

**GENERAL SUBJECT: OLD TESTAMENT PATTERNS OF SISTERS USEFUL TO GOD
FOR HIS ECONOMY**

Message One

The Pattern of Rahab

Scripture Reading: Matt. 1:5; Josh. 6:22-26; 7:1-6, 10-15, 20-21; 9:14

- I. When the two spies came to Jericho, Rahab (who was both a harlot and a Canaanite) contacted them and was willing to receive them, hide them, and deliver them by acts that issued out of her faith (Josh. 2:1b-7, 15-16, 22; James 2:25); she believed in the God of Israel and declared, “Jehovah your God, He is God in heaven above and upon earth beneath” (Josh. 2:11b):**
 - A. Jehovah provided Rahab the harlot to Joshua for the gaining of the land; because of her faith in God, she “did not perish with those who were disobedient” (Heb. 11:31); she turned to Israel and their God, and she trusted in Him and His people (Josh. 2:12-13).
 - B. The sign for Rahab and her house to be saved was for her to hang a line of scarlet thread in the window of her house (vv. 18, 21); the scarlet thread tied in the window typifies an open confession of the redeeming blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19); she believed that by this sign she and her household would be delivered.
 - C. Although Rahab was a condemned Canaanite and a prostitute in Jericho (Josh. 2:1), a place cursed by God for eternity (6:26), after she turned to God and to God’s people (vv. 22-25; Heb. 11:30-31), she married Salmon (Matt. 1:5), the son of a leader of Judah, a leading tribe of Israel (1 Chron. 2:10-11), and probably one of the two spies; then she brought forth Boaz, a godly man, out of whom Christ came, and she became associated with Christ in His incarnation for the fulfillment of God’s eternal economy (Matt. 1:5).
 - D. This shows that regardless of our background, if we turn to God and His people and are joined to the proper person among God’s people (not in a physical sense but in a spiritual sense), we will bring forth proper fruit and participate in the enjoyment of the birthright of Christ – Exo. 24:13; 33:11; Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9; Josh. 1:1; 2 Kings 2:2-15; Phil. 2:19-23; 1 Cor. 4:17.
- II. After the destruction of Jericho, Israel was defeated at Ai; at Jericho, according to God’s economy, Joshua sent out spies, not for fighting but to gain Rahab; but at Ai, because Israel had lost the presence of the Lord (Josh. 7:12c), Joshua sent out spies for fighting (vv. 2-3).**
- III. Joshua 9:14 is a very powerful portion of the Scriptures that shows why the children of Israel were deceived by the Gibeonites – “they did not ask for the counsel of Jehovah”; thus, Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them to let them live (v. 15):**

- A. The children of Israel were deceived because they were like a wife who forgot her husband.
- B. A wife should never leave her husband; rather, she should always rely on him and be one with him; when the Gibeonites came to Israel, as the wife Israel should have gone to her Husband and checked with Him about what to do – Josh. 9:14.
- C. The result of Israel's not seeking the counsel of her Husband was that this independent and individualistic wife was deceived, and she had no protection, no safeguard; from this record in the Scriptures we need to learn that, as the Lord's wife, we should co-live with Him, always relying on Him and being one with Him all the time.

Message Two

The Pattern of Deborah (1)

Scripture Reading: Judg. 4–5

- I. **The book of Judges shows that Israel had offended God by rejecting Him as their King; it is a great wickedness, a great evil, in the sight of God if we reject Him as our King, our Lord, our Head, and our Husband – 1 Sam. 8:7; 12:17, 19; Judg. 21:25; 17:6; Luke 19:11-14; Jer. 11:13; Ezek. 16:24.**
- II. **God raised up Deborah as a judge of Israel who practiced the female submission to the man in order to keep God’s ordination and bring all of Israel into a proper order under God’s kingship and headship–Judg. 4–5:**
 - A. At the time of Judges 4, the men of Israel had failed in their God-ordained function of leadership; this forced God to do something extraordinary and unusual in raising up a female, Deborah, as a judge of Israel; the raising up of such a female changed the entire condition of Israel – vv.4-5.
 - B. The children of Israel cried out to Jehovah (v. 3a), and Deborah, a prophetess, was raised up as a judge of Israel; she would sit under the palm of Deborah, and the children of Israel went up to her for judgment (vv. 4-5).
 - C. In the Bible a proper female indicates one who is in submission to God, one who keeps God’s ordination; this is the position that Israel should have taken before God as her King, her Lord, her Head, and her Husband, but Israel violated God’s ordination, leaving her position as God’s wife and forsaking Him for hundreds of idols; this brought Israel into a miserable situation and condition:
 1. Samson was a Nazarite from his mother’s womb for the full course of his life; the Nazarite was to let his hair grow long, signifying that he was to remain in subjection to the Lord’s headship, wherein is power – Num. 6:5; Judg. 16:17; 1 Cor. 11:3-6, 10, 15.
 2. But Delilah pressed him with her words every day and urged him to tell her the secret of his power until “his soul was tired to death” (Judg. 16:16); because of Satan’s wearing out tactics, Samson fell into Satan’s snare, his hair was shaved by Delilah, and he was captured by the Philistines, losing his Nazarite consecration, his power, his testimony of sanctification, and God’s presence (Dan. 7:25).
 3. Those who accept the different and wrong teaching that the believers should not submit to deputy authorities appointed by God will be spoiled by this teaching; with us (especially the married sisters – Eph. 5:22-24), there should be a submissive spirit, standing, atmosphere, and intention; if you are such a person, there will be a great blessing for you and for your future.
 - D. By reading Deborah’s song in Judges 5, we can see that she was full of ability, capacity, insight, and foresight, but such an excellent and capable person was very submissive; God made her the leader, yet she kept the proper order and took Barak as her covering – 4:6-9; cf. 1 Cor. 11:3-6,10.
 - E. When this excellent, extraordinary woman took the lead to practice the female submission to the man, the entire country came into an excellent and proper order;

all the leaders took the lead, all the people followed, and the army was formed; everyone returned to his or her proper position before Jehovah – Judg. 5:2, 13.

- F. The first and greatest function of the sisters in the church life is to be submissive; if the sisters can learn this lesson, the church will be strong, enriched, and renewed:
1. To be submissive requires the supply of life, the enjoyment of grace, the working of the cross, and the denial of the self.
 2. Those who are filled with Christ are filled with submission; the Lord, who was submissive throughout His life, has given us His life of submission and obedience – Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 5:7-9.
 3. For a sister to marry a brother means that she is willing to offer herself up and say, “I am willing to submit”; if a sister has never intended in her heart to submit to the one she intends to marry, she should not marry him – Eph. 5:22-23; 1 Pet. 3:1-6.

Message Three

The Pattern of Deborah (2)

Scripture Reading: Judges 5

- I. Deborah rose up not only as a judge of Israel but also as a mother in Israel – Judg. 5:7:**
- A. When the church life in practicality reaches a peak, there should be some real mothers in every church; in Romans 16:13 Paul says, “Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother as well as mine”:
 - 1. The apostle Paul needed a mother; without a sister as a mother to take care of them, all of those who bear the burden for the Lord’s service would be sorrowful; we all need the care of spiritual mothers, whose care is our real nourishment and our real protection.
 - 2. Paul’s having a spiritual mother indicates that the saints in the church life in Rome had a life transfer through the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ; the best way to have a life transfer is by following the pattern of Paul, who did not determine to know anything but the all-inclusive Christ, and this One crucified – 1 Cor. 2:2.
 - B. The Gospel of John is a book on life, not on the natural life but on the transferred and transformed life; originally, John was not Mary’s son, and Mary was not John’s mother, but by Christ’s life-releasing death, by His life-dispensing resurrection, and by His life union with them, His beloved disciple could be one with Him and become the son of His mother, and she could become the mother of His beloved disciple – 19:26-27.
 - C. Our first relationship is in the flesh, but the second is in the spirit, that is, in the transferred life; because we have the second birth (3:6), we surely have the second relationship, the second family relationship with the real sisters and the real mothers.
 - D. If the sisters exercise their spirit of prayer and faith to be real mothers (2 Cor. 4:13), they will realize how selfish they are and how much they are in themselves; having good children in the spirit will expose them to the uttermost; furthermore, the sisters will grow and mature in life by taking care of some spiritual children.
 - E. If the sisters love the Lord and mean business to be for the church life in the Lord’s recovery, they need to consider themselves as serving nurses, as church nurses, who give nursing care in the church as a true hospital; all the sisters need to be serving sisters by prayer and loving mothers by the most excellent way of love in order to help the needy ones and the younger ones in their spiritual life and church life; this is the best way to receive the blessing, the growth, the spirituality, and the real enjoyment of the Lord – Rom. 16:1-2, 13; Isa. 66:12-13; 1 Cor. 12:31b; 13:4-7.
- II. The Bible says that at that time among God’s people, there were “great resolutions in heart,” and “great searchings of heart” – Judg. 5:15-16:**
- A. To have a great resolve is to make a firm decision, and to have a great searching is to devise a plan to live to the Lord and to live out the Lord for His up-to-date recovery in the building up of His Body, the preparation of His bride, and the

ushering in of His kingdom in its manifestation – 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 14:7-9; Rev. 19:7-9.

- B. We need to aspire and pray to be like those whom Deborah describes at the end of her song, which concludes in a glorious way: “May those who love Him be like the sun / When it rises in its might” – Judg. 5:31.

Message Four

The Pattern of Ruth (1)

Scripture Reading: Ruth 1- 4

- I. **Judges is a book of Israel's miserable history, dark and foul; Ruth, as an appendix to the book of Judges, is the record of a couple's excellent story, bright and aromatic; the main character in this story, Ruth, is like a lily growing out of brambles and a bright star in the dark night – Ruth 1 – 4:**
- II. **Chapter 1 of the book of Ruth speaks of Elimelech's swerving from the rest in God's economy (vv. 1-2), Naomi's returning to the rest in God's economy (vv. 3-7, 19-22), and Ruth's choosing for her goal (vv. 8-18):**
 - A. Ruth is a book of rest; the Sabbath rest is Christ as our rest, typified by the good land of Canaan – Deut. 12:9; Heb. 4:8-9:
 1. In the Old Testament the good land was a rest because the temple could be built there; the temple was the ultimate consummation of the entering into the good land by the children of Israel; with the temple God could have His expression and His representation for His kingdom, government, and administration – 1 Kings 8:1-11.
 2. Christ is rest to the saints in three stages: in the church age, in the millennial kingdom, and in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth for eternity.
 - B. For Elimelech to leave the good land meant that he was swerving from the rest in God's economy, thus cutting himself off from God's economy; he swerved from Bethlehem, the birthplace of the coming Christ (Micah 5:2; Luke 2:4-7), in Judah, the top part of the good land (Gen. 49:8-10; Exo. 3:8b; Deut. 8:7-10), to Moab, a country of idolatry (Judg. 10:6).
 - C. Naomi's returning to the Holy Land was her returning to the rest in God's economy from Moab, the country of idolatry, to Judah, the land of Immanuel (Isa. 8:8) to arrive at Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ (Ruth 1:19a, 22b); she returned with Ruth, her daughter-in-law given to her by God for the accomplishing of His economy concerning Christ (v. 22a).
 - D. Ruth chose the goal of participating with God's elect in the enjoyment of Christ, and she became an important ancestor of Christ, one who helped bring forth Christ into mankind; this was her choosing God and His kingdom for the carrying out of God's economy concerning Christ – Matt. 1:5-6.
- III. **Chapter 2 of the book of Ruth speaks of Ruth, as one who had returned to God from her heathen background, exercising her right to partake of the rich produce of the inheritance of God's elect:**
 - A. According to her threefold status as a sojourner, a poor one, and a widow, Ruth exercised her right to glean the harvest; her gleaning was not her begging but her right.
 - B. God's ordinance concerning the reaping of the harvest was that Jehovah would bless the children of Israel if they left the corners of their fields and the gleanings

for the poor, the sojourners, the orphans, and the widows – Lev. 23:22; 19:9-10; Deut. 24:19.

- C. Boaz obeyed this ordinance, thereby testifying to his great faith in Jehovah; under God's sovereignty, this ordinance seems to have been written for one person – Ruth.
- D. Just as Ruth had the right to enjoy the produce of the good land after coming into the land, so we have the right to enjoy Christ as our good land after believing into Him; Ruth's exercising of her right to gain and possess the produce of the good land signifies that, after believing into Christ and being organically joined to Him in our "joined" spirit (Rom. 8:16; 1 Cor. 6:17), we must begin to pursue Christ in order to gain, possess, experience, and enjoy Him (Phil. 3:7-16).

Message Five

The Pattern of Ruth (2)

Scripture Reading: Ruth 1 – 4

I. Chapter 3 of the book of Ruth speaks of Ruth's seeking for her rest:

- A. "Naomi, her [Ruth's] mother-in-law, said to her, My daughter, I must seek some resting place for you, that it may go well with you" – v. 1:
 - 1. Naomi realized that the proper person to be Ruth's husband was Boaz; hence, Naomi acted as a "middleman" in order to prod Ruth to get married.
 - 2. The genuine ministers of the New Testament are like Naomi in that they stir up the believers in Christ to love Him as their Bridegroom that they may take Him as their Husband – 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7; 21:9-10.
 - 3. The only way for us to have rest is to know Christ as our Husband and take Him as our Husband, living in the closest and most intimate contact with Him – 1 Cor. 2:9; cf. 16:22.
 - 4. If we marry Christ, taking Him as our Husband, our life will be changed; we will realize that we must have a wife's fidelity, and we will learn how to enjoy Christ as our life and our person, walking and behaving in oneness with Him – 2 Cor. 2:10.
- B. After coming to the good land and exercising her right to enjoy its rich produce, Ruth still needed a home so that she could have rest; this kind of rest could only come through marriage:
 - 1. Although we may be saved and love the Lord, in order to have a home for our rest we must marry the Lord Jesus, taking Him as our Husband, and live together with Him in the church as our home – Rom. 7:4; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27.
 - 2. Christ as our Husband and the church as our home are a complete unit for us to have a proper and adequate rest (v. 32).
- C. Considered in the light of Matthew 1:5-6 and 16, Ruth's seeking for her rest was actually for the continuation of the genealogy to bring in Christ.
- D. Boaz told Ruth, "I am a kinsman, yet there is a kinsman closer than I" – Ruth 3:12:
 - 1. In this verse the first kinsman of Ruth's husband, Ruth's closest kinsman, typifies our natural man, who cannot and will not redeem us from the indebtedness (sin) of our old man (4:1-6).
 - 2. Boaz, the second kinsman of Ruth's husband, typifies Christ, who partook of blood and flesh (Heb. 2:14) to be our Kinsman and who can redeem us from our sin, recover the lost right of our natural man in God's creation, be our new Husband in His divine organic union with us, and take us as His counterpart for His increase (Ruth 4:7-13).

II. Chapter 4 of the book of Ruth speaks of Ruth receiving a reward for God's economy:

- A. As part of her reward for God's economy, Ruth gained a redeeming husband, who typifies Christ as the redeeming Husband of the believers; now as believers in

Christ, we have a Husband who is our eternal, present, and daily Redeemer, rescuing us, saving us, delivering us, from all our troubles.

- B. In addition to gaining a redeeming husband, Ruth was redeemed from the indebtedness of her dead husband (vv. 1-9); this typifies the believers being redeemed from the sin of their old man.
- C. Another aspect of Ruth's reward is that she became a crucial ancestor in the genealogy to bring in the royal house of David for the producing of Christ (Ruth 4:13b-22; Matt. 1:5-16); this indicates that she had an all-inclusive and all-extensive gain with the position and capacity to bring Christ into the human race; she is thus a great link in the chain that is bringing Christ to every corner of the earth.
- D. Ruth not only became a crucial ancestor in the genealogy for the producing of Christ, but she also continued the line of the God-created humanity for the incarnation of Christ; the incarnation of Christ was a matter of His being brought out of eternity into time and with His divinity into humanity.

Message Six

A Worthy Woman for God's Economy

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 31

- I. **The first principle for man to live a proper human life is for Him to fear the Lord, to revere the Lord; to fear the Lord is to be in fear of offending Him, of losing His presence, and of not receiving Him as our reward in the next age; we should be in fear of missing the Lord's smile in this age and His reward in the next – Prov. 1:1, 7; Eph. 4:30; 2 Cor. 5:9-10:**
 - A. To fear God is to trust in Him – Prov. 3:5-8, 26; 16:1, 9, 20, 33; 19:21; 30:5-6.
 - B. To fear the Lord means we also honor Him – Prov. 3:9-10.
 - C. The holy fear is actually a source of joy (Psa. 2:11) as a fountain of life (Prov. 14:27) and as a tree of life (11:30) to dispense God into us for the carrying out of His economy.
 - D. The fear of the Lord and the love of the Lord are two wonderful results of the forgiveness of our sins – Psa. 130:4.
- II. **Proverbs 31 presents to us two models of those who fear the Lord: on the one hand we should be like a king, a royal man like the Lord, having the authority to rule; on the other hand, we should be a worthy woman, knowing how to arrange, manage, take care of, and provide for the needs of the saints in the house of God:**
 - A. Proverbs 31:3-9 speaks of a reigning king – one who does not drink wine but who speaks for the rights of others and ministers justice (typifying Christ and His overcomers); only this kind of person can reign.
 - B. Proverbs 31:10 through 31 describes a worthy woman (12:4; 19:14; Ruth 3:11) – one who is wise, kind, diligent, and capable and who can arrange, manage, and provide for her household; “Her price is far above corals” (Prov. 31:10); her glory surpasses all her peers (v. 29); this worthy woman typifies the church and the saints who love the Lord:
 1. The main characteristic of a worthy woman is that she fears the Lord (reverently worshipping, obeying, serving, and trusting the Lord with awe-filled respect); “Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain; / But a woman who fears Jehovah, she will be praised” – v. 30.
 2. The heart of the husband of a worthy woman trusts in her; “She does him good and not evil / All the days of her life” (v. 12); “Her husband is known in the gates / When he sits among the elders of the land” (v. 23).
 3. Such a worthy and prudent woman is from the Lord as a crown of her husband (12:4); her children and husband rise up and call her blessed (31:28); her husband also praises her by saying that she surpasses all others (v. 29).
 4. A husband should be able to see with his own eyes his wife's “pure manner of life in fear”; her adorning should not be the outward plaiting of hair and putting on of gold or clothing with garments, “but the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God” – 1 Pet. 3:1-4.

5. In the proper church life the sisters should “adorn themselves in proper clothing with modesty and sobriety [self-restraint], not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, what befits women professing godly reverence, by good works”; godly reverence is a godly fear toward God, a revering and honoring of God, as is fitting for one who worships God – 1 Tim. 2:9-10.
 6. Older women should be reverent in their behavior, their deportment, so that “they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be of a sober mind, pure, workers at home, good, subject to their own husbands, that the word of God would not be blasphemed” – Titus 2:3-5.
- C. In the aspect of overcoming, we should be like a king; in the aspect of loving the Lord, we should be like a worthy woman; being like this will cause us to have value and glory before the Lord.