



June 2008
Shavuot 5768



Dear Mishpochah in Messiah,

Megillah Ruth

The feast of *Shavuot*, Weeks or Pentecost, begins this year on the evening of Sunday, June 8 and continues for the following two days. The instructions to count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath following the Feast of First Fruits are found in Leviticus 23:15-16. At this appointed time (*moed* in Hebrew, pronounced mo-ED), a new grain offering was presented to the Lord, and two loaves of leavened bread were waved before Him.

The Bible continues in Leviticus 23:22 with the following: “*When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: ‘I am the Lord your God.’*” This harvest theme as well as this very command is dramatically portrayed in the Book of Ruth. For this reason, Ruth, which is actually one of the five festival scrolls (*megillot*) in Judaism, is read on *Shavuot*. The Lord wants to speak to each of us through this precious biblical gem this month!

Background of Ruth

The story of the Book of Ruth takes place during one of Israel's darkest times, the period of the judges (1400–1050 B.C.), a time characterized by lawlessness, faithlessness, and estrangement from the God of Israel. We read in Judges 2 that the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals (vs. 11). They forsook the Lord and provoked Him to anger (vs. 12). Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of their enemies (vs. 16). “*Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them...*” (vs. 17).

Judges 21:25 sums up both Ruth's era and our own as well: “*In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*” We are living in “harvest time,” when mankind should be seeking God. Yet, everyone is still doing their own thing—except those with a heart like Ruth!

Ruth's Uniqueness

First of all, Ruth was a Moabite, a non-Jew whose people were ancient enemies of Israel. She had married an Israelite man, a son of Elimelech and Naomi, when the family came to live in Moab because there was a famine in their native Bethlehem in Judah. Elimelech died in Moab. After about ten years, Ruth's husband also died, as did his bother, leaving two Moabite widows: Ruth and Orpah.

Ruth calls herself a “foreigner” in chapter 2, verse 10. This word in Hebrew *nokri*, noke-REE, means foreign, non-relative, different, alien, even “outlandish.” Ruth certainly stood out in her heathen culture, as a lighthouse in the darkness. She was presented with a difficult decision when news came that the Lord had visited His people and the famine was over in Bethlehem, the “house of bread.” [This is hugely prophetic! There is a severe famine of the Word of God in Bethlehem today. It has been choked out by Palestinian terrorists. Bethlehem needs a visitation from the God of Israel. Pray!] Ruth's mother-in-law, Naomi, urged her and Orpah to return to their mothers' homes, to their own people and to their own gods. Naomi wanted them to find husbands and go on with their lives.

Orpah, whose name means "to turn the back of the neck," did the "natural" thing. She returned to her own people, and to her own gods. This included the chief god of the Moabites, "Chemosh," a god who required child sacrifice, [another interesting parallel with our day, given the abortions which occur every day in America!]. How many believers go back to what is "comfortable" or "familiar" regarding what and when we celebrate and how we worship? (See last month's explanation of celebrating Yeshua's resurrection separate from when it happened historically at Passover.) The Bible tells us that Orpah and Ruth were married for ten years in Moab. Neither had children. Both appeared to be barren. We don't know if Orpah remained barren, but we do know that Ruth became **very** fruitful.

Ruth's name means "friendship." At a time when loyalty and faithfulness were a rarity, Ruth displayed deep love and devotion. She refused to return to her own people or their gods, but clung instead to Naomi and Naomi's God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Ruth exemplifies Psalm 45:10-11, *"Listen, O daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget your own people also, and your father's house; so the King will greatly desire your beauty; because He is your Lord, worship Him."* This is what Ruth did. She said to Naomi, *"Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God"* (Ruth 1:16). She was committed to Naomi and to her God. She was selfless. She was determined to take care of her mother-in-law and to comfort her, even though it would be very difficult. *"'Comfort, yes, comfort My people!' Says your God. 'Speak comfort to Jerusalem...'"* (Isaiah 40:1-2a) Two widows in Israel at that time would have had to struggle to exist. But God rewarded Ruth's love and faithfulness. This "woman of valor" (Ruth 3:11), even though she was always called "Ruth the Moabitess," became the great-grandmother of King David, and part of the lineage of the Messiah Yeshua!

There is a deep lesson for all of us as we consider the two Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah. Both faced the same difficult circumstances: widowhood and poverty. Both had to make a decision: to return to the known, the familiar, what seemed best for them, or to embrace the unknown, and follow the One True God, and His purposes and plans for their lives. Do we want our choice for our lives or God's choice? Orpah or Ruth? The following is a quote from Pinecrest Bible Training Center's, **The Banner**, summer 2000, that speaks to the heart: "Though completely unknown to Ruth, only as she left behind those things that were dear to her, could she become the bride of Boaz, her kinsman-redeemer. So also, only as we make our choice to conform to the Lord's choice for us, can we, in the highest sense, please the heart of our heavenly Bridegroom."

Ruth and Torah

It is generally accepted that God gave the Torah to Israel at Mt. Sinai at *Shavuot*. We know that He sent the *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit, to the disciples in the Upper Room on this same feast. Hence, the Law was given on tablets of stone, and later, engraved on the fleshly tablet of the heart, in God's perfect timing years apart but on the exact same day, His feast day.

In Ruth, we not only see the heroine clinging to the Torah, we also see Boaz, a wealthy, righteous, virtuous Israelite obeying the Law of God. The first instance of this had to do with "gleaning." As mentioned earlier, the gleanings of the harvest were to be left for the poor (the fatherless, the widow) and the stranger. (See also Leviticus 19:9-10 and Deuteronomy 24:19-22.) This command had a promise—*"that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands"* (Deuteronomy 24:19). Boaz followed the Mosaic law at a time when it was not the thing to do! When God sovereignly led Ruth to glean in the field of Boaz, He also led Boaz to go beyond the letter of the Law to the spirit of the Law (grace), and show Ruth extra care, compassion and favor: *"...Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn"* (Ruth 2:8-9). Boaz also commanded his young men as follows, *"...Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and*

do not rebuke her" (Ruth 2:15-16). Boaz did **much more** than the Law required for this non-Jewish woman. [Our Boaz, Yeshua, **loves** those with the Ruth spirit who have made a life decision to take refuge under the wings of the God of Israel! (See Ruth 2:12.) There is no doubt that the God of Israel is moved by non-Jews who display great faith in Him. A New Covenant example is found in Matthew 15:21-28. Read about the Canaanite woman. You will be blessed.]

Another Torah principle in the Book of Ruth is the commandment concerning levirate marriage (from the Latin word 'levir,' brother). We read about this in Deuteronomy 25:5-10 where if a man dies childless, his brother is commanded to marry his widow (so that the family line would not end—seen as a great loss in Judaism). Since Ruth's husband died childless (and actually Naomi's as well), a near kin, a "brother" was needed. It "just so happened" that God sent Ruth to glean in the fields of a near relative of her late husband. As Naomi said to Ruth, *"This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives"* (Ruth 2:20). Boaz could be their "kinsman-redeemer," their *goel* (go-EL). He fulfilled the necessary requirements. The kinsman—redeemer 1) had to be a relative of the deceased, 2) must buy back the property of the relative, 3) must agree to marry the wife of the deceased and raise up seed to the relative, 4) must have the resources to perform the task, and 5) was entrusted with the right to sit as judge or authority in the place of the relative.

Ruth, at the direction of Naomi, appealed to this Torah custom when she went to the threshing floor by night. When she uncovered his feet and lay down near him, Ruth was asking Boaz to redeem her. She was, in essence, expressing her desire to marry him. Boaz never would have initiated this himself since Ruth was a much younger woman. (Boaz was a generation older than Ruth, a contemporary of Naomi.) Boaz graciously agreed to take Ruth "under his wing," which meant covering her with the border of his *talit* or prayer shawl, just as God had done to Israel as beautifully expressed in Ezekiel 16:8, *"When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord God.*"

Yeshua, our Kinsman—Redeemer

The levirate marriage is a blueprint for the work of Yeshua, our Kinsman—Redeemer. A Torah-observant Jew like Boaz, Yeshua knew nevertheless that the Law could not **save** or **redeem** us. Just as there was another "kinsman" besides Boaz who could not redeem Ruth, Boaz was the chosen vessel (see Ruth 4:6); the Law could not redeem mankind, so God sent His Son to redeem us. (See Galatians 2:16.) Yeshua took on human flesh, as our "brother," to become our "near kinsman": *"Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people"* (Hebrews 2:17).

We were impoverished, without hope in the world, spiritually barren and unfruitful, uncovered, unprotected, and far from fulfilling our God-ordained destinies when Yeshua, our Kinsman—Redeemer agreed to pay the price for our redemption: His life. Just as Boaz "purchased" Ruth, we have been purchased: *"...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold...but with the precious blood of Messiah, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"* (1 Peter 1:18-19). Just as Boaz had a covenant meal with Ruth, even before the redemption process began (see Ruth 2:14), Yeshua took the "cup after supper" with His talmidim at the final Passover on earth in Jerusalem.

Yeshua, like Boaz, has raised up a godly seed that was prophesied over 700 years before Yeshua was born by the prophet Isaiah: *"...He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days..."* (Isaiah 53:10). We are the seed of Yeshua as we say to Him, "Cover me. Extend the border of your *talit* over me." A deep awareness of the need to be redeemed—a decision—an act of the will—submission to God's plan for our lives. Yeshua is our Boaz. We must be His Ruth!

Ruth and Revelation

The Book of Ruth looks backward to connect with the Torah and forward to connect with the final book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation. Under Jewish law, the kinsman-redeemer could also redeem a family member sold into slavery (Leviticus 25:47-49). When Adam sinned in the garden, mankind was sold into slavery to sin, and the earth itself came under a curse. We read in Genesis 3 that Adam lost the title deed to planet earth. We read in Revelation 19 that Yeshua, the Second Adam, not only redeemed all those sold into slavery, but He redeemed the earth itself when He died on the tree of Calvary: *"And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals' "* (Revelation 5:1-2)? *"...Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."* (Revelation 5:5)

What is that scroll? The title deed to planet earth! Yeshua began the process of redeeming what Adam lost. He met all the conditions of the Kinsman-Redeemer which were written on the outside of the scroll. He will return to rule the earth for 1,000 years.

"And they sang a new song, saying: You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:9-10)

May this *Shavuot* find you keeping Yeshua's commandments and living in the power of His Spirit.

Hag Sameach! *Neil & Jamie*

P.S. We have begun to write our new T.V. series—Yeshua in the Torah—based on the weekly Parashot (Portions). The Kinsman-Redeemer will be the focus of one of the programs. Please pray for the Lord's anointing and direction for us in this project this summer.

P.P.S. This month's offers:

Messianic Life Lessons from the Book of Ruth (Book)- Hope fulfilled in Yeshua, our Kinsman-Redeemer.

Jewish New Testament (20 CD Set)- Hear the Bible read in a Messianic Jewish version.

Sing a New Song (CD)- Messianic Music; One of Neil and Jamie's favorites.

Ruth (available in DVD or VHS)- This teaching will bless everyone who has a love for God's people, Israel.

Jewish Jewels Television Airtime Schedule - June 2008

LOCAL TV STATIONS

STATE:	CITY:	STATIONS:	AIRTIME:
AK	North Pole	KJNP TV 4	TUE 6:00 PM
CA	Sonoma	PUBLIC ACCESS 8	MON 8:30 PM
FL	Tampa/St. Pete.	WCLF TV 22	SUN 2:30 PM
FL	Orlando/Cocoa	WTGL TV 45	SUN 1:30 PM
FL	Miami/Ft. Laud.	WHFT TV 45	THU 11:30 AM
FL	Tallahassee	WVUP TV 45	SUN 1:30 PM
FL	West Palm Beach	WFGC TV 61	SAT 10:30 PM
GA	Columbus	WYBU TV 16	SUN 2:30 PM
IA	Dubuque	KFXB TV 40	SUN 1:30 PM
IL	Peoria	FAITH ALIVE CH 20	FRI 6:00 PM
MO	New Bloomfield	KNLJ TV 25	SUN 1:30 PM
NJ/NY	New York	WMBC TV 63	SUN 4:00 PM
OH	Columbus	WSFJ TV 51	SUN 3:30 PM
OR	Portland	K26GJ TV 26	SUN 12:00 PM
OR	Salem	K21GX TV 21	SUN 12:00 PM
SC	Greenville	WGGS TV 16	FRI 10:30 AM

NOTE: WE ARE NO LONGER AIRING ON WFMZ TV 69 IN PA.

SATELLITE NETWORKS

Dish Network
 DGUARD - SUN 3:30 PM (EST) [Ch. 9707]
 WHMBSAT - SUN 3:00 PM (EST) [Ch. 9719]

DirectTV - NEW AIRING ON CTN
 World Harvest TV (WHT) - SUN 3:00 PM (EST) [Ch. 367]
 Christian Television Network (CTN) - SUN 2:30 PM (EST) [Ch. 376]

God TV - The GOD Channel
 WED 4:30 AM (GMT) & 6:30 AM (Jerusalem)

Australian Christian Channel (ACC)- THU 8:00 AM (AEST)

Digital Satellite Receiver
 World Harvest TV (WHT) - C-Band - Galaxy 16 -
 Transponder 15 - 99° W - SUN 3:00 PM (EST)

INTERNET www.jewishjewels.org www.acctv.com.au
View the following IPTV Services on www.skyangel.com:
 GTN - SUN 3:30 PM (EST) [Ch. 109]
 WHT - SUN 3:00 PM (EST) [Ch. 130]

