

Passage: Genesis 38

Title: The Story of Judah & Tamar (and God's Amazing Grace)

Summary: Another strange, but true story that God reveals in the Scriptures for us the story of Judah and Tamar. As strange and as sordid as this story is, God reveals a tapestry of love and forgiveness that weaves all the way to the birth of Jesus; and the story reveals that try as Satan will to destroy the plans of God, his efforts are futile, and that would mean his efforts against you as well. You don't want to miss this study.

Genesis more than history book / It is His-story

It all begins here in Genesis. In chapter 3 we will see the first mention of the Messiah who would be bruised for our iniquities (sin), chapter 5 the gospel laid out before us in the meaning of each name. We will see genealogy after genealogy, but they will all drop off until we come to just one genealogy, the genealogy leading up to the Messiah. This Old Testament, starting with Genesis, is more than the history of the children of Israel and Jewish Nation, this is His-story.

Theme of this Book – for this is why He had to come:

From Paradise to Prison – back to Paradise:

(Genesis 3:15 NKJV) And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

(Genesis 3:15 noted) And I (God) will put enmity (hostility/hatred) Between you (satan) and the woman (mankind), And between your seed (demons) and her Seed (Jesus); He (Jesus) shall bruise your (satan) head, And you (satan) shall bruise His (Jesus) heel."

Outline:

Part 1 – The History of Major World Events (chapters 1-11) (spanning 2000+ years)

- The Creation of the World and Man (1-2)
- The Fall of Man (3-5)
- The Flood of the World (6-9)
- The Tower of Babel: the Dispersion of Man (10-11)

Part 2 – The History of the Major Families (chapters 12-50) (spanning approximately 350 years)

- The Life of Abraham (11-25)
- The Life of Isaac (25-26)
- The Life of Jacob (27-36)
- The Life of Joseph (36-50)

Interlude to Joseph / Seldom Read / Contrasts

A little interlude here of the story of Joseph. Joseph is the major character for the rest of the book of Genesis and we will pick back up on him in Genesis 39. But here in Genesis 38 is the story of his older brother Judah. It is a seldom-read chapter, it is a rather sordid story and greatly contrasts the life of Joseph. We see Judah's life was sad and sordid, Joseph's life as we will see is sparkling and spectacular. God often gives us contrasts in the Scriptures that allow us to clearly see the beauty and the sparkle of one person or principle more clearly. We will see how rare and precious Joseph was for the days that he lived in.

Never Wastes His Word

God never wastes His Word, and He never wastes His warning. The fact that it is in this book, and we are reading it now is all that we need to be assured that we need to be reading this chapter, today, for our lives, or for someone we will be encountering in the near future. He who has an ear, let him hear.....

Prayer

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need

(Genesis 38:1 NKJV) It came to pass at that time that Judah departed from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah.

Somewhere in 20 Years

Verse one this insertion is somewhere in this 20 year period that Joseph is in Egypt and before the boys come down to Egypt to buy grain

Dazzled

Hirah means nobility (as in distinction and honor in standing), or better said splendour and dazzling. And even Christians can get dazzled by the splendor of the world, the people with all their sparkle and charm and think, man, that's the way to go. Look at their life. They so have it going on. Of course, the end of their life ends in perishing because they've never come to Jesus Christ, but nonetheless, along the way, Christians can want to join the people who show this splendor and dazzle, and you always come to that if you cannot find and see the splendor in Jesus Christ. In about seven miles.

(Genesis 38:2 NKJV) And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her and went in to her.

(Genesis 38:3 NKJV) So she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er.

(Genesis 38:4 NKJV) She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan.

(Genesis 38:5 NKJV) And she conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name Shelah. He was at Chezib when she bore him.

Pagan Pal / Canaanite Wife – Gen 28

So here this young man Hirah, an Adullamite, he's a pagan pal to Judah, he is someone who is outside the believing community of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Judah goes for a Canaanite woman even though back in Genesis 28 Jacobs parents (Rebecca and Isaac) told Jacob don't take a woman from Canaanite, and they sent him to his uncle Laban's to find a wife (which turned out to be Rachel and Leah):

(Genesis 28:1 NKJV) Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.

(Genesis 28:2 NKJV) "Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

(Genesis 28:3 NKJV) "May God Almighty bless you, And make you fruitful and multiply you, That you may be an assembly of peoples;

Jacob pass Wisdom to Kids / Maybe Guilt / Leaves his Covering

Judah knows this, Jacob would pass the wisdom of the father's down to his kids, but Judah ignores it. I believe what is happening here is Judah is checking out for a while. Maybe it was the guilt of what he did to Joseph, maybe it was who he really was, but for whatever reason we see him checking out. He departs from his brothers, his family, his father and from any accountability and wisdom, and he heads to the world for relief from the struggles of life.

Hanging Out in wrong Place

So here he is hanging out with the unsaved buddy, and he hooks up with an unsaved woman, and takes her as wife.

Warning / Notice Progression

Again here in the Scriptures is a story put here for us as a warning for us to protect us from doing the same. Noticed the progression, now we may not jump into sin but a slow progression starts and we end up in a place we shouldn't be. Here's Judah's progression, he leaves his family, which means he leaves his accountability, we see him start hanging out with an unbeliever, a person of unlike faith and then we find him being joined to an unbeliever, someone outside the faith and the belief of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – the God of Israel. By the end of this chapter we'll see him being joined to a prostitute.

Youth – Careful who Hang out With / Gradually Lead You / Psalm 1

You youth and young adults be careful who you hang out with for their influence can take you places that you will wish you never went to. You may say well there are not that many Christians to hang out with, so I really have no choice. Well the choices were even less for Judah, and what happened to Judah will happen to you. In most cases it will happen so gradually you won't even realize it. Hey I'm going to go down to see a buddy, he's always making me laugh, I could use a good laugh. Hey it's just for one beer.

This is Psalm 1:

(Psalms 1:1 NKJV) Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

(Psalms 1:2 NKJV) But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

(Psalms 1:3 NKJV) He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

(Psalms 1:4 NKJV) The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

(Psalms 1:5 NKJV) Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

(Psalms 1:6 NKJV) For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Walk – Stand - Sit

Notice the progression, first he is walking the ungodly, then he is stopped and standing with the sinner, then he is sitting amongst them. It is a gradual progression, but the ending is same.

(Genesis 38:6 NKJV) Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar.

Day of Arranged Marriages / Knew better than Dad – Er too Stupid

This was in the day of arranged marriages where the parents picked out the mate for their children. And here we see Judah who knew better than his dad, hey I can take a Canaanite woman for myself I'll be fine. But I'll pick a wife from my son because he's too stupid to decide what's right for himself.

Personal Principle

Let me share a personal principle with you. I will not do anything that I don't want my son to do even if I have the liberties to do it myself. I think too many R-rated movies have gone way over the line and fast approaching are the PG-13 movies. I don't watch any R-rated movies so I will never have to say to my son or have a discussion with him on which one are ok, and which ones are not, I watch this type but not that type. I just don't watch them, and hope when I am not around nor will he. Same with alcohol, not in the privacy of my home, nor with pizza, nor a glass of wine at dinner with Mommy. Personally, I don't because the stakes are too high and I want to have a zero alcohol policy so as to never influence him. These are silent witnesses that I hope will imbed in his mind. I can't ask him to not do something that I do.

It Doesn't work for Anyone

As for Judah's son we will see his arranged marriage doesn't work out for all involved.

(Genesis 38:7 NKJV) But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him.

(Genesis 38:8 NKJV) And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother."

Why? We don't know, it must have been something terrible for God to kill him.

Levirate Marriage

This is called the “Levirate marriage” it later became part of the Levitical Law written by Moses to the Children of Israel.

(Deuteronomy 25:5 NKJV) "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

(Deuteronomy 25:6 NKJV) "And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

(Deuteronomy 25:7 NKJV) "But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.'

(Deuteronomy 25:8 NKJV) "Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him. But if he stands firm and says, 'I do not want to take her,'

(Deuteronomy 25:9 NKJV) "then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.'

(Deuteronomy 25:10 NKJV) "And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal removed.'

We will find when we get to the Mosaic/Levitical laws, that 34 forms of the the law were first revealed, introduced in the book of Genesis

Next Brother / Carry on Lineage

In that culture, it was a common practice that if a man married and he died before he had any children, his next oldest brother had to take his wife and marry her and raise up children in the name of the dead brother. The firstborn would be named after the dead brother and considered to be his family

Younger Brother would Say

We will see this again in the Book of Ruth. In the Book of Ruth, after Naomi's husband and sons had died, she came back to Israel with her daughter-in-law Ruth. Ruth gleaned in the field of Boaz and at the end of the Harvest season, she was instructed, by Naomi, to go at night and see the place where Boaz lay and lay down and cover her feet with his blanket. Boaz was a near kinsmen. Elimelech and his two sons are dead and his family name will perish unless someone follows the law and raises up a child to keep the family name going. Ruth is actually asking Boaz to fulfill the law concerning the dead brother to raise up a child after his name. Boaz was an older man, old enough to be Ruth's father; but, he was attracted to her. However, there was another brother who was next in line, as far as order of kin, and he would have the first opportunity. He could not fulfill the law as he was already married, so, he passed on the shoe to Boaz and Boaz married Ruth.

(Genesis 38:9 NKJV) But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother.

(Genesis 38:10 NKJV) And the thing which he did displeased the LORD; therefore He killed him also.

Onan – not his Child

Onan knew the child born would not be considered his own, therefore he spilled his seed on the ground so Tamar would not become pregnant with child.

Not proof Text / Rejecting & Disrespecting /

The verb tense is a continual ongoing activity; so he would have continual relations with her (likely for his personal satisfaction), but not fulfill what his responsibility was, for her to have child. Onan was rejecting his father's direction, and he was disrespecting his dead brother. The displeasure of God was not the emitting of the seed on the ground, but his failure to fulfill the obligation of raising up an heir for the dead brother

What about Birth Control / Stay in Context / Stay Silent / Heb 1

This verse isn't proof text against masturbation or against birth control. What about birth control you may ask. Well, all you singles, obey the word and stay pure is God's word for you today. But for married couples, man has debated this issue for centuries and like in verse 7 we don't know what Er did, therefore

we have to remain silent about that, and I believe the same goes here. We cannot build a case off of this one verse against birth control, because we do not have enough information. A great rule in studying the Scripture is when the Bible is silent it is best to we remain silent. I can see nowhere in the Scripture were God says birth control is wrong. So I remain silent and say to you what was spoken to us in the book of Hebrews, Jesus speaks to man today, therefore seek Him and His leading for you in that area of your life: *(Hebrews 1:1 NKJV) God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, (Hebrews 1:2 NKJV) has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

I stay away from giving my personal opinion because I do not have to live with my personal opinion, the other person does if they apply it.

Be Fruitful

Now the word does say be fruitful and multiply:

(Genesis 1:28 NKJV) Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Another one for the Kingdom / Only Creation for Eternity

Every time a Christian couple tell me they are with child, I say Praise the Lord, another one for the Kingdom. You know every day man creates rockets that fly to space, computers that travel the speed of light, houses, and other stuff, but all of that will burn, the only thing the man can create the last forever is a child.

How many Kids?

Question may be asked then how many children are enough, again I take you back the Hebrews chapter 1:

(Hebrews 1:1 NKJV) God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, (Hebrews 1:2 NKJV) has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

Masturbation

How about masturbation, is it wrong? Let me just say this Jesus says if a man lust in his heart he is guilty of adultery. Jesus is making a point of how powerful the human mind is, and just how much it is a reflection of what is in our heart.

(Matthew 5:28 NKJV) "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Take Thoughts to Captivity

It is important that we take every thought into captivity, that we do not let anything, especially our mind have power over our bodies. Young men you must be in control of your lust. Getting married will not take care of your lust problem.

(1 Corinthians 6:12 NKJV) All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

(2 Corinthians 10:3 NKJV) For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

(2 Corinthians 10:4 NKJV) For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

(2 Corinthians 10:5 NKJV) casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

(Genesis 38:11 NKJV) Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die like his brothers." And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

Black Widow

At this point Judah thinks he has a black widows situation going on here and there ain't no way he's allowing his last son to marry Tamar. So he comes up with this story to appease her, but he has no plan of ever giving his last son to her

Something Honourable About Tamar

What's interesting about Tamar is that even though the first two men really had no interest in the lineage of the family. She takes some type of ownership that she wants to do this and continue this on. She then being more Respectful than the actual sons who were of the father, Judah, because she could have just been cut loose, if you would, and went on and remarried somebody else, but she finds herself drawn to endure this time of being a widow and being childless that she's willing to do that. rather than just move on and remarry someone else from the Canaanite culture.

(Genesis 38:12 NKJV) Now in the process of time the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

Wife Dies – Back Pagan Pal

Judah's wife dies, and we see Judah grieving again and where does he go? He goes with us pagan pal. The time to shear the sheep was a party time, it was like a harvest time, it was a time where they knew money would be flowing in as soon as they took their goods to the market.

Judah will enter into sin knowing this is not the will of God and what I find interesting is when people are bent on sin, they find people and surround themselves with people who will support their position on sin, and even to the point of justification of their sin, of why they are right to do what they're going to do. And it doesn't have to just be finding an unbeliever. Here's what we see. Judah do, but people in the church will do it all the time, they'll find someone who they know won't speak the truth to them. Will coddle them because they are either desiring or involved in the same. sin, or they just are weak in the faith, and they don't want to lose a friend, so they so call support the friend, even though the friend is it displeasing the Lord.

(Genesis 38:13 NKJV) And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep."

(Genesis 38:14 NKJV) So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife.

(Genesis 38:15 NKJV) When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face.

She Figures it Out

Tamar figures it out she knows Judah is holding back from her so she plots her own plan.

Temple Prostitute

The word for harlot here is prostitute. She dressed up like a Temple prostitute. Usually pagan worship was associated around the procreated capacities of man. They revered the marvelous power of the creating of life through a sexual union. It was a major part of the Canaanites religious belief and worship. Every Canaanite woman had to devote herself, for a period of time, as a prostitute to raise funds for the Temple. It was an accepted practice among these people. So, Tamar put on the attire of a temple prostitute and veiled herself so Judah couldn't recognize her.

(Genesis 38:16 NKJV) Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. So she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?"

(Genesis 38:17 NKJV) And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock." So she said, "Will you give me a pledge till you send it?"

(Genesis 38:18 NKJV) Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that is in your hand." Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him.

To the World for Comfort / No Money in Hand

Judah's mourning so he goes to the world again for comfort and relief. One note here, this buying a prostitute wasn't part of his plan. He doesn't have the money to pay her we see, if that was his plan he

would have had money in hand. Judah thought is to go have a couple beers with his friends, but he ends up in a place he shouldn't be and ends up doing something that he will regret. Again Psalm 1.

Ring – Bracelet – Staff / Person – Possessions - Position

The signet was the ring stamp that you could put into the wax and sign with to prove that the merchandise was yours. So the

- Signet ring actually identified who you were,
- the bracelet represents wealth for not everyone could afford to wear bracelets,
- and the staff, at least in Judah's case represented his livelihood, for he was a Shepherd.

Notice what Tamar asked for. Used as a seal on business transactions or correspondence, the signet spoke of the person, of identity. The bracelets spoke of possession of wealth. The staff spoke of position—even as it does to this day. Thus, Tamar, playing the role of a prostitute, is saying, "I want your person, your possessions, your position." And that's exactly what happens to anyone who gives himself or herself to immorality. Person, possessions, position are all lost. "What do I want?" asked Tamar. "I want it all."

Turn yourself Over to Immorality / Ruin Life

Turn yourself over to immorality, prostitution, drug use, gambling, or any of that sleazy stuff and you will see that the cost is high. It will ruin your name, take your wealth, and in many cases take away your livelihood.

Risks it All for a Moment

Judah gives all to her for a moment of pleasure, he gives it all up, he risks it all for one moment of pleasure. Beloved learn the contrasts between Joseph and Judah.

(Genesis 38:19 NKJV) So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.

(Genesis 38:20 NKJV) And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her.

The Witnesses

Look at Judah he gives his payment to a heathen to go settle up for him with a harlot what a horrible witness, but we can all have our horrible witnesses in the life and the choices that we make as the world watches us. It's always bigger than just us. And there's always others watching. Not to mention the Lord watches

(Genesis 38:21 NKJV) Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who was openly by the roadside?" And they said, "There was no harlot in this place."

(Genesis 38:22 NKJV) So he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this place."

(Genesis 38:23 NKJV) Then Judah said, "Let her take them for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her."

Too late for life is changed up forever.

(Genesis 38:24 NKJV) And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore she is with child by harlotry." So Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"

Sin in Others Lives / We Justify It

Judah can believe it, my daughter-in-law has been involved in immorality. She deserves death. Isn't it amazing how horrible our sin looks when other people are doing it. We justify our sin in our mind, we say it is because we are in love, we say this is different, it's only temporary.

Whole Chapter Devoted / See Contrasts – Joseph will Run

God devotes this whole chapter, one chapter out of 50, to tell us the story. God gives us a warning of the life of Judah. We see the contrast between Judah and Joseph, Joseph himself will have a moment of passion, there in Potiphar's house, but he will give us what a man after God does in these situations – Turn and burn.

(Genesis 38:25 NKJV) When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." And she said, "Please determine whose these are; the signet and cord, and staff."

(Genesis 38:26 NKJV) So Judah acknowledged them and said, "She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he never knew her again.

Sad Statement / World Looks On / Need More Christians Living it Out

What a sad statement, Judah is from the lineage of Jacob, and Tamar is more righteous than he is. How sad it is when the world looks on at us and there are those times where they are more righteous than us. The world looks on and says if you're all right with God, then so too must I. The world doesn't need more evangelism, the world needs to see more Christians living it out, walking in obedience.

Judah drifts

Judah drifts off the scene, what a way to leave this man.

(Genesis 38:27 NKJV) Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins were in her womb.

(Genesis 38:28 NKJV) And so it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took a scarlet thread and bound it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first."

(Genesis 38:29 NKJV) Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, "How did you break through? This breach be upon you!" Therefore his name was called Perez.

(Genesis 38:30 NKJV) Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.

4 Woman / Linked to Messiah / Amazing Grace / God rather Cleanse - Trophy

Four women named in Matthew's Gospel. All of them outside of the Jewish race, for, even Bath-sheba was a Hittite. All of them had shady experiences in their past. It speaks of the "grace" of God. We may not have the most honorable past and we may be ashamed of it as we look back; yet, God does not disqualify us or kick us out. He would rather wash us, cleanse us, forgive us and then use us as trophies to His grace:

(Matthew 1:1 NKJV) The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

(Matthew 1:2 NKJV) Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.

(Matthew 1:3 NKJV) Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.

Family Past

Do not think that your past will ever keep you away from God. Tamar is proof and a powerful picture of God's redemptive grace. This woman did questionable things, yet she will be connected to the Messiah. We see God's grace, it is unmerited, unearned, favor, for the infinitely ill deserving. That is you and I.

Ruth Overview

Ruth 1

Ruth 1 tells how, during a famine in Israel, Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons move from Bethlehem to Moab. Elimelech dies, and later both sons—who had married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth—also die. Naomi hears the famine in Israel is over and decides to return home. Orpah tearfully says goodbye, but Ruth clings to Naomi, declaring her loyalty to Naomi, her people, and her God. They arrive in Bethlehem at the start of the barley harvest, with Naomi feeling bitter over her losses.

Key Verse

Ruth 1:16–17 (NKJV)¹⁶ But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people *shall be* my people, And your God, my

God. ¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if *anything but* death parts you and me.”

Ruth 2

Ruth 2 describes how Ruth goes to glean leftover grain in the fields to provide for herself and Naomi. She happens to work in the field of Boaz, a wealthy relative of Elimelech. Boaz notices her, learns of her loyalty to Naomi, and shows her kindness and protection. He ensures she has extra grain to gather and invites her to eat with his workers. Ruth returns to Naomi with abundant grain, and Naomi praises God for Boaz's kindness, noting he is a family redeemer.

Nowhere is Ruth's physical appearance described and recorded. Everyone immediately makes the assumption of physical beauty as the scriptures declared Sarah, Rachel, and Rebecca and their physical beauty, but that's not associated with Ruth. It's not there, but many make the assumption that it is, but what I know Boaz sees is an impoverished heartbroken stranger alien in the land trying to get by day by day, not knowing what a future holds the land that they're on is no longer theirs where their stand is not clearly described. It's probably a minimal dwelling place and probably very vulnerable and this is what Boaz sees in Ruth

Key Verse

Ruth 2:4–7 (NKJV)⁴ Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, “The LORD *be* with you!” And they answered him, “The LORD bless you!” ⁵ Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman is this?” ⁶ So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, “It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.” ⁷ And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house.”

Ruth 3

Ruth 3 tells how Naomi instructs Ruth to approach Boaz at the threshing floor at night to request his protection as a family redeemer. Ruth follows Naomi's guidance, uncovering Boaz's feet and lying down. When Boaz wakes, Ruth asks him to “spread his garment” over her as a sign of marriage and redemption. Boaz praises her for her kindness, promises to act, but explains a closer relative has the first right to redeem. He sends her home with grain as a sign of his care.

Ruth chapter 3, I'll say this, if Judah had the character of Boaz, he could have laid down at the harvest and God would have brought a bride to him that was God given and God sent. But instead, he chose to go to the world, and he chose to follow the way of the world. Something to be said for all of us.

Key Verse

Ruth 3:5–9 (NKJV)⁵ And she said to her, “All that you say to me I will do.” ⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. ⁷ And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. ⁸ Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. ⁹ And he said, “Who *are* you?” So she answered, “I *am* Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.”

Ruth 4

Ruth 4 recounts how Boaz meets the closer relative at the town gate and offers him the right to redeem Naomi's land and marry Ruth. The man declines, allowing Boaz to redeem both. Boaz publicly claims Ruth as his wife, and they marry. Ruth gives birth to a son, Obed, who becomes the grandfather of King David. The chapter ends with a genealogy linking Ruth and Boaz to David.

Key Verse

Ruth 4:11–12 (NKJV)¹¹ And all the people who *were* at the gate, and the elders, said, “We *are* witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and

may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. ¹² May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this young woman.”

Ruth 4:18–22 (NKJV)¹⁸ Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; ¹⁹ Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; ²⁰ Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; ²¹ Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; ²² Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

We End at Matthew

The book of Ruth ties to Matthew 1 through the genealogy of Jesus. Ruth, a Moabite woman who showed faith and loyalty to God, married Boaz, and they became the great-grandparents of King David. Matthew 1 includes Ruth and Boaz in the lineage of Jesus Christ, showing how God worked through unexpected people and circumstances to fulfill His promise of the Messiah.

Matthew 1:1–6 (NKJV)

¹ The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: ² Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. ³ Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. ⁴ Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. ⁵ Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife* of Uriah.

Matthew 1:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

Matthew 1:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

Here is Something Interesting

- According to several Bible-code studies, in the Hebrew Masoretic text of Genesis 38, if you pick a starting point and then count every 49 letters (sometimes said as 7×7) after that point, you allegedly spell out, in order, the names:
 - Boaz (בועז),
 - Ruth (רוּת),
 - Obed (עֹבֵד),
 - Jesse (יֵשׁוּעַ),
 - David (דָּוִד)
 - — all in the generational sequence leading from Judah through Perez to David .
- A similarly worded explanation states that these names are hidden “in chronological order within Genesis chapter 38,” reinforcing the idea that the sequence intentionally anticipates the Messianic lineage (Dr Chuck Missler)

Prayer

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need