

Ruth And Rahab The Non-Jewish Ancestors Of Jesus

'God said to Abram, "Leave your country, your relatives and your father's house and go to the land I will show you. I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. You will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curses you. In you will all of the families of the earth be blessed"' (Genesis 12:1 to 3). Abraham had been called by God to found a nation for the purpose of one day bringing our Messiah Jesus to mankind. Almost everyone in the Messianic family were Hebrews and Jewish except Rahab.

'The genealogy of Jesus our Messiah, the descendent of David, the descendent of Abraham. Abraham became the father of Isaac. Isaac became the father of Jacob. Jacob became the father of Judah and his brothers. Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron. Hezron became the father of Ram. Ram became the father of Amminadab. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon. Nahshon became the father of Salmon. Salmon became the father of Boaz by Rahab (the Hittite). Boaz became the father of Obed by Ruth (the Moabite). Obed became the father of Jesse. Jesse became the father of David the king' (Matthew 1:1 to 6). The name Boaz means 'cheerfulness'. Rahab was Ruth's mother-in-law.

Rahab's story. 'Joshua the son of Nun secretly sent two men out of Shittim as spies saying, "Go, view the land and Jericho." They went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and slept there' (Joshua 2:1).

Rahab had heard of the miracles enjoyed by the Children of Israel and had become convinced Israel's God was the one true God. That belief in God gave her the courage to hide the two spies. When she met the spies she seemed to have already decided, at the risk of her own life, to support Israel and their God. She had somehow convinced her entire family. Notice in the following verses Rahab referred to God by name and did not say, "Your God". 'Before they had laid down she came up to them on the roof and she said to the men, "I know God has given you the land and the fear of you has fallen on us and all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. We have heard how God dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and to Og whom you utterly destroyed. As soon as we had heard it our hearts melted, neither did there remain any more spirit in any man because of you for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. Now therefore, please swear to me by God, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you will deal kindly with my father's house and give me a true token you will save alive my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, all they have and will deliver our lives from death"... Rahab let them down by a scarlet cord through the window for her house was on the side of the wall and she lived on the wall' (Joshua 2:8 to 11 & 15).

"The city (Jericho) will be devoted and all that is in it to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute will live, she and all who are with her in the house because she hid the messengers we sent" ... They utterly destroyed all that was in the city, men, woman, young, old, ox, sheep and donkey with the edge of the sword. Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring out from there the woman and all she has as you swore to her." The young men who were spies went in and brought out Rahab with her father, her mother, her brothers, sisters and all she had. They also brought out all her relatives and they set them outside of the camp of Israel. They burnt the city with fire and all that was in it. They put the silver, the gold and the vessels of brass and of iron into the treasury of the Lord's house. Rahab the prostitute, her father's household and all she had, Joshua saved alive. She lived in the midst of Israel to this day because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho' (Joshua 6:17 then 21 to 25). Archaeology has discovered Rahab's house on the outer wall of the city. Note also, when we do something good for a Jewish person or for Israel, God rewards us and our families abundantly, just like He did for Rahab and her entire family. 'Rahab the prostitute was justified by works, in that she received the messengers and sent them out another way' (James 2:25).

Rahab may have been a prostitute but she was not a wicked woman. There were no Social Services in those days and many women were forced into prostitution to support themselves and their families. Rahab lived among the Canaanites, pagan people who were without any morals. Some women were public prostitutes and it was considered an honourable profession. Rahab was probably a Hittite. 'From the wilderness to Lebanon, even to the great river the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites and to the great sea (Mediterranean Sea) toward the going down of the sun will be your border' (Joshua 1:4). The Hittites were at that time living in Canaan. After being rescued, Rahab and her family moved and settled among the Israelites where she immediately stopped being a prostitute. Rahab married an Israelite named Salmon and became an ancestor of Boaz, David and Jesus Himself and she is included in the list of Heroes of Faith. 'Salmon became the father of Boaz by Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed by Ruth. Obed became the

father of Jesse. Jesse became the father of David the king' (Matthew 1:5 & 6). 'By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, having received the spies in peace' (Hebrews 11:30 & 31). Rahab was the great-grandmother of King David.

Ruth's story. Ruth became the fore-mother of Jewish royalty in Israel's Messianic lineage by being loyal, pure and by turning her heart away from the false gods of the Moabites, mainly Baal and Chemosh, to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Her loyalty to her widowed mother-in-law Naomi earned her an esteemed book of her own; the Book of Ruth. Ruth herself was left a widow when Mahlon died. Abraham's family were all Hebrews (Genesis 14:13) so the Moabite tribe was a Hebrew tribe derived from Abraham's nephew Lot but they were not Jews who came from the tribe of Judah. Ruth the Moabite was a Hebrew. She was a very distant cousin to the Children of Israel. By that time, the Moabites and the Children of Israel were enemies. In Ruth's day, the kingdom of Moab was south of the kingdom of Ammon. Ammon was Lot's other son. Moab was north of the kingdom of Edom. Edom was the kingdom started by Jacob's twin brother Esau. West of those three kingdoms was Israel before they had a king. Relatives or descendants of Abraham populated that entire area and they were all Hebrews. Ruth's exit from Moab resulted in her entry into Israel and into Biblical history as the grandmother of King David and ancestor of Jesus our Messiah. Ruth took Naomi's advice and proposed marriage to Boaz in the sweetest way by asking him to 'spread your skirt over me.'

The Book of Ruth, chapter 1, verses 1 & 2. In the days when the judges judged (or ruled) there was a famine in the land (of Israel). A man named Elimelech of Bethlehem of Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab with his wife Naomi and two sons Mahlon and Chilion. They lived there for about ten years. 3. Elimelech died and Naomi was left with her two sons. 4. They took wives of the women of Moab. The name of one was Orpah (who married Chilion). The name of the other was Ruth (who married Mahlon). 5. Mahlon and Chilion both died. Naomi was bereft of her husband and two sons. 6. She arose with her daughters-in-law to leave the country of Moab for she had heard how the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread. 7. Naomi left where she was with her two daughters-in-law and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. 8. Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house and may God deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9. God grant you rest, each of you in the house of her (second) husband." Then Naomi kissed them and they lifted up their voice and wept. 10. They said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." 11. Naomi said, "Turn again my daughters. Why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb who may be your husbands? 12. Turn again my daughters, go your way for I am too old to have a husband. If I say I have hope, if I should even have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, 13, would you wait until they were grown? Would you keep from having husbands? No my daughters, for it grieves me much for your sakes, for the hand of God has gone forth against me." 14. They lifted up their voices and wept again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and left (to return to Moab) but Ruth joined with her. 15. Naomi said, "Behold your sister-in-law is gone back to her people and to her god. Return after your sister-in-law." 16. Ruth said, "Do not entreat me to leave you and to return from following after you, for where you go I will go. Where you lodge I will lodge. Your people will be my people and your God my God. 17. Where you die will I die and there I will be buried. God do so to me and more also if anything but death part you and me." 18. When Naomi saw Ruth was steadfastly determined to go with her, she left off speaking to her (about returning to Moab). 19. Together they travelled to Bethlehem. When they came to Bethlehem, the city was moved about their sorrow and the women said, "Is this Naomi?" 20. Naomi said to them, "Do not call me Naomi, call me Mara (bitter) for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21. I went out full and God has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi since God has testified against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?" 22. Naomi returned and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who came out of the country of Moab and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

Ruth, chapter 2, verse 1. Naomi had a kinsman of her late husband Elimelech named Boaz, a mighty man of wealth. 2. Ruth said to Naomi, "Let me now go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him (Boaz) in whose sight I might find favour." Naomi said, "Go, my daughter." 3. Ruth went and gleaned in the field after the reapers and happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz. 4. Boaz returned from Bethlehem ... 5. Boaz asked his servant who was set over the reapers, "Whose young lady is this?" 6. The servant answered, "It is the Moabite lady who came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab. 7. She said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from the morning until now, except that she rested a little in the house." 8. Boaz said to Ruth, "Did you not hear, my daughter? Do not go to glean in another field, neither pass from here but abide here close by my maidens. 9. Let your eyes be on the field they reap and go after them. I have commanded the young men not to touch you and when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink of what the young men have drawn." Ruth bowed herself to the ground and asked Boaz, "Why have I found favour in your sight that you should acknowledge me since I am a foreigner?" 11. Boaz answered her, "It has been fully revealed to me all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband and how you have left your father,

your mother and the land of your birth to come to a people you did not know before. 12. May God recompense your work and a full reward be given to you from the God of Israel under Whose wings you have come to take refuge." 13. Ruth said, "Let me find favour in your sight my lord, because you have comforted me and because you have spoken kindly to your handmaid though I am not as one of your handmaidens." 14. At mealtime Boaz said to Ruth, "Come here and eat of the bread, and dip your morsel in the vinegar." Ruth sat beside the reapers, they gave her parched grain. She ate and was sufficed and left of it. 15. When Ruth rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves and do not reproach her. 16. Also pull out some for her from the bundles and leave it, and let her glean and do not rebuke her." 17. So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening and she beat out what she had gleaned. It was about an ephah of barley. 18. She took it and went into the city and her mother-in-law Naomi saw what she had gleaned. Ruth gave to Naomi what she had left after she was sufficed. 19. Naomi said to Ruth, "Where have you gleaned today? Where have you worked? Blessed be he who acknowledged you." Ruth told Naomi with whom she had worked and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz." 20. Naomi said to Ruth, "Blessed be he of God who has not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. The man is a close relative to us, one of our near kinsmen." 21. Ruth said, "Yes, he said to me, 'Keep close by my young men until they have ended all my harvest.'" 22. Naomi said to Ruth, "It is good my daughter, for you to go out with his maidens and that they not meet you in any other field." 23. So Ruth kept close by the maidens of Boaz to glean to the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest and she lived with her mother-in-law Naomi.

Ruth, chapter 3, verse 1. Naomi said to Ruth, "My daughter, will I not seek rest for you so it may be well with you? 2. Boaz is our kinsman with whose maidens you were. Behold, he winnows barley tonight in the threshing floor. 3. Wash and anoint yourself and put on your clean clothing, and go down to the threshing floor but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4. When he lies down ... you go in and uncover his feet and lay down and he will tell you what you are to do." 5. Ruth said, "All you say I will do." 6. Ruth went down to the threshing floor and did according to all Naomi told her. 7. When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Ruth came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. 8. At midnight Boaz was startled and turned himself. Behold, a woman lay at his feet. 9. He asked, "Who are you?" She answered, "I am Ruth your handmaid. Spread your skirt over your handmaid for you are a near kinsman." 10. He said, "Blessed are you by God my daughter. You have shown more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as you did not follow young men whether poor or rich. 11. Now my daughter, do not be afraid. I will do for you all you ask, for the entire city of my people knows you are a worthy woman. 12. It is true I am a near kinsman, however there is a kinsman nearer than I. 13. Stay tonight and in the morning, if he will perform to you the part of a kinsman, well, let him do the kinsman's part, but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to you, then will I do the part of a kinsman to you, as the Lord lives. Lie down until the morning." 14. Ruth lay at his feet until the morning. She rose up before one could discern another for he said, "Let it not be known a woman came to the threshing floor." 15. Boaz said, "Bring the your mantle and hold it." Ruth held it and Boaz measured six measures of barley and laid it on her then he went into the city. 16. When Ruth came to Naomi she told her all that Boaz had done for her. 17. Ruth said, "These six measures of barley gave he me for he said, 'Do not go empty handed to your mother-in-law.'" 18. Naomi said, "Sit still my daughter until you know how the matter will fall for Boaz will not rest until he has finished this thing today."

Ruth, chapter 4, verse 1. Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there. Behold, the near kinsman of whom Boaz spoke came by. Boaz said, "Ho, such a one! Turn aside, sit down here." He turned aside and sat down. 2. He took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." They sat down. 3. Boaz said to the near kinsman, "Naomi who has come back out of the country of Moab is selling the parcel of land which was our brother Elimelech's. 4. I thought to disclose it to you saying, 'Buy it while facing those who sit here and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it but if you will not redeem it then tell me so I may know, for there is none to redeem it besides you and I am after you.'" He said, "I will redeem it." 5. Then Boaz said, "Whatever day you buy the field of the hand of Naomi, you must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead on his inheritance." 6. The near kinsman said, "I cannot redeem it for myself lest I mar my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption on you for I cannot redeem it." 7. This was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning exchanging land, to confirm all things. A man drew off his shoe and gave it to his neighbour and this was the manner of evidence in Israel. 8. So the near kinsman said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." He drew off his shoe. 9. Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, "You are witnesses this day, I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's from the hand of Naomi. 10. Plus, Ruth the Moabitess the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife to raise up the name of the dead on his inheritance so the name of the dead not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his place. You are witnesses this day." 11. All the people who were in the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May God make the woman who has come into your house like Rachel and like Leah who together built the house of Israel and do you worthily in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. 12. May your house become like the house of Perez

whom Tamar bore to Judah due to the children God will give you through this young woman.” 13. So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. He went in to her and God gave her a son. 14. The women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the Lord Who has not left you this day without a near kinsman and let his name be famous in Israel. 15. He will be to you a restorer of life and sustain you in your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons has borne him.” 16. Naomi took the child (Obed) and laid him in her bosom and became nurse to him. 17. Her women neighbours gave him a name saying, “There is a son born to Naomi.” They named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of King David. 18. This is the history of the generations of Perez. Perez became the father of Hezron. 19. Hezron became the father of Ram. Ram became the father of Amminadab. 20. Amminadab became the father of Nahshon. Nahshon became the father of Salmon. 21. Salmon became the father of Boaz. Boaz became the father of Obed. 22. Obed became the father of Jesse and Jesse became the father of King David. Jesus was born about one thousand years later.

The story of Ruth was written to inform us about the genealogy of Jesus. To prove Jesus was indeed our Jewish Messiah His entire lineage had to be written and recorded. It is also assurance for Gentiles, if they turn from their old lives and wholly follow the Lord, they too can receive the same blessings Jewish people receive from God. In the days of Ruth, there was no king or particular leader in Israel and everyone did what was right in their own eyes (Judges 21:25). What was right in Elimelech's eyes was to take his wife and sons to Moab where he could provide food for them but sadly, he and his sons died there. The fact Naomi never lamented their sojourn in Moab meant she agreed it was the best thing for their family. Losing her husband and both sons was a terrible wrench for her and the change in her demeanour must have been quite extreme for the women to ask on her return home, “Is this Naomi?” Naomi was a broken woman but she had Ruth who adored her.

Ruth's story was set in Bethlehem which in Hebrew means, “House of bread,” and her gleaning the barley and wheat reveals Bethlehem truly was the ‘bread basket’ of Israel. The tribe of Judah resided there. King David was born and raised there and years later, Jesus was born there. The name ‘Ruth’ means compassionate. To be ruthless is to be full of compassion. To be ruthless is to lack compassion. Ruth certainly lived up to her name. She was a tenderhearted, loving, loyal woman, full of integrity. Although she grew up among the godless tribe of the Moabites, she behaved like a true Hebrew, even when she was still in Moab. Naomi's influence in her young life must have been profound. Ruth must have married Mahlon at a very young age because after being married for a few years she was still a young woman who was strong enough to glean grain from morning to dusk, in the hot sun with hardly a break. That was very hard work. The fact that Ruth loved her mother-in-law so much reveals the loving, nurturing nature of Naomi towards her two daughters-in-law. Although it was against Jewish law to marry non-Jews, Naomi was not upset when her two sons chose Moabite wives, but that could have been because they were, after all, distant cousins. It was obvious Naomi loved both Ruth and Orpah. Orpah had never accepted God and turned back to Moab whereas Ruth had already accepted Him and wanted to go forward. She said to Naomi, “Your God will be my God.” Ruth left her parents, family, land and any inheritance she could have received to accompany Naomi and to follow the Lord and as a reward for her faithfulness to God, she was written into the Bible as a matriarch. Jesus said, “Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, wife, children or lands for My name's sake, will receive one hundred times more and will inherit eternal life” (Matthew 19:29).

Indeed, the man Ruth married, Boaz, was the son of Salmon and Rahab (Matthew 1:5). Rahab (or in Hebrew, Rachav) had been a woman of loose morals until she accepted God and turned from her worldly ways. By doing so she led her entire family (Joshua 6:23) into redemption. Rahab was an ancestor of Jesus our Messiah, proving He is the Saviour of Jews, Hebrews and Gentiles. Ruth was the grandmother of King David and about 1,100 years later, Jesus was born to become the Saviour of the world. The Genealogy of Jesus had to be assured with most of His ancestors named and recorded to prove Jesus was born into the secure Jewish Nation, in Israel. He was born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1), the city where Ruth had once lived.

Amen and God bless you.

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