

June 6-12, 2022

Ruth; 1 Samuel 1–3

:MY HEART REJOICETH IN THE LORD”

Summary: *Ruth 1 Elimelech and his family go to Moab because of famine—His sons marry—The father and sons die—Ruth, the Moabitess, her husband having died, remains constant to Naomi—They come to Bethlehem.*

Ruth 2. Ruth gleanes in the fields of Boaz, a near relative of Naomi—He treats Ruth kindly.

Ruth 3. By Naomi’s instruction, Ruth lies at the feet of Boaz—He promises as a relative to take her as his wife.

Ruth 4. The nearest relative declines, and Boaz takes Ruth to wife—Ruth bears Obed, through whom came David the king.

1 Samuel 1. Hannah prays for a son and vows to give him to the Lord—Eli the priest blesses her—Samuel is born—Hannah loans him to the Lord.

1 Samuel 2. Hannah sings praises to the Lord—Samuel ministers before the Lord—Eli blesses Elkanah and Hannah, and they have sons and daughters—The sons of Eli reject the Lord and live in wickedness—The Lord rejects the house of Eli.

1 Samuel 3. The Lord calls Samuel—The house of Eli will not be purged by sacrifices and offerings—Samuel is recognized as a prophet by all Israel—The Lord appears to him.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How did a convert woman influence the genealogical line of the Savior?

There are a few

women greatly revered in Jewish thought. Ruth is one of them. A woman convert to Judaism is given or “takes upon herself” a “new name,” usually that of Ruth or another of the righteous women of the Bible. (Convert men are usually named “Ben Avraham—Son of Abraham.”) “The sages regarded Ruth as the prototype of the righteous convert. They taught that Elimelech and his sons were punished for going to Moab during the famine in Judah. They should have remained to share the hardships of their own people, and to help them with their own wealth. Ruth on the other hand left her home not to seek an easier life, but to devote herself to the

God of Israel, and to share the fortunes of Naomi and her people, whatever they were destined to be.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Ruth came to Israel as her mother-in-law, Naomi returned. It was at the biblical “barley harvest, spring” hoping to be delivered from widowhood. That is significant because Ruth’s second marriage to Boaz’s produced a descendant, Obed, then Jesse, then David and 14-generations later, the Lord and Savior, the Deliverer, born in the spring!

What and who is a “Gentile?”

On the other hand, the stigma of “gentile” has been carried for a long time in Judaism. Although modern Israel now reflects more gentile habits, some Orthodox Jews describe assimilation of some gentile habits as a major problem.

“The custom of decorating graves with flowers is strongly opposed by some Orthodox rabbis on the ground that it is a “gentile custom.” Neither Conservative nor Reform Judaism, however, objects and it is also common practice in Israel, particularly in military cemeteries.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) Understanding the thought processes and “genetic memory” of Jewish thought can assist members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (who are truly a part of the House of Israel) to improve their “gentile” way of thinking. “An undoubted factor in the survival of the Jews as a people with a common identity has been their shared experience of persecution at the hands of gentiles (non-Jews). In general, the Jewish attitude toward the gentile has been conditioned, since the Exile, by the gentile’s attitude toward the Jew— tolerance being met with tolerance.” “In ancient Israel the acceptance of monotheism (the belief that there is only one God) became the chief factor distinguishing Jews from gentiles, who then worshiped many gods. In addition, the dangers of being affected by the gentiles’ assumed lower moral and social standards were constantly stressed.” “At this time gentiles were either natives living in Erez (land of) Israel or travelers passing through it. Resident gentiles were protected by traditional hospitality and by contractual agreements made between Israel and the neighboring states. Native gentiles were expected to be loyal to Israel’s civil laws in return for protection but were generally in a humbler position than the Israelite population.”

“The gentile was not obliged to acknowledge God but was at least obliged to abandon the worship of false gods. Unlike Jews, Noahides were not required to suffer martyrdom rather than break the law against idolatry; they were, however, required to choose martyrdom rather than shed human blood. In some instances, gentiles were also required to observe

Sabbath and the festivals, and to fast on the Day of Atonement. Social differences remained, nonetheless...” “During the latter part of the Second Temple period (from the second century B.C.E.) the prohibition against Jews marrying gentiles, limited originally to the seven Canaanite nations—Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites (“neither shalt thou make marriages with them.” **Deuteronomy 7:3**)—was extended to include all gentiles, who might lure Jews away from the true God. In order to prevent the possibility of intermarriage the rabbis enacted a series of laws intended to limit social contact between Jew and non-Jew. These included a strict prohibition on the use of gentile wine, originally limited to that used in idolatrous libations, but later extended to cover all non-Jewish produced wine.”

How did gentile customs become restricted?

“According to the *Aggadah* (collection of traditions and legends) Midian allied with Moab against Israel. By making the Israelites drunk they succeeded in luring them to idolatry and forbidden relations with the daughters of Midian; for this reason, the drinking of gentile wine was forbidden.” “Jews were forbidden to emulate gentile customs of an idolatrous or superstitious nature. The prohibition (*hukkat ha-goi*) was derived from the biblical commandment “ye shall not walk in the customs of the nation” (**Leviticus 20:23** and **18:13**). Its purpose was to prevent Jews from being converted to other religions. In *Talmudic* literature the term “the customs of the Amorites” (*darkhei ha-Emori*) was also used to cover all heathen practices of the gentiles of that time. Even gentile dress associated with non-Jewish religious practice was forbidden (“martyrdom should be accepted rather than changing the style of a shoelace”). Jewish garb thus became an emblem of traditional Judaism,

especially in eastern Europe, and modern dress was frowned on as a cunning method of Christianization. Many of the restrictions against involvement with gentiles made during Talmudic times were reduced as economic contact increased between the Jewish and gentile communities during the Middle Ages.”

What prompted changes in Jewish attitudes about gentiles?

“During the 500 years of the Talmudic period to 499 C.E. widely differing attitudes toward gentiles were expressed. When Jews were being tortured during the reign of the Roman emperor Hadrian, Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai stated that the best of gentiles should be killed. In later, less hostile times, it was sometimes claimed that no difference between Jew and gentile would be made on the Day of Judgment. The concept of the righteous gentile (*hasidei ummot ha-olam*—the pious ones of the nations of the world) is first found in the Midrash. The *Tosefta* (Jewish oral law) teaches that they are as eligible to a place in the hereafter as any member of the House of Israel. Rabbi Isaac Arama states that “every true pious gentile is equal to a son of Israel.” The *Zohar* (Jewish oral law from the late 2nd century) states that all gentiles who do not hate Israel, and who deal justly with Jews, qualify as pious ones. According to Maimonides righteous gentiles were those who observed the *Noachide* laws and were motivated by belief in the divine origin and authenticity of Moses’ prophecy, and not merely by the reasonableness of the laws, in which case they were considered simply wise men but not *hasidei ummot ha-olam*. Since World War II the concept of the righteous gentile has been used to refer to those non-Jews who helped Jews escape the persecutions of Nazism.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) At Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, there is an avenue of planted trees. Each one is

dedicated to a “Righteous Gentile.” There is one planted in memory of a Dutch member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who helped Jews escape in Nazi-occupied Europe. However, according to the Latter-day Saints, he is a member of the House of Israel, not a gentile! “. . . *Hasidei Ummot ha-Olam*, rabbinic term for those non-Jews who, because of their moral character or virtuous acts, rank equally in merit and grace with Jews. According to the *Talmud*, the righteous gentile is as eligible as any Jew for a place in the world to come.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) One of the Israeli travel agents once commented to a prospective USA visitor, “You’ve got to visit Salt Lake City. That’s the only place a Jew can walk down the street and feel like a gentile!” Of course, this needs correction. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints know they are a part of the House of Israel, the majority from the tribe of Joseph.

Who are the Jewish expectations of the Messiah?

“According to the Talmud, the Messiah will be a descendant of the House of David and will be preceded by a secondary Messiah, from the House of Joseph.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) There is a Jewish tradition that the Messiah’s return will reflect either the date or event of the destruction of the first and second temples. Joseph Smith’s mission was to restore temple worship. Consider biblical expectations: the “Lord will suddenly come to his Temple.” (**Malachi 3:1**) Abraham brought his son to *Mount Moriah* Hebrew: ‘taught of the Lord’) to offer Isaac as a human sacrifice. This later became the place of the temple. Human sacrifice is precisely the trouble that Abraham was spared in the Ur of Chaldees. It was a profound lesson in opposition, a chiasmus. Jewish tradition states that Isaac was in his early thirties when he was to be sacrificed. The trouble was

spared when God provided instruction that a lamb was to be offered as a sacrifice. Abraham and Isaac found an alternative sacrifice, a ram in the thicket, and it was offered as a substitute for Isaac. Later, other animals, first born and unblemished, were brought to the same place where the temple then stood. In some cases, they were “blessed” with the sins (troubles) of the people in attendance. In one case, a lamb or goat would “escape” out the Gate Beautiful (also Gate of Forgiveness and Gate of Mercy). It would be tied with a red ribbon and let out into the wilderness to die on its own, carrying the sins of the people. Isaiah portrays the same principle when he describes the “glory” fastened in a “sure place.” It is a glory that we can bring our troubles (sins) to the Lord, at his house, and leave with greater blessings than we ever imagined. “And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. “And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father’s house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it.” (Isaiah 22:21-25) In Jerusalem, there have been thousands of nails pounded into the old Western (Wailing) Wall, a remnant of the last known Jewish temple. They remind us of a practice the Jews had until about a hundred years ago. They would “nail their

sins in a sure place” and then get on with life. A glorious thought! Going to a modern-day temple for worthy members of the Church of Jesus of Latter-day Saints not only blesses the ancestors whose work is being done, but also those who are serving them. It is the Lord’s house where virtuous people meet, renew their souls, and remind themselves of the name they have taken upon themselves.

Who was named, “Dedicated to the Lord?”

The account of the Prophet Samuel has great significance in dedication and service to the Lord. Hannah, the wife of Elkanah and the mother of the prophet Samuel, is described as a devout woman who made an annual pilgrimage to the temple in *Shiloh* (Beth El) to offer sacrifices. As she stood in the temple, pouring out her anguish at her barrenness and vowing to dedicate any son born to her to the temple and to the service of God, the high priest Eli heard her and eventually added his blessing to her pleas. Her vow was that she would dedicate her firstborn son to the Lord. “And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.” (1 Samuel 1:11) First fruits and first born were offerings to the Lord. They could be redeemed by paying money instead. In Hannah’s case, she gave her firstborn son to the High Priest (*Kohen*) and hence to the Lord.

What is the significance of the Jewish holiday of Shavuot?

Orthodox rabbinic traditions teach that the date of Shavuot, 50-days after the beginning of Passover, marks the revelation of the *Torah* (the first five books

of the Old Testament—the law) to Moses and the Israelites at Mount Sinai. In the “Law” are the commandments written in stone. How meaningful it is that this is the precise day the gift of the Holy Ghost was given on the Mount of Olives. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, (wind, *ruah* in Hebrew, which also means spirit) and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:1-4) The law was now written in their hearts! “Shavuot is Hag ha-Bikkurim, festival of the first fruits. The word bikkurim is derived from the same root as *bekhor*, the firstborn of man and animal, which were also to be dedicated to the service of God.” “Firstborn is the term referring to a male offspring who is the first issue of his mother’s womb. According to the Torah, the firstborn, known in Hebrew as *bekhor*, has special sanctity. Therefore, he is subject to specific Torah laws which apply to all firstborn human beings and animals of the following types: cattle, sheep, goats and donkeys. The purpose of these laws is to teach us that everything in the world belongs to God and man owns only what God has given to him. When a man has worked hard to raise a family or rear a herd of animals, and finally sees the first fruits of his labor, the Torah tells him that these first fruits belong to God. Therefore, if man wishes to own and enjoy these gifts, he must redeem them from their rightful owner.” “The ceremony of the redemption of the firstborn is of great significance. In the case of a human *bekhor*, this ceremony...consists of redeeming the child from a kohen (priest) by giving the kohen five silver coins.

During the ceremony, the father presents his son, often on a specially embellished tray, to the kohen, who asks him in an ancient Aramaic formula, whether he wishes to redeem the child or to leave him to the kohen. (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) The gift of the Holy Ghost testifies of the First-born Son of God!

How did “God in a box,” fail, for Eli’s sons?

Eli’s sons taking advantage of worshipers, put the ark of the covenant in front of the Israelite forces and then lost the ark to the Philistines. Eli mourns his son’s deaths, however learning the ark was lost, is the blow that ends his mortal life. Religious profiteering is still repugnant in Jewish Law. Providing religious service for money is improper. Yet one can see religious men at the Western (Wailing) Wall waiting to assist Bar Mitzvah services on Mondays and Thursdays (not on Saturday, which is the Sabbath, because no money is handled on this day). The families allowing them to assist are encouraged to pay money in return. It is apparent that if the sum is not sufficient, the religious men may press for more. One can see blessings being given with one hand, while the other is cupped for a “donation.” When Jesus cleansed the temple, he was filled with righteous indignation because men were desecrating his Father’s house by selling doves and lambs to be sacrificed, not so much for the service but for the money they would make. He overturned the moneychanger tables and said to the sellers of doves, “Take these things; hence, make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise.” (John 2:16.)