

people. All events are incidents in His total precious plan for His own (Rom. 8:28, 29).

c. With place

In this instance, it was Bethlehem. The word means the "house of bread." So it was for Ruth and Naomi. They were fed physically, but much more. Bethlehem speaks a thousand blessed memories to the child of God (Micah 5:2).

Conclusion Does God guide? Of course He does. With Naomi, the Israel type, there is coming a day when the nation will return to the land (Ezek. 36:24). Ruth, the type of Gentiles, will also come into blessing (Isa. 60:3). Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, will be at the focal point making it all possible (Isa. 53). What all appears, to the cursory reader, to be but accidents is in fact the outworking of His eternal purpose. God does guide. In our traumatic experiences, let us not forget that God has not left the issues of our life to chance, but to His own blessed concerns. Amen.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

"How God Guided Ruth"
Ruth 2:1-7

Introduction

1. This chapter explains how God introduced Ruth to Boaz. From the gloom of Moab, here is hope dawning in Bethlehem. While the first chapter speaks of the decision of Ruth's faith, this chapter deals with the work of her faith.

2. Naomi and Ruth are back in the land of Israel. They have resettled (at least Naomi) in Bethlehem (1:22). The stage is set for the next episode in God's dealing with His purpose in this family.

3. Principal among the events described is the guidance of the Lord. It is absolutely inescapable to recognize the hand of God marvelously moving in the events given. This is how it all eventuated:

1. THE PERSONS INVOLVED

a. Primary persons

1) Naomi Three times she is mentioned in this section. While she is not dominant, she is important to the entire issue at hand. God is moving for Ruth, but it comes because of Naomi. Incidentally, Naomi figures as a type of Israel. Having been in dispersion (Moab), she is now being brought back into the land of the nation Israel. So this will yet be (Ezek. 36:24).

2) Ruth Here is the key individual in God's program. She is a Gentile and a type of their future. They too will be blessed when Israel returns (Naomi). The testimony of Scripture is clear (Isa. 60:3; 62:2; 66:19).

3) Boaz While there are various meanings suggested for this name, it may mean "man of strength." Whatever, he is called a "kinsman" of Naomi. This word is variously used in the Bible (Psa. 31:12; 45:14; Prov. 7:4; cf. Ruth 3:2). He is obviously a relation

because he is from the family of Elimelech. Rabbinic tradition has it that he was a nephew of Elimelech. The omission of the article with the word "kinsman" shows that he is just one of many and not a particular relative of importance. He is described as a "man of wealth." This same phrase is used of a "man of war" (Judges 6:12; 11:1). The phrase is obviously a statement of virtue. Boaz is certainly a type of Christ as the: a) Lord of the harvest, and b) Savior of Israel and the Gentiles (the world).

b. Secondary persons

1) Supervisor vv. 5, 6. Here is the foreman of the whole project of gleaning. He is an important man in God's program. He did not hinder Ruth from moving into the field of God's choice. He is an attendant unto blessing.

2) Reapers vv. 5, 6. These gave no hinderance to Ruth's intentions. They were silently cooperative with the will of God. It may be they were entirely insensitive to God's overruling providence, but they were instruments He used to work His plan.

2. THE ACTIVITIES DESCRIBED

a. From Scripture

The law of Moses provided for the poor. One of these provisions related to gleaning (Lev. 19:9, 10; 23:22; Deut. 24:19-22). Two privileges are found in these verses: 1) Poor had the right to glean. 2) Owners were not allowed to pick up the gleanings themselves. It is true that many owners were hard-hearted and placed obstacles in the way of the poor. Indeed, some were so unfavorable that they actually forbade the poor to do this good work.

b. About service

The figure of importance here is Ruth. But what a beautiful person. First, she is noted as asking her mother-in-law for permission (v. 2). Then, she went where she could find "grace" (v. 2). She worked arduously (v. 7). Her labor was done for herself and her mother-in-law.

c. Concerned spirituality

It is important to note that Ruth took her stand by faith with Israel (1:16). Here is a demonstration of that faith. This was in fact Israel behavior. It was part of the arrangements with God and the nation. She acted, therefore, upon a relationship with God.

NOTE: Here is an insight into God's social relief program in the Old Testament. There was no laziness promoted by handouts. The poor were expected to work for what they got! There is a dignity about the whole issue. The diligence (from morning until now, v. 7) shows that Ruth really stuck at the field. She did take a rest (she tarried a little, v. 7), but there is every evidence of fidelity to her task.

3. THE DETAILS INDICATED

a. In words

1) Behold Here is a word calling attention to a dramatic event. Boaz came from the city of Bethlehem and greeted his servants in a very gracious manner. They responded in a similar fashion. But something more is to be perceived: here are the two progenitors of God's Messiah! That is the primary issue at hand. Furthermore, God is at work. He is guiding in the events here.

2) Happened The Hebrew has a cognate noun used with a verb: "her chance chanced to hit upon the field of Boaz." Ah, there it is: no direct statement of God anywhere in the book, but He is there! The whole record breathes with His activity, though it is never so stated. The world speaks of chance; we speak of providence. It is God working in, with, and under the circumstances of life. We can never doubt His presence and ministry among us (Matt. 28:20). Divine omnipresence--what a blessing.

b. In time

While yet in Moab, God began to work in Israel (1:6). Naomi was led to return. She did (1:22) and it was at just the right time, the time of harvest (1:22). It was this harvest time which God used to bring about Boaz to meet Ruth. No word nor event is idle with God's