

## A MOABITE WOMAN WHO WOULD NOT GIVE UP

In those days when the judges ruled the nation of Israel, there was a famine in the land. (Ruth 1:1a). Elimelech, his wife Naomi and family moved to Moab at that time. However, their future became uncertain with the death of Elimelech and his two sons, who were married to Moabite women named Orpha, and Ruth. Naomi decided to move back to Israel with her two daughters-in-law. However, she insisted on them staying, but as she was leaving, they wept aloud; Orpha, one of the sisters, kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. *She said, urge me not to leave you or to turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God (Ruth 1).* Ruth's decision to leave everything behind, including her gods, family to follow the God of Naomi and her people was an attitude of sacrificial love. This action was prophetic in itself of a beautiful future. A future so special, she never dreamed of. Descendent of Lot, Abraham's nephew, from a nation with an embarrassing beginning, nonetheless, God had a future and a hope for Ruth in a far and distant future, although she would not have a chance experience the excitement of it. Ruth was a chosen one unknown to her. She was both a widow and an alien, touching the heart of God. With courage and determination, she entered an unfamiliar territory, where a Moabite was not looked at with favor. But she performed all that her mother-in-law suggested her to do in that foreign land. Strong physically and emotionally, Ruth remained faithful to the end. Where she was gleaned was in the field of Naomi's husband kin, Boaz.

Naomi stayed behind the scene teaching Ruth how to behave in that culture, not knowing how she was being used to bring about God's plan for Ruth's life, a plan in which Naomi would be part of. She would no longer be alone. Her life would be filled with joy in the fulfillment of God's plan for Ruth, whose life was an ordinary life with an extraordinary future ahead of her. Ruth was in the right place in the space of the right time for all to happen as God planned. She had to be willing to leave behind all that was important to her, including her religion and her family. YAHSHUA said, Truly, I tell you, there is no one who has given up and left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for My sake and for the Gospel's who will not receive a hundred times as much now in this time- houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecution – and in the age to come, eternal life (Mar. 10:29-30). Although, Ruth did not have in mind this concept YAHSHUA presented, she took a path of obedience for God to fulfill His plan through her. In spite of being a foreigner, she was respected for her act of compassion toward her Jewish mother-in-law Naomi. When the time came for her to marry Boaz, the people rejoiced with her and Naomi, saying, *May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachael and Leah, the two who built the household of Israel. May you do worthily and get wealth in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem, (prophetically of YAHSHUA) and let your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the Lord will give you by this young woman (Ruth 4:11-12).* Ruth's future as well as Naomi's took root in these prophetic words uttered by the people which took thousands of years for its fulfillment, while generations multiplied. God, however, in His appointed time brought all to fulfillment.

Decisions we make daily are of great importance for our future, for they will guide us either to a good or bad results. For the Christian, a life of faith is essential for a successful Christian life. As the Lord said, It is impossible to please Him, for whoever would come near to God must believe that God exists and that He is rewarder of those who earnestly and diligently seek Him (Heb. 11: 6). The decision Ruth made shows faith as she left all behind to help her mother-in-law. She had no idea of the beautiful plan God had for her. She followed her heart of compassion and God accomplished His plan for her life by giving her a husband with a significant and important future. Rebeka was also a willing bride, who left country and family to go to a foreign land to marry Isaac, from whom Esau and Jacob came. Ruth was a Gentile bride uniting the two races Israel and Moab as one in the marriage covenant, as YAHSHUA'S bride is made up of Jews and Gentiles. Paul affirmed saying, *...The Gentiles are now to be fellow heirs members of the same body and joint partakers in the same divine promise in Christ through the glad tidings (Eph. 3:6).* Through her marriage to Boaz a Jew, Ruth became a member of the ancestor of YHASHUA through her son Obed, who was the father of Jesse, the father of David (the ancestor of YAHSHUA Messiah). Now, these are the descendants of Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron, Hezron of Ram, Ram of Amminadab. Amminadab of Nahshon of Salmon, Salmon of Boaz, of Obed, Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of David (the ancestor of YAHSHUA Messiah) (Ruth 4:17-22).

The Patriarch Abraham lived a life of faith and from the time a son was promised him to the time he was born and commanded to be sacrificed, he remained faithful to the covenant. In his obedience, *God blessed him saying, In blessing I will bless you and in multiplying I will multiply your descendants like the stars of the heavens and like the sand on the seashore. And your Seed (YAHSHUA) will possess the gate of His enemies.* And in your Seed (Messiah) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed and [by Him] bless themselves, because you have heard and obeyed My voice (Gen.2:17-18). Abraham is the father of many nations (Rom. 4:17) and the father of those who profess to be Christian. *[Urged on] by faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed and went forth to a place which he was destined to receive as an inheritance; and he went although he did not know or trouble him mind about where he was to go. By faith he dwelt as a temporary resident in the land which was designated in the promise in a strange country, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs with him of the same promise (Heb. 11:8-9).* The nation of Israel had its beginning through Abraham's faith at the time he was tested and was found obedient to God. A hero of the faith, Abraham stood firm before God.

The reward for an obedient servant of God might not be seen on earth. On the contrary, he or she might suffer persecution, even death, as was the case of many of yesterdays' martyrs and even today's. However, they are citizens not of this world, but of heaven. We must suffer for our Lord, as He gave Himself for us, to form for Himself a bride pure and holy. For that to happen, He suffered in obedience to His Father to the point of death and death on the cross. That should be the attitude of His willing bride. Leaving all behind to obey and follow Him to the end. We all have is a cross to bear on our way to heaven. Sometimes it seems heavy, other times, not so much. Perseverance in suffering constitutes faithfulness in the carrying of the cross ours to bear. I am sure that the life of Ruth had many valleys to cross, for her to get where she was, without giving up, as well as Abraham's. For him to become the father of many nations, he had to

persist in faith. By faith we are his sons and daughters. Ruth, privileged in the lineage of Messiah, had much to celebrate. She too was a woman of faith and was rewarded.

God's promise is that He has a future and a hope for us. However, we must pursue faithfulness in our obedience to Him. Our future depends on it.