD. ACCORDING TO TRADITION, BOAZ COULD NOT PROPOSE TO RUTH, SHE MUST TAKE THE INITIATIVE BECAUSE SHE WAS A WIDOW. IT WAS HER RESPONSIBILITY TO APPROACH A KINSMAN AND CLAIM HER LEGAL RIGHT AS A WIDOW ACCORDING TO DEUTERONOMY 25:5-10. THERE WERE TWO WAYS TO LAY SUCH CLAIM: (1) PUBLIC (2) PRIVATE. RUTH CHOSE NOT TO EMBARRASS BOAZ IN ANY WAY BUT TO GIVE HIM OPPORTUNITY TO REVEAL HIS INTENTIONS WITHOUT PUBLIC DISGRACE.

(1) Protect women
(2) Land

* Suppose ...

Law #3

I. NAOMI'S PLAN - V. 1-5

(A New Naomi -
(Positive NOT pessimistic!)
A PLAN -

PERHAPS RUTH WAS NOT FULLY AWARE OF HER RESPONSIBILITY TO LET BOAZ KNOW HER INTENTIONS. MAYBE SHE WAS NATURALLY TIMID OR SHY. WHATEVER THE SITUATION, NAOMI TOOK THE INITIATIVE AND SUGGESTED RUTH TAKE STEPS TOWARD LETTING BOAZ KNOW HER INTENTIONS OR WILLINGNESS TO BE MARRIED. THE WORD "REST" IN VERSE 1 IS TRANSLATED A RESTING PLACE (ASV MARGIN), A HOME (A.O.I.) OR SECURITY (N.A.S.V.). MOST

"TO BE SETTLED"

Ruth made ie marriage
no claim on what she had every right to claim - So Naomi has a plan!

COMMENTARIES BELIEVE ALL OF THESE TRANSLATIONS ARE SPEAKING OF MARRIAGE. NAOMI WAS ACTING AS A MATCHMAKER FOR RUTH. SHE KNEW THAT BOAZ WAS IN THE CORRECT RELATIONSHIP TO REDEEM RUTH. HE HAD THE LEGAL RIGHT BUT THE QUESTION WAS DID HE DESIRE OR WANT TO DO SO. RUTH MUST TAKE THE FIRST STEP AND NAOMI ENCOURAGED HER TO DO SO. THE THRASHING FLOOR WAS THE PLACE WHERE ALL FAMILIES WORKING IN THE HARVEST OR REAPING MET TO FINISH THE HARVEST SEASON. SOMETIMES THESE WERE IN OPEN FIELDS BUT OFTEN ON THE TOP OF HILLS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE WIND IN WINNOWERING THE GRAIN. OFTEN, THE BEST WINDS WERE AT NIGHT AND THUS MEN WORKED LATE INTO THE NIGHT CONCLUDING THE WORK DAY WITH A FESTIVE MEAL AND SINGING. FAMILIES WOULD SLEEP AROUND THE GRAIN TO PROTECT IT FROM INTRUDERS AND THEY USUALLY SLEPT FULLY CLOTHED WITH SOME KIND OF MANTLE THROWN OVER THEM TO KEEP OFF THE CHILL OF THE NIGHT AIR. NAOMI SUGGESTED THAT RUTH ACT PROMPTLY - TONIGHT. THE PREPARATION FOR GOING TO THE THRASHING FLOOR WAS TO WASH, ANOINT AND PUT ON HER BEST CLOTHES. (COMMENT ON NO. 3 WASH TUB WARMING WATER IN SUN - SOAP. MIDNIGHT IN MOAB - EARLY POVERTY COLLECTION BY MR. MOAB - K-MART BLUE LIGHT SPECIAL.) SIMPLY STATED, RUTH PREPARED HERSELF BY PUTTING OFF HER MOURNING OR WORK DRESS AND PUT ON CLOTHING PROPER FOR COURTING! TO "UNCOVER HIS FEET" AND TO PULL THE MANTLE OVER HER WAS A SYMBOLIC YET MODEST WAY OF TELLING BOAZ SHE WAS WILLING TO ACCEPT HIM AS HER GOEL AND TO INITIATE THE LEGAL PROCEDURE OF A LEVIRATE MARRIAGE. ONCE AGAIN, RUTH WAS TO DO ALL OF THIS IN A QUIET, PRIVATE WAY IN ORDER THAT BOAZ COULD REJECT HER

3:1

①
②

Thrashing
Winnowing

3:3

Rumble
Seat
Porch
Swing

Courting

(1) Protect the harvest
(2) = "I want you to be my K-R - act for him to act"

OFFER IF HE CHOSE TO DO SO. APPARENTLY, RUTH HAD NO INTENTION OF TAKING HIM INTO THE PUBLIC COURTS. ONE IS IMPRESSED WITH THE OBEDIENCE OF RUTH. THERE IS NO HINT OF RESENTMENT ON HER PART OR ANY IDEA THAT NAOMI WAS MEDDLING IN RUTH'S AFFAIRS. SUCH ACTION WOULD LET BOAZ KNOW RUTH'S FEELINGS.

PROPOSAL ③ (ALSO Ruth's!)

II. BOAZ' PROBLEM - V. 6-13 (~~PROPOSAL~~)

such as
a ring on
the finger
symbol
of
engagement.

LATE AT NIGHT RUTH MADE HER WAY TO THE THRASHING FLOOR WHERE BOAZ AND HIS WORKING CREW WERE ASLEEP. MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN ALL SLEEP AROUND THE THRASHING FLOOR. RUTH LAID DOWN AT BOAZ' FEET AND PUT HER FEET TO HIS FEET. THIS WAS ALL A SYMBOLIC ACTION TO LET BOAZ KNOW THAT SHE WAS WILLING TO BECOME MRS. BOAZ. ALSO, PLEASE NOTE THAT BOAZ' REACTION TO HER PRESENCE INDICATING THAT NOTHING WAS UNUSUAL OR OUT OF ORDER CONCERNING HER CONDUCT. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE PRAISES HER AS A WOMAN OF HIGH MORALITY AND VIRTUE. RUTH WAS QUIETLY CLAIMING BOAZ AS HER KINSMAN REDEEMER AND ALL OF THIS ACTIVITY WAS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS. (IF RUTH WERE NOT A WIDOW, THE INITIATIVE WOULD HAVE RESTED WITH BOAZ BUT SINCE SHE WAS A WIDOW, THE INITIATIVE RESTED WITH HER.) RUTH HAD SHOWED NO INTEREST IN THE YOUNG MEN AND BOAZ HAD SHOWED INTEREST IN NONE OTHER BUT HER. BOAZ' REACTION WAS - YES, I WILL MARRY YOU BUT THERE IS ONE MAJOR PROBLEM - VERSE 11. ACCORDING TO OLD TESTAMENT LAW, BOAZ HAD A LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY TO MARRY RUTH IF SHE SO DESIRED BUT THERE WAS ONE FACT NAOMI APPARENTLY DID NOT KNOW, THAT IS, THERE WAS A NEARER KINSMAN AND BOAZ APPEARS

- don't let the news get out - don't let him get a good look at Ruth!
(BOAZ HAD ALREADY CH. INTO THIS)

TO HAVE BEEN THE ONLY PERSON WHO KNEW ABOUT IT. IT WAS A LEGAL OBSTACLE WITH WHICH HE ALONE COULD DEAL. UNDOUBTEDLY, HE HAD BEEN HOLDING HIS BREATH HOPING THAT THE NEAREST KINSMAN DID NOT GET A GOOD LOOK AT RUTH! BOAZ KNEW MORE ABOUT THE KINSMAN'S LEGAL STATUS THAN THE KINSMAN DID. HE HAD BEEN INTERESTED ENOUGH ALREADY TO MAKE DETAILED INQUIRY! IT WAS A VERY DECISIVE MOMENT IN THE LIVES OF BOAZ AND RUTH. QUESTION: WOULD THE NEARER KINSMAN DESIRE TO ACT IN RUTH'S BEHALF? IF HE DID, BOAZ WOULD BE OUT IN THE COLD.

III. RUTH'S PATIENCE - V. 14-18

BOAZ WANTED SECRECY IN ORDER TO PROTECT RUTH BECAUSE HE DID NOT WANT THE NEWS TO LEAK OUT BEFORE HE COULD ACT IN HER BEHALF. ALSO, HE MADE PROVISION OF GRAIN, NOT SENDING HER HOME EMPTY. ONE IS IMPRESSED WITH BOAZ' CONCERN FOR RUTH'S CHARACTER AND PROVISION. (YOUNG WOMEN TODAY WOULD DO WELL TO LOOK AT THEIR FUTURE HUSBANDS-TO-BE AND ASK THE QUESTION IS HE REALLY CONCERNED ABOUT YOU OR HIMSELF? IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE.) NAOMI'S QUESTION: "WHO ART THOU MY DAUGHTER?" IS EQUIVALENT TO THE MODERN-DAY QUESTION: "ARE YOU ENGAGED?" DID HE GIVE YOU A RING? HAVE YOU SET THE DATE FOR THE WEDDING." IT HAD BEEN AN EVENTFUL NIGHT. ALL OF THE LEGAL STEPS WERE SET IN MOTION. ALL RUTH COULD DO NOW WAS WAIT. THE REST WAS UP TO BOAZ. MCGEE CALLS THIS THE "REST OF REDEMPTION." BOAZ WAS A MAN OF MANY GOOD QUALITIES: COURTEOUS, CONSIDERATE, GENEROUS AND RESPECTED. HOWEVER, RISING ABOVE ALL

Redemption is
His work - not
hers! Rest is hers.

-5-

Ln. 5:25

OF THESE OUTSTANDING QUALITIES WAS THAT
OF TRUSTWORTHINESS. BOAZ DID WHAT HE SAID
HE WOULD DO - HE WAS A MAN OF HIS WORD.
HE DID NOT AROUSE HOPES IN PROMISES HE
HAD NO INTENTION OR ABILITY TO KEEP.
RUTH HAD DONE HER PART AND THE REST WAS
UP TO BOAZ. HE WASTED NO TIME IN WORKING
IN HER BEHALF. THERE IS A BEAUTIFUL
APPLICATION OF OUR GREAT KINSMAN - REDEEMER
IN THIS PASSAGE. JUST AS RUTH COULD DO
NOTHING LEGALLY BUT SIMPLY WAIT FOR BOAZ
TO ACT IN HER BEHALF, SO YOU AND I CAN DO
NOTHING TO SECURE OUR REDEMPTION IN CHRIST.
HE WILL DO WHAT HE SAYS HE WILL DO - HE
ALWAYS KEEPS HIS WORD. IN A SENSE, HE
HAS MADE HIMSELF RESPONSIBLE FOR US AND
HE DID NOT REST UNTIL OUR REDEMPTION WAS
COMPLETE. THE BELIEVING SINNER MAY REST
UPON HIS TRUSTWORTHINESS. WHAT GOD SAYS
HE WILL DO, HE WILL DO. (MATTHEW 11:28,
JOHN 6:37)

THAT
DAY!

Let up:

you may count on it - done!

Lesson: (www)

1. Right Purpose - Redemption
2. Right Plan - act at once
3. Right Person - Boaz
4. Right Preparations - wash
5. Right Place - feet

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

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BOAZ AT THE GATE BUT NOT ON THE FENCE

RUTH 4

"A Love Story
NOT A LUST Story!"

REVIEW. ² THE BOOK OF RUTH BEGINS WITH A FUNERAL AND ENDS WITH A WEDDING. BUSINESS DEALS AND LEGAL TRANSACTIONS WERE COMMON TO BOAZ BUT ON THIS PARTICULAR MORNING HE WAS GOING TO COURT TO SECURE THE HAND OF THE WOMAN HE LOVED. THERE WERE RISKS TO BE TAKEN, A GREAT DEAL WAS AT ~~STAKE~~ ^{STAKE} AND EVERYTHING MUST BE HANDLED JUST RIGHT. (CHAPTER 1 - RUTH RETURNING, CHAPTER 2 - RUTH GLEANING, CHAPTER 3 - RUTH REVEALING, CHAPTER 4 - RUTH MARRYING.) THIS CHAPTER MAY BE DIVIDED INTO THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

I. BOAZ GOES TO COURT - VERSES 1-6

2/10
THE GATE OF THE CITY WAS THE PLACE WHERE LEGAL TRANSACTIONS TOOK PLACE. EVERYONE EVENTUALLY PASSED BY THE GATE. IT WAS A PUBLIC PLACE SO PEOPLE COULD FREELY APPROACH AUTHORITIES AND VOICE LEGAL GRIEVANCES. NO PRELIMINARIES WERE NECESSARY, NO ONE HAD TO BE NOTIFIED, NO WRITING OR DELAYS WERE INVOLVED. A PERSON COULD SIMPLY SIT DOWN IN THE GATE TO TRANSACT WHATEVER OFFICIAL BUSINESS WAS NECESSARY. THERE WERE STONE BENCHES TO SIT UPON AND ELDERS OF THE CITY MADE THE COURT LEGAL. THE NUMBER OF ELDERS DETERMINED THE GRAVITY OF THE SESSION. MINOR MATTERS WITNESSED BY ONE OR TWO BUT THE LARGER MATTERS SUCH AS DIVORCE AND ESTATES REQUIRED TEN. THEIR PRESENCE MADE IT A LEGAL ASSEMBLY. THE GATE OF THE CITY WAS MUCH LIKE OUR CITY HALL TODAY. (COMMENT ON GREETING, "HO, SUCH A ONE!" IT WOULD

= "my friend"

NOT casual conversation - Court in session!

• A sitting session =
sit a spell -
a "sit-u-ation"

-2-

BE COMPARABLE TO OUR "SO-N-SO", A REFERENCE TO THE UNNAMED KINSMAN. SOUNDS LIKE A TRUE ORIENTAL NAME!) WITH COURT IN SESSION, BOAZ INFORMED THE KINSMAN OF HIS OPPORTUNITY. THE WORD "ADVERTISE" IS TRANSLATED DISCLOSE OR INFORM AND LITERALLY MEANS "TO UNCOVER THE EAR" AND PICTURES THE RAISING OF HAIR TO WHISPER IN THE EAR. WHEN INFORMED OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO PURCHASE LAND IN HIS CAPACITY AS A KINSMAN REDEEMER, THE UNNAMED KINSMAN READILY AGREED TO DO IT. IT MAY BE THAT BOAZ' HEART SANK WHEN HE HEARD THE RESPONSE OR IT MAY BE THAT HE WAS PREPARED BEFOREHAND TO DROP THE OTHER SHOE! THE "BOMB" BOAZ DROPPED ON THE UNNAMED KINSMAN WAS THAT A FOREIGN WIDOW FROM MOAB WENT WITH THE PROPERTY! IN ORDER TO GET IT, HE HAD TO MARRY HER! IT MAY BE THAT THE NEAR KINSMAN HAD NEVER SEEN RUTH BUT HIS EXPLANATION OR REFUSAL WAS BOUND UP IN THE LEGAL COMPLICATIONS OF THE CASE. THE WORD "MAR" IS MENTIONED IN VERSE 6. ACCORDING TO OLD TESTAMENT LAW, REDEMPTION INVOLVED USING FUNDS FROM ONE'S OWN ESTATE TO ACQUIRE LAND WHICH ULTIMATELY WOULD GO TO ANY SON BORN TO RUTH. ALSO, THAT SON WOULD BEAR HIS FATHER'S NAME, THAT IS THE NAME OF MAHLON. SO, IN EFFECT, THE NEAR KINSMAN WOULD BE MORTGAGING HIS OWN ESTATE TO BENEFIT ANOTHER, A RISK HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO TAKE. A LAND DEAL WAS ONE THING, MARRIAGE WAS SOMETHING ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT! IT MAY BE THAT THE FACT RUTH WAS A MOABITE ALARMED THE NEAR KINSMAN. IT WAS A BUSINESS DEAL WITH LEGAL COMPLICATIONS AND SINCE HE DID NOT LOVE RUTH IT WAS NOT WORTH THE RISK. THERE WAS A VAST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MOTIVES OF THESE TWO MEN. THE NEAR KINSMAN MAY HAVE FELT COMPASSION FOR A POVERTY-STRICKEN WIDOW

concern
pity.

Buy it = Buy her
no way! (she comes with the deal!)
(Exchange her estate)

BUT BOAZ LOVED HER! THE NEAR KINSMAN DESIRED THE PRIVILEGE OF LAND ACQUISITION BUT REFUSED THE DUTY OF A HUSBAND. NEEDLESS TO SAY, ALL OF THIS WAS GOOD NEWS TO BOAZ, FOR HE WAS FULLY PREPARED TO REDEEM NAOMI'S ESTATE.

II. THE BAREFOOT KINSMAN - VERSES 7-12

THE FIRST DIVISION OF THE CHAPTER HAD TO DO WITH COURTS, THIS DIVISION HAS TO DO WITH CONTRACTS. IN BIBLE TIMES, COVENANTS AND CONTRACTS WERE MADE IN VARIOUS WAYS, FOR EXAMPLE, TWO MEN WOULD TAKE A PINCH OF SALT FROM A POUCH, MIX IN THE POUCHES SIGNIFYING THAT THE CONTRACT WAS BINDING AS LONG AS THE SALT WAS MIXED, THAT IS IT COULD NEVER BE BROKEN. SOMETIMES AN ANIMAL WAS SLAIN AND THE CARCASS DIVIDED DOWN THE BACKBONE AND THE DIVIDED PARTS LAID ON THE GROUND. THE TWO PARTIES JOINED HANDS AND WALKED BETWEEN THE DIVIDED PARTS INDICATING THAT THE CONTRACT WAS BINDING UNTIL THE DEATH OF THE PERSONS INVOLVED. ANOTHER WAY WAS THE EXCHANGE OF A SANDAL. IT WAS A SYMBOLICAL ACT TO RATIFY A LEGAL CONTRACT. THE WALKING OVER A PIECE OF GROUND WAS IN EFFECT A TITLE DEED OR AUTHORIZATION TO TAKE POSSESSION. GOD MADE SUCH A CONTRACT WITH JOSHUA (JOSHUA 1:3). TO TRANSFER OWNERSHIP, THE SHOE WAS SURRENDERED SYMBOLIZING GIVING UP OF ONE'S INTEREST IN A PARTICULAR MATTER. THE KEEPER OF THE SHOE HAD THE RIGHT OF POSSESSION. ALSO, IN ORIENTAL COUNTRIES, OFTENTIMES SLAVES WORE NO SHOES AT ALL AS DISTINGUISHED FROM SONS WHO DID. HENCE, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE POINT IN THE PRODIGAL SON'S STORY WHERE THE FATHER PUT SHOES ON THE FEET OF THE RETURNING PRODIGAL RESTORING HIM TO THE PRIVILEGES OF SONSHIP.

Did not sign papers - they swapped sandals - shoe = Right to walk the land i.e. yours!

BOAZ HAD DONE EVERYTHING NECESSARY IN ORDER FOR RUTH TO BECOME HIS WIFE. THE TRANS-ACTION WAS FINISHED. (APPLICATION: SALVATION IS A LOVE RELATIONSHIP. WE ARE A PURCHASED PEOPLE.) EPHESIANS 5:26-27, ACTS 20:28.)

III. WEDDING BELLS IN BETHLEHEM - VERSES 13-17

WEDDINGS ARE WONDERFUL EVENTS. IN THIS CONTEXT, IT WAS A HAPPY DAY FOR ALL. A PUBLIC WEDDING WHERE EVERYONE WAS INVITED AND BOAZ WAS IN THE CENTER OF THE PICTURE! NOTICE THAT SHE DID NOT APPEAR AT THE COURTHOUSE IN PREPARATION FOR THE CEREMONY. THERE WERE NO SHOWERS IN HER BEHALF OR A WRITE-UP IN THE BETHLEHEM BANNER ON THE SOCIETY PAGE DESCRIBING THE EVENTS OF THE WEDDING AND THE INTENTION OF THE BRIDE AND GROOM. SOMEONE HAS SUGGESTED THAT AT THIS WEDDING THE ORGANIST PLAYED "HERE COMES THE GROOM." COMPARED TO WEDDINGS TODAY, THIS MUST SEEM VERY STRANGE. HOWEVER, KEEP THE TYPOLOGY IN MIND. THIS BOOK HAS TO DO WITH THE REDEMPTION OF A POOR, PENNILESS WIDOW WHO HAD NO LEGAL RIGHTS IN ISRAEL. SHE WAS AN ALIEN OUTCAST WHO CAME INTO PROMINENCE BECAUSE OF HER RELATIONSHIP TO BOAZ. THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IS MADE UP OF SPIRITUAL ALIENS AND THEIR CLAIM TO FAME IS BY VIRTUE OF A MARRIAGE TO THE LAMB OF GOD. THE LAMB IS IN THE SPOTLIGHT AND NOT THE BRIDE. (REVELATION 19:7-8)

Point THE LAMB IS ALL THE GLORY IN EMMANUEL'S LAND... (THE BIBLE RECORDS INTERESTING IDEAS REGARDING MARRIAGES AND WEDDINGS. FOR EXAMPLE, GENESIS 24 WITH ISAAC AND REBEKAH AND JACOB AND HIS 14-YEAR PLAN FOR RACHEL. A "WORK FOR YOUR WIFE PROGRAM". OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING MODERN WEDDINGS.)

IV. RUTH'S PLACE IN BIBLE HISTORY - VERSES 18-22 (*From Jesse to Jesus*)

THIS BOOK OF REDEMPTION ENDS WITH A GENEALOGY. THIS APPEARS TO BE A STRANGE, DRY, UNINTERESTING WAY TO CONCLUDE A MARVELOUS LOVE STORY. IT IS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT SHOWS HOW AN OUTCAST FROM OBSCURE MOAB WAS PLACED INTO THE MESSIANIC FAMILY BY VIRTUE OF A DECISION MADE TO LEAVE HER COUNTRY AND COME TO BETHLEHEM. RUTH MADE A DECISION TO FOLLOW WHAT APPEARED TO BE A PATH OF POVERTY AND REJECTION AND WOUND UP BRINGING A SON INTO THE WORLD WHO WAS PART OF THE MESSIAH'S FAMILY TREE. IN THIS BOOK WE HAVE THE HISTORY OF A WOMAN, A STRANGER IN ISRAEL, WHO WAS DESTINED TO BE INVOLVED IN ISRAEL'S COMING KING. RUTH, A RELATIVE NOBODY FROM MOAB BECAME A SOMEBODY THROUGH MARRIAGE. THIS LOVE STORY MOVES FROM RAGS TO ROYALTY. IN A TIME WHEN PSYCHOLOGY SPEAKS A GREAT DEAL ABOUT SELF-IMAGE AND SELF-WORTH THIS BOOK POINTS TO THE FACT THAT YOU AND I ARE WORTH A GREAT DEAL TO GOD. BY VIRTUE OF OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH OUR GREAT KINSMAN REDEEMER, WE LIKE RUTH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD NOT BECAUSE OF WHO WE ARE BUT BECAUSE OF WHERE WE ARE. (EPHESIANS 1:6) WE LIKE RUTH WERE UNABLE TO REDEEM OURSELVES. WE ARE TOTALLY DEPENDENT UPON THE GENEROSITY OF ANOTHER TO DEAL WITH OUR SPIRITUAL POVERTY. WE HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER GOD BUT OUR SINS. IN EXCHANGE FOR OUR SINS, HE OFFERS SALVATION IN CHRIST. IN RUTH'S CASE, HER DECISION TO LEAVE MOAB FOR BETHLEHEM CHANGED THE COURSE OF HER LIFE AND ALSO OF SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS. KEEP IN MIND THAT A SINGLE DECISION, IN A MOMENT OF TIME, INFLUENCED HISTORY AND DESTINY. RUTH MADE THE RIGHT DECISION AND SO SHOULD WE. (COMPARE MATTHEW 7:13FF.)

Eph. 1:6

" THE BOOK OF RUTH"
Chapter 1

22 IN O.T. (Names of men)
11 IN N.T. (Counting 1+2+3)

Revised
84-92

Several books of the Bible bear the names of men but only two the names of women. In Esther, the great doctrine of the providence of God is set forth even though God's name does not appear in the book. In the book of Ruth, the doctrine of redemption is set forth in a love story even though the word love does not appear in the book. (It is interesting to notice in our day that the word love is on every tongue--it is the theme of books, T.V. programs, plays and songs, pasted on the side of building and cars, but I dare say few have found real love in this lifetime apart from the love of God.) The love story of Ruth is that of an honest moral man for a virtuous woman. In the book we see an Old Testament picture of God's love for mankind and what it cost Him to purchase our salvation on Calvary. In this book we are aware of the meaning of grace for it tells how a Gentile girl who was condemned by the Law was brought into favor Boaz. There was nothing to commend her to him only thru pure grace.

Verse 1: "when the judges ruled"

The book tells us when the events of this book transpired--during the days of the judges. These were the darkest days in Israel's history. When they came from Egypt and moved toward the promised land, the prospects for the nation were bright. But those days were marked by failure, disobedience, sadness, apostasy.

"a famine in the land"

Oftentimes in the O.T. famines are mentioned as accruing at a time when the nation of Israel was in a great moral and spiritual decline. God's clear instruction to every Jewish family was that blessing for them was in the land of promise. Famines came sometimes to test the Lord's people and to teach them to rely upon God for their needs in time of physical distress. But too often, they acted in haste in order to secure relief. The principle is true for believers today. God often sends testings upon us to teach us spiritual lessons but all too often we miss the opportunity to learn and draw near to Him because our comfort is more important to us than spiritual growth and development.

"Moab"

The names in the Bible had meanings which people understood. The word "Bethlehem-judah" means "house of bread and praise." Let me suggest to you that this family was indeed a prodigal family headed for trouble because of where they were going. Moab was an exceptionally fertile and rich area. But it was also a very heathen/pagan country where men worship idols which always meant trouble for Jews.

Point
Family
same
will
✓

Little did this man know that he was moving his family to an area where they would have 3 funerals in the home in 10 years! They moved to a country where there were not spiritual interests. Notice the progression in the move--"sojourn, continued, dwell." They had no intention of staying in Moab very long--just a few months till the famine is over but they stayed there 10 years! Seldom does the prodigal family, son, daughter expect to be in the "far country" very long but time has a way of getting away from us. 10 years is a large segment of a persons life--wasted out of the place of blessing! Often times, pastors are asked to explain the conduct of certain folk who make professions of faith but do not stay with it and wind up in the hogpen. I cannot explain the conduct of everyone who claims to know Christ. This I know--a son who goes to the far country and to the hogpen is going to get a whipping there but there is blessing at home. Years ago while a student in Seminary I heard a Bible teacher say this: If you stand at the crossroads of life you will see the prodigals going home and the pigs staying in the pen. If he is a son--the call of the fathers house will touch his heart. *Can't have blessing in far country. Come Back.*

✓

Verse 2:

Character Disposition

"Elimelech"--"God is my king" - ABRAHAM.

"Naomi"--"pleasant" Mahlon--"sickness or unhealthy"

Chilion--"puny or pinning" (Sad pick for husbands!)

Trouble

This is a sad looking family. God will attempt to reach them thru the affairs of life. This untimely trip would eventually cost this family the lives of all of the men. In their low spiritual state, these two sons do a forbidden thing--they married Moabites thus breaking the law which restricted such marriages.

Verse 3:

Allegorically inclined

"Orpah"--"deer" "Ruth"--there are several words for the meaning of Ruth all the way from beauty to good nature. All of these words suggest one who has beauty, charm, personality etc. Search thru the Book of Ruth and you will be amazed to observe that you cannot find one thing wrong with Ruth! (*Moses - Eliphaz David - Samson*) In this far off country this family out of the place of blessing begins to get into trouble.

Verse 6:

"she had heard...that the Lord had visited"... Faith would not take Naomi back to the land. It had taken 10 years for her to react--with a great deal of personal tragedy. It was not until she began looking and thinking about her homeland that she began to have a measure of peace and satisfaction. But to return to Bethlehem proposed some grave problems for her daughters in law.

Verses 7-13

This passage brings to an end all mother-in-law jokes. It shows how closely these two can be.

(1) Kiss

(2) Frustration

Naomi tells these two girls if they go back to Israel with her they will not be accepted by the people. They will not be accepted socially or religiously. They will be unable to marry and must endure widowhood til they die. They will live in poverty because all that the family had in goods was spent in time of famine and sickness. Naomi seeks to send them back to their homes and families. She reminds them that even if she did marry again immediately there would not be time to wait for the sons to grow up and it was manditory for them to marry next of kin.

In the light of such information each of the women made a decision.

Orpah went back to her old life and its gods. (v.15)
From this point on, Orpah was never heard of again in Scripture!

Verses 16-22:

Ruth made a decision to face the hardships. She made a decision to trust God and leave behind the old life of Moab. It was not a half-hearted momentary decision it was for life. She was leaving Moab and its gods to trust the living and true God. Ruth stood at the crossroads of life as did Orpah but Ruth saw more than things, comforts, family, social respectability-- she put her hands into the hands of God... a faith that looked beyond what she could see with her eyes!

The last few verses picture the prodigal daughter coming home. The marks of the 10 hard years are evident. She had changed---signs of age and sorrow upon her life. There is a sad note of bitterness in her reply. She recognized that the stay in Moab had been of a disciplinary nature. The fact that she refers to God as "Almighty" speaks of the distance that had come as result of her going to Moab. Sons do not refer to their father in this way. She returns in a bitter state of mind and soul. There is something suggestive about the beginning of barly harvest. When we come back to the place of blessing there is always abundance and beginning. This was the place of satisfaction.

Our conclusion is to take another look at Orpah and Ruth. In Orpah we see a picture of those people who when brought to the place of decision turn back to the idols of Moab. When she had to choose between God and things--things won out. She was never heard from again. She chose the line of least resistance. In Ruth we see an illustration of faith. Faith will not turn back even in the face of impossible circumstances. This is the test that comes to every life--believe God or doubt Him. Point: How many girls named Orpah/ How many girls named Ruth? Make a decision. Which direction are you going today?

THE BOOK OF RUTH
Chap. 2

Last Lord's Day I began a series of messages in the Book of Ruth. We were introduced to the main characters in the ^{first} chapter. (Review) Today, we see the last primary characters in the story--Boaz, "in whom is strength")

When Naomi and Ruth returned to Jerusalem, they were faced with several major problems not the least of which was how they were going to keep body and soul together. There were no social organizations to which widows could appeal for help. However, there were some laws in Israel to assist the poor. God's poverty program for the poor of that nation was not in the form of relief. God never stifled the will to work. Even in caring for the poor, God involved the element of work and the sustaining of pride and self respect. It was to this law for the poor that Ruth resorted.

2:2

2 Thes 3:10
Hidden: "I fight poorly - to work."

Gleaning was a lowly task. In the time of harvest, the reapers would go thru a field cutting the grain. The women would follow tying the sheaves. After that the gleaners or those who were poor could go into the field and take what was left. According to the law, the corners of field and any bundles of grain left behind were for the taking. It has been estimated that as much as 20% was left for the poor. Once again the character of Ruth is seen. She was not too proud, lazy, to work. There was no complaining of the hardship or remembering how it used to be in Moab.

2:3

This is one of the great verses in the Bible on the leading of the Lord in the life of one of his children. The word "hap" means "happened". In the common language of the day, the writer speaks of how Ruth came to the field of Boaz. However, there was nothing of chance or accident about it. Ruth was being guided by the unseen hand of God. A valuable lesson on the Lord's guidance. The older we become in faith, the less one needs tangible indications of the Lord's will. Notice there were no visions or pious talk about His leading--He just led her in the everyday events of life. This has been my experience--no strange feelings or great visions. (** Dr. Ironside said on one occasion that most of the decisions he had to make in life were made not knowing at the moment if that was the will of God. He prayed and took a step. Stay close to the Lord day by day and when the big decisions come it will not be such a jarring experience. (Statement by Carey/Taylor how as he grew older none of the demands of youth re the Lord's leading. Help to me.)

Place in light of Paul's teaching

2:4

Boaz greeting to his workers and their response is very encouraging. It is as unusual as it is welcome. God was not just a curse word in these labor and capital relationships. There was good feeling on both sides because God was in the middle. For Boaz, his religion carried over into his everyday work. Here was a wealthy man who was not ashamed to speak the Lord's name to his workers. In spite of the fact that this was a time of great spiritual decline in Israel, Boaz did not forget the Lord.

2:5

"Whose damsel is this?"

When Boaz came to the fields that morning, he noticed among the gleaners a woman of striking beauty.

We noticed this too on our recent trip to Israel--- bus picked up to girls who were Israeli soldiers. In rough army clothing, no makeup, hairdos but very beautiful girls! Boaz question betrays more than a passing interest in this girl. It was "love at first sight."

***When I was a student in seminary, Dr. J. Vernon McGee came to the school for special lectures on the Book of Ruth. He asked if he could give this verse a rather free translation from the Hebrew. After careful study eh had come to this conclusion that what Boaz really said that morning was---whistle.

2:6-9

It is not difficult to see that Boaz has more than just a passing interest in Ruth. Apparently he knew about her and her faithfulness and goodness to Naomi but being the village's most eligible bachelor, he had hear many stories about fine young women! Now he sees for himself and offers her protection and drink. The times of the judges were much like our times--- a breakdown of law and order and it was not safe for a young woman to be alone in the fields without some kind of security. All of this activity speaks of a man who has found the true love of his life.

2:10

Ruth was surprised that she should be treated so kindly. When she came to Israel it was with the expectation that men would not show her any attention at all. Now she is treated courteously by one of the areas wealthiest men. The answer to Ruth's question:

"Ruth go home and look in the mirror." You are a girl of great beauty and charm but above all a woman of godly character. This question is easily understood by our knowing something about Ruth. There is an even greater question--- "Why have we found grace in His eyes?"

There is nothing in any of us to call forth the love of God to us! Grace was extended to us "without a cause" "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:24)

There are some folk who give the impression that God really got a prize when they came to the Lord. There was/is nothing attractive about us that would make God love us--nothing! All we have in this world to bring to God is our sins! We are needy sinners---needing God grace.

2:12

I can think of not lower way to express faith in God. In addition to her beauty---her faith in God was attractive to Boaz. (A comment to youth---make this the primary consideration in marriage.) Also an added word--Ruth is a good example of the fact that beauty can be used in God's work. There is the feeling by some that God cannot use beauty. He can and does but it must be surrendered to Him.

2:13 -17

What a blessing Boaz acts must have been to Ruth. After the loss of her husband, the poverty of life plus the many other hardships. Ruth sensed too that here was a strong man of great grace and character. For those of you who think men were slow to get dates in the Bible, notice that Boaz met Ruth in the mid-morning and is now having lunch with her! Boaz leaves instruction to let some sheaves fall on purpose---now the worker know love has done its work in Boaz heart. The results of the days gleaning was startling--- far more than would be expected in a couple of normal days of gleaning.

2:20

Our chapter begins and ends with a couple of laws we do not have today and do not easily understand. In ancient Israel, God kept the land which He had given them in the family. God set up certain laws for the protection of that property. Every 50 years the land reverted to the original owners no matter who might possess it at the time. Let us suppose that a family should lose its land and even to the point of selling themselves into slavery--which did happen at times. The law stated that a near kinsman--Heb. Goel-- could redeem those relative by paying their debts and correcting their financial situation in the courts. In the case of a widow--there were responsibilities about marrying her--in the case of a brother. Why this picture in the Old Testament? Bible A Book of Redemption.

Man is a slave to sin. He is in bondage to his sins to the point that he cannot deliver himself. The longer he lives the more he weaves a web of sin about himself. He needs someone--a Kinsman Redeemer to get him out of his spiritual delima. We have such a person--He came to earth--our kinsman to redeem us from sin. Have you been set free in Christ?

3:3 In the steps of Ruth's preparation to go to Boaz, we have/see a picture of the sinners coming to Christ.

1. Washing-- we are not fit for Heaven as we are, we need cleansing. Titus 3:5, Heb.1:3 "purged" means cleansed. There is no way we can go to Heaven apart from cleansing of our sins.

2. Anoint-- This practice was both ceremonial and personal. Ceremonially it set certain persons apart with a special function or dignity in the service of God. Personally it began as a means of protecting the skin from the heat of the sun. Gradually it became a kind of cosmetic in which olive oil was mixed with perfumes. Dr. McGee said he knew the very brand name of this perfume--It was not Chanel V or Evening In Paris---it was "Midnight in Moab!" All of this reminds us of the fragrance of our Lord. As men touch Christ, the fragrance of His presence is on them.

3. Raiment-- in all probability, Ruth had been wearing her widow's mourning clothes. She may have worn a working dress in the field. Boaz had never seen her in a "dress-up" dress. I can imagine Naomi thought that if Boaz thought Ruth was something in her work clothes--wait til he sees her in her party dress! The Bible is filled with the doctrine of our proper covering in order to come into the presence of God. The story is as old as Adam and Eve. A proper covering is necessary. In that covering we are as safe as He is safe. (3 kinds of righteousness.) (Phil. 3:9, Romans 3:21-22)

4. "Get thee down" -- Action required in appropriation. Let him know your feeling--go tell him. So with us in humility we must claim Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

3:3-7

Let me hasten to explain that there is nothing improper with Ruth's conduct. She is responding to a custom that was understood in Israel. It must be kept in mind that this scene takes place in a public place. Men and women and children were asleep around this threshingfloor. Orientals sleep at night fully clothed simply reclining on some kind of mat with only the shoes/sandals removed and their large outer garment thrown over the feet and body to keep out the cool night air.

3:8 -9

Ruth put her feet to his feet. Boaz reaction to her presence indicated that there was nothing out of the way about her behaviour. As a matter of fact he praises her for conduct that was far above his highest expectation. What Ruth had done was the act of a very modest and sensitive woman.

Ring etc

Ruth was quietly claiming Boaz as her kinsman-redeemer. This was the private way of letting him know that she was willing to become Mrs. Boaz. Ruth could have done this action publicly--she could have brought Boaz into court and demanded he do his duty but that is not the way of godly people.

3:11

Boaz is willing to take the necessary legal steps to make Ruth his wife. Boaz goes on to confirm our faith in Ruth when he mentions how highly spoken of she is in the town.

3:12

This verse tells us something about Boaz interest in Ruth. He had already taken the time to find out if the field was clear--was he interested or was he not? Like all great drama--there was an obstacle to be overcome before they could live happily ever after. There was another kinsman who was nearer than Boaz--perhaps a brother to Elimelech.

3:13-15

This is not a wrong suggestion by Boaz. She would be protected and Boaz did not want the news to get out too soon that he wanted to act as her kinsman lest the nearer kinsmen get a good look at her and marry this beautiful girl. (Perry)

3:16

The question of Naomi means--"Are you engaged?" Do you have the ring? Has a date been set for the wed.?"

3:18

Ruth had done her part--the rest is up to Boaz. He would not be idle but was even then seeking to take the proper steps to deal with the situation. The great gospel picture in this verse reminds us that Our Kinsman-Redeemer did all that was necessary to secure our salvation. Redemption is His work. Calvary the place where this redemption was completed. Just as Ruth could do nothing legally but simply waited for Boaz to act, so we can do nothing to secure our redemption in Christ. The Bible says to the sinner--"stop your own works AND trust Him." We cannot go to Heaven on our good works--it is not possible. His work for us. (Verses: Matt. 11:28)

4:6 It is generally assumed that this man was a

brother of Elimelech and that Boaz was a nephew. He probably married and had children. His problem had to do with his own property. To marry a woman from Moab would bring all kinds of complications into his own family. He did not want to run the risk. There was a vast difference in the motives of the two men--this man felt a spirit of compassion for his poverty stricken relatives but Boaz was in love! I am sure this man's reaction was good news to Boaz and in fact might have been just what Boaz was seeking.

4:7

We have seen some strange laws in Israel but this transaction is one of the most unusual thus far. In the ^{LEVITIC} ~~Levitic~~ Law in Deut. 25 we learned that a widow could take the scandal of the near kinsman and spit in his face if he refused to perform his function as a kinsman. This custom however, was a legal action. It was one of 3 ways of making a covenant. (1) Two men would take a pinch of salt and put into each other pouch then shaken. The contract was binding for as long as the salt mixed--that is it could never be broken. (2) Slaying of an animal divide the carcass down the backbone place the divided parts on the ground and the two parties join hands and walk between the two parts. It spoke of a contract that was firm until the death of the persons. (3) The exchange of scandals was the most common method of making a contract. It was the exchange of something of value. The shoe surrender symbolized the giving up of one's interest in land and suggest the keeper of the shoe had the right of possession. Among ancient nations this act often spoke of two matters. (1) Departure or (2) Possession.

There is something wonderful to see in this transaction. The Law could not save us. There was not any way for the foreigner or stranger to get in under the law--someone must give her his name! The Law cannot save. No person was ever saved by keeping the Law. (Gal. 3:13, Romans 3:20) In Boaz we see one who gave his love, name, righteousness. Eph. 1:6.

4:9-10

Boaz had done all that needed to be done. He had finished the transaction. Now Ruth the poor, hard working widow will become a woman of status in the community and all because of love. Salvation is in reality a love arrangement. We are a purchased people. (Eph. 5:26-27, Acts 20:28)

It would appear in v. 11 that the whole town was glad to see such a marriage.

The good graces of the town folk is seen in their blessing to the bride and groom mentioned in v.12. Pharez was the illegitimate son of Judah. In this reference we see the desire of the people for God to bless these two and to show grace to them. They are asking God to manifest His grace to Ruth even though she is a foreigner--- an outsider.

Have you noticed something unusual about this wedding scene? The bride is not in the center of the picture. The bride is not capturing all the attention. As a matter of fact, she did not even appear at the courthouse for the ceremony! When we compare this to weddings in our day it is strange indeed. Today every aspect of the wedding is for the bride. When showers of given--never for the groom. When the picture appears in the society page it is always the bride. When they describe the clothing at the wedding it is always the attire of the bride. When the ceremony begins the groom stumbles in behind the preacher and the bride comes down the aisle to the tune of "Here Comes the Bride" not "Here Comes the groom." But in this ceremony it is an entirely different matter. It is Boaz who is in the spotlight. He is the important party in this wedding. Think of the Bible picture. We are like Ruth--aliens, outcasts, poor and needy. We come into the presence and proper relationship to God thru Jesus Christ. Everything depended on Boaz and his work at the gate. In the Book of Revelation, it is very obvious that the central person in this scene is the Lamb. It is the wedding of the Lamb not the bride. (Rev. 19:7-8)

4:13-17

The Lamb is all the glory in Emmanuel's land

Like most love stories, this one had a happy ending. From famine and sorrow to weddings and a new baby. The word "Obed" means "one that serves."

4:18-22

Wonder why this book ends with a genealogy. These are usually very dry and uninteresting. This one is highly significant for it points to a coming King. The way has been opened and this Moabite widow was to take her place in the kingly genealogy of David and ultimately of our Lord.

Conclusion:

Three facts about a Kinsman-Redeemer.

1. He must be a kinsman--
2. He must be willing to redeem--
3. He must be able to redeem.--

Jesus Christ met all three qualifications.