

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 23%

Weekly Readings will cover: Ruth 1 through Ruth 4, 1 Chronicles 2:9-55, 1 Chronicles 4:1-23 & 1 Samuel 1

Sunday: Ruth 1

Monday: Ruth 2

Tuesday: Ruth 3

Wednesday: Ruth 4

Thursday: 1 Chronicles 2:9-55

Friday: 1 Chronicles 4:1-23

Saturday: 1 Samuel 1

Current # of email addresses in the group: 599

I hope each of you had an amazing fall Holy Day season! God's Holy Days are so meaningful to His wonderful plan for all of mankind. If only people knew the truth of the love and hope God's plan contains for them.

I hope the 4-week break has been beneficial for anyone who was behind. I hope by now everyone who was behind is caught up. If not, I highly encourage you to start with us now as we start two new books this week. This week we will start and finish the book of Ruth and will also start 1 Samuel. I hope you enjoy being back in this study!

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 41

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 260 - SUNDAY: October 15th

Ruth 1

Introduction to the book: The UCG reading plan's introduction to this book states: "The book of Ruth chronologically overlaps the book of Judges. And, although not stated in the biblical text, Talmudic tradition names the same author for both—the prophet Samuel. But unlike the book of Judges, Ruth is not part of the second major division of the Old

Testament, known as the Prophets. Instead, it actually belongs among the third division, the Writings (known in Greek as the Hagiographa, meaning "Sacred Writings," and sometimes referred to as the "Psalms," as the book of Psalms is the first book of the Writings in order of arrangement and makes up the largest portion of this section). The *Beyond Today Bible Commentary* covers some material from the Writings in commentary regarding the Prophets when that material has a clear timeliness and helps to further elucidate the historical material in the Prophets. Ruth does just that, giving more details about the period of the judges and providing an important link in the family of Judah, from which the kings of Israel will eventually spring.

"The story is set in the difficult days of the Judges, which were marred by appalling spiritual, moral, and social decline. Yet, as the story unfolds, we discover that within the corrupt society there were still true believers: simple folk who tried honestly to love and serve God, and to live generously with their neighbors. The unveiling of Ruth, of her mother-in-law Naomi, and of her husband-to-be, Boaz, reminds us that true sacred history is not learned so much in the annals of heroes and kings, as in the daily lives of godly women and men. The Book of Ruth should be required reading for any who study the era of the Judges, for it brings much-needed balance to our impression of that age of spiritual disarray" (Lawrence Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*, 1991, introductory notes on Ruth).

This heartwarming and encouraging book provides an example of the variety of instruction God has laid out in His Word. The entire book is a self-contained short story about a few central characters, similar in that regard to Esther. There is no direct instruction from God—no commands, no correction from a prophet, no expounding of God's law. There are, however, great themes and lessons in the book—one being that God blesses those who seek to obey Him, sometimes in very unexpected ways. This is the experience of the main character Ruth,

after whom the book is named—making this book one of only two in the entire Bible named after women, the other being Esther.

Remarkably, Ruth is not an Israelite but a foreigner, a Moabitess. Yet she will not remain so but will be grafted into Israel—and not just grafted in but honored by God with an important position in the lineage of David and his descendant the Messiah. Whether the book's author actually is Samuel or someone else, there is a clear sense of respect for a foreign-born woman wanting to submit herself in obedience to God and follow His way of life, and in doing so to have such a major impact on Israel's future.

Ruth is one of the five books of the Writings known to the Jews as the Megilloth—the other four being the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations and Esther. While the word *megilloth* simply means "rolls" or "scrolls," this term is used specifically of the *festival scrolls*—that is, the books of the Writings read in the synagogues at feast times. One of the major threads running through the book of Ruth is that of harvest, specifically the smaller spring harvest—first of barley and then of wheat (see Ruth 1:22). For this reason Ruth is traditionally read in Jewish synagogues during the Feast of Harvest or Firstfruits (Pentecost)—which occurs during this agricultural period in May or June.

Interestingly, Jewish tradition says the first Pentecost for Israel was when God gave the law at Mount Sinai and Israel accepted it, thereby truly becoming His people. Ruth is the story of a woman who accepted the laws of God and thereby became part of God's people. It should be noted that the "harvest" of Israel as God's people typified the spiritual harvest of *spiritual* Israel, the New Testament Church of God—the members of which are God's "firstfruits" in this age, as there will be a greater harvest of mankind when Christ returns. The story of Ruth helps to illustrate the fact that all people will one day be given the opportunity to follow God—and that, even today, gentiles are grafted

in among God's firstfruits to be part of His early harvest. Paul (Romans 11:24-25) and Peter (Acts 10:9-15) later showed that God intended all along for the gentiles to be grafted into Israel (Isaiah 56:3-7; Leviticus 19:33).

It was also at Pentecost that the nation of Israel entered into its covenant marriage with God. And this was symbolic of the marriage relationship Jesus Christ was to have with spiritual Israel, the Church. Clearly, love and marriage—as representative of God's relationship with His people—is also a theme of the book of Ruth. Boaz, picturing Christ, marries Ruth, who represents the Church. He is the husbandman who protects, provides for and cares for his bride.

Finally, another overarching theme of the book is clearly that of the kinsman-redeemer. "The Hebrew word for kinsman (*goel*) appears thirteen times in Ruth and basically means 'one who redeems'" (*The New Open Bible*, 1990, introductory notes on Ruth). The need for redemption is made clear early in the story—and its accomplishment through buying back land, Levirate marriage and the perpetuation of the family is the grand conclusion. The book thus "provides a clear picture of the kinsman-redeemer, an individual who through relationship is able to intervene on a family member's behalf. In this role Boaz prefigures Jesus Christ, who became a real human being so that He might be our kinsman, and qualify as [that is, meet the conditions of becoming] our Redeemer" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, introductory notes on Ruth). What a wonderful picture!

It should be noted that the exact time of the story of Ruth within the period of the judges is not clear. Genealogies of Judah's family, as recorded at the end of the book and in other passages (see Ruth 4:18-21; Matthew 1), show the following progression: Salmon by Rahab (the Jericho prostitute of Joshua 6 fame) begets Boaz; Boaz and Ruth have a child named Obed; and Obed begets Jesse, the father of David. Yet

there were around 360 years between the time that Salmon and Rahab met and the birth of David, and it seems unlikely that there were only three generations between them. Thus, it appears that generations may have been skipped in the genealogy—between Salmon and Boaz or between Obed and Jesse or both.” [END]

Before we move into the daily reading, let’s review a few themes in a bit more detail:

The Levirate Marriage: The word Levirate comes from two words: Levir meaning “a husband’s brother” and “ate” meaning “with”. Simply it means “With a husband’s brother”. In Deuteronomy 25:5-10 we find the instructions regarding this law. Within this practice, a brother would bear a son with his brother’s widow, which would remain the heir of the dead brother so that the family could not easily die out. This practice was also combined with the land redemption rights found in Leviticus 25:25-31, 47-55). This again was a law established to maintain the land within a family after a member died. Both the land law and the levirate marriage were intended to preserve family and land in the case of difficult circumstances/crises. How great is God that He has such wonderful laws and practices!

Hesed (aka Khesed): A survey of the Old Testament (Hill & Walton) contains this to say: “Related most frequently to covenant loyalty, the Hebrew term hesed envelops all the far-reaching implications of Yahweh’s loyalty to his covenant. The KJV frequently translates the term “mercy,” while the New American Standard Bible chooses the compound term “lovingkindness.” These only begin to introduce all the varied ways whereby God demonstrates his covenant loyalty, and this variety is reflected in the decision by the translators of the New International Version to use an array of terms: kindness, love, loyalty, and more.

Ruth is a book of “hesed” on both the human and the divine levels. The most explicit statement of this is found in Ruth’s stirring

expression of commitment to Naomi (1:16-17). It is this quality that gains her Boaz's favor (2:12). Boaz is likewise praised for the "hesed" he shows to Naomi (2:20)...

...The Lord's hesed is introduced in 1:8-9 as the factor that will eventually lead to the successful remarriage of Naomi's daughters-in-law so that it cannot help but be recognized in the provision of the goel (kinsman-redeemer) for Ruth."

For anyone interested, this Bible Project video explores this Hebrew word "hesed/khesed" and this theme in about a 5-minute video:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/loyal-love/>

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "As the story opens, we are introduced to the family of Elimelech. We later learn that he is a close relative of one of the story's main characters, Boaz—perhaps a cousin or uncle (a brother seems unlikely as that would probably be stated). As the genealogies show, Boaz was from an important family line of Judah, descended as he was from the tribal leader in Mosaic times. So Elimelech would also have been of that important family.

But famine drives Elimelech to relocate his family southeast to the land of Moab. While his action may have been borne out of a lack of faith in God to provide for them in Israel (abandoning their inheritance in the Promised Land and his responsibility to serve as a leader in Judah), it is also possible that he simply believed this was the right way to provide for his family in such a situation, perhaps taking cues from the patriarchs, who moved to Egypt in time of famine. (Moab may have seemed even more justifiable as it was closer to home and the Moabites were descendants of Abraham's nephew Lot.) In any event, the times must have been quite hard on the family already. For while Elimelech's name meant "God Is My King" and his wife Naomi's meant "My Delight" or "Pleasant," they named their sons Mahlon (meaning

"Sickly") and Chilion (meaning "Pining," "Failing" or "Wasting Away"). It is not clear whether these names were given at birth or later (similar to Naomi later renaming herself Mara, verse 20). But it is clear that conditions must have been pretty bad.

Apparently Elimelech dies not too long after settling in Moab. His sons are wed to local Moabite women—Mahlon to Ruth and Chilion to Orpah (compare verse 4; Ruth 4:10). This was not forbidden in the law God gave Israel, as intermarriage with Canaanites was (see Deuteronomy 7:3), though there were prohibitions related to the offspring of intermarriage with Moabites (which we will address at the end of the book). But these particular marriages produce no children. That may be because the marriages were rather short-lived (depending on when the weddings took place). The sons, it turns out, were named appropriately, as they both died early deaths 10 years after their father.

With her husband and two sons dead, and thus no men to provide for the family needs, Naomi realizes that her prospects in Moab were bleak. Seeing herself as a further burden to her daughters-in-law, and hearing that agricultural conditions in Israel had improved (Ruth 1:6), she determines to return to her homeland and entreats Ruth and Orpah to return to their families and remarry. They, however, want to go with her. But she knows the hardships each of them would face in Israel, not only as widows, but especially as foreigners—they would be impoverished *and* outsiders. And she could be of no help. As an elderly widow, there was no hope of her being married again and having additional sons to give them in marriage (verses 11-13)—this according to the custom of levirate marriage that God gave Israel, wherein a man was to marry his childless dead brother's widow in order to continue his brother's lineage (see Deuteronomy 25:5).

Orpah then departs—going "back to her people and to her gods" (Ruth 1:15). The wording here is interesting. It implies that these Moabite

women had actually *left* their pagan gods when they married Mahlon and Chilion. But this was simply the rule of the day, as a wife in ancient Middle Eastern society was supposed to adopt the religion of her husband. The real test was now. Orpah's name meant "Neck," perhaps fitting for one who turned her head to look back—and then actually *went* back to her former paganism. Indeed, it is likely that she had made no true commitment to God in the first place. Apparently neither of them had—or Naomi would probably not have lightly told them to depart from it.

But Ruth was different than Orpah. It is interesting that her name may be a Moabite modification of the Hebrew word *reuit*, meaning friendship, association or companion. Ruth certainly was motivated by true friendship for Naomi. She was a faithful companion who would not leave her dear friend even when it meant personal difficulty. Since there was no one else to care for her mother-in-law, she would stand in the gap and do what she could. This was remarkable character and devotion. But there was apparently more to it than strong friendship. At the end of her courageous and loyal commitment of verses 16-17 (the focal point of the entire narrative), she invoked the Lord as one who sincerely believed in Him. She had before been part of a dark and evil pagan society. But light had dawned through her association with the family of Elimelech. She had no doubt heard all about Israel and its God. And though the way might be hard, she wanted to be as much a part of it as she could. She would embrace what it meant to be an Israelite in covenant with the true God. The remainder of the story concerns how this remarkable choice is rewarded in a remarkable way.

We might expect Naomi to be overwhelmed and ecstatic at this decision. But her reaction seems to simply be one of resignation to the fact of Ruth coming with her (verse 18). This is terribly sad. Perhaps she was not convinced of Ruth's commitment—or perhaps she was just too fixated on concern over how this could possibly work out well for Ruth,

especially considering her own predicament. As can be expected to some extent, Naomi has let the events of her life since coming to the land of Moab weigh heavily on her. And going home made it even worse. As excited as those in Bethlehem were to see her when she and Ruth arrived there, Naomi asks them to call her Mara, which means "Bitter." What had made her house in Israel a home was the presence of her loved ones, who were now gone. "For Naomi, who had left Bethlehem with a husband and two sons, the return brutally drove home the extent of her loss" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on 1:19-21).

Moreover, she views her circumstances as God's judgment on her (perhaps indicating some faithlessness in the initial decision to resettle in Moab). But she has now returned. "The theme of *return* is prominent in this chapter. The word is even used of Ruth—an unusual word for the narrator to use since there is no indication that Ruth had ever been to Israel" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verse 22). Perhaps what is important here is the symbolism. The Hebrew word for return is the expression used throughout the Old Testament for repentance—rejecting our former ways and turning our lives around to go the way God originally told mankind to go. Ultimately, returning to God always brings great reward." [END]

Verse 4 – It's worth noting that while the story moves very quickly along in these first few verses, these individuals are in Moab for approximately 10 years.

Verse 5 – Adam Clarke's commentary states: "It is imagined, and not without probability, that Mahlon and Chilion are the same with Joash and Saraph, mentioned 1Chronicles 4:22, where the Hebrew should be thus translated, and Joash and Saraph, who married in Moab, and dwelt in Lehem."

Verse 6 – John Gill’s commentary believes this famine that drove them to Moab was caused by the Midianites who came yearly and destroyed/carried off their produce (see Judges 6:3) until God through Gideon freed them of that oppression.

Another idea is that the judge that God used to free them of oppression here was Ibzan (Judges 12:8) – On this theory, John Gill states: “There were two Bethlehems, one in the tribe of Zebulun, Jos 19:15 of which some think this man was; and another in the tribe of Judah, the city of Jesse and David, and of the Messiah; and Josephus says, Ibzan was of the tribe of Judah, of the city of Bethlehem; and because Boaz was of the same place, and lived in the times of the judges, the Jewish Rabbins are of opinion that he is the same with Ibzan; so Jarchi and Ben Gersom.”

Verse 17 – In an attempt to end the debate, Ruth lays out terms and then takes an oath that she will not leave Naomi. Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “May he inflict any of those punishments on me, and any worse punishment, if I part from thee till death. And it appears that she was true to her engagement; for Naomi was nourished in the house of Boaz in her old age, and became the fosterer and nurse of their son Obed, Rth 4:15, Rth 4:16.” [END]

Verse 19 – John Gill’s commentary states: “as Aben Ezra observes, this shows that Elimelech and Naomi were great personages in Bethlehem formerly, people of rank and figure, or otherwise there would not have been such a concourse of people upon her coming, and such inquiries made and questions put, had she been formerly a poor woman.”

Verse 22 – This gives us the timing of the days of Unleavened Bread as no new grain (barley) could be eaten by Israel until after the Wave Sheaf offering was presented and that occurred on the Sunday during

the days of Unleavened Bread and began the 50-day count to Pentecost.

Day 261 - MONDAY: October 16th

Ruth 2

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "After all of the calamity of chapter 1, Naomi and Ruth begin to settle back into Israel. Without husbands to help provide for them, Naomi and Ruth utilize the legal provisions God gave to Israel for the poor and widows (see Leviticus 19:9-10; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19). Ruth seeks permission from Naomi to gather grain in the fields being harvested. Her "reference to whoever is kind enough to let her glean (the meaning of 'in whose eyes I find favor') reminds us that not everyone followed the Law!" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verses 2:2-3). With Naomi's blessing, Ruth "happens" upon the field of Boaz, a kinsman of Naomi's deceased husband Elimelech (Ruth 2:1, 3). She, of course, didn't intend this, not even knowing about Boaz or any connection with him. But it wasn't random chance. God was behind it, as Naomi later recognizes (verse 20).

Interestingly, "about a mile east of Bethlehem is a field, called 'Field of Boaz,' where, tradition says, Ruth gleaned. Adjoining is the 'Shepherd's Field,' where, tradition says, the angels announced the birth of Jesus. According to these traditions, the scene of Ruth's romance with Boaz, which led to the formation of the family that was to produce Christ, was chosen of God, 1100 [or more] years later, as the place for the heavenly announcement of Christ's arrival" (*Halley's Bible Handbook*, note on chapter 2).

In this field Ruth labored. Indeed, her harvesting would have been hard work—using a sickle to glean the corners of the field and picking through the field for any grain the harvesters had dropped. Ruth caught

the attention of the servants because of her hard work, staying in the field from morning through the heat of the day—not even stopping long to rest "in the house" (verse 7), which was probably a tent or canopy to provide some shade in the field. Ruth has thus established a good reputation for herself. "In a small community the story of Ruth and Naomi would be common knowledge, the focus of much conversation (cf. v. 11). Now events showed Ruth hardworking (v. 7), respectful (v. 10), modest, and grateful (v. 13). The reputation we earn opens—or closes—the door of opportunity" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verses 6, 10-11, 13). Indeed, Ruth's having sown seeds of good character was allowing her to "reap a harvest" of great reward (compare Galatians 6:7).

Boaz fulfills the instruction God had given Israel to not treat strangers or foreigners differently under the law, and even instructs Ruth to stay and glean in his fields for her protection. This and Naomi's words at the end of the chapter show that safety was a concern for a lone woman during this period. "Again we sense that Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz live in an oasis of peace in a turbulent, sinful society" (note on Ruth 2:9, 22). Ruth was apparently in danger of being molested while she worked in the fields. Among Boaz's many kindnesses, he personally warned his workers that Ruth was not to be touched.

In verse 12, "Boaz blesses Ruth, in a statement which may be taken as a prayer.... Boaz believes that Ruth deserves the best for her piety and choice of Israel's God, and is convinced that a just God will see that she is well rewarded. Boaz, who utters this prayer, is the means by which it is answered" (note on verse 12). Boaz goes so far as to provide food for Ruth while she works, instructs his workers not to rebuke and shame her if she works among the already harvested sheaves and even tells them to purposely drop some of the harvest for her to gather.

It is interesting to note that Boaz did not just give her the grain. He "exhibited the highest form of charity by giving in secret so as not to shame the recipient" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verse 17). Perhaps there is even a spiritual lesson in what happened. While God undoubtedly led Ruth to Boaz's field, and may have even laid it upon Boaz to be so generous to her, Ruth herself had to put forth the necessary work to reap the blessings. Thus, despite the fact that it was a gift, she still had to work. And work she did all day long, gathering an ephah of barley (verse 17). As an ephah equates to about 65 percent of a modern bushel and a bushel of barley weighs about 48 pounds, Ruth gathered about 31 pounds of barley.

This was far more than typical gleaning could bring in, and Naomi immediately recognizes that someone must have helped Ruth out (verse 19). When Ruth tells her about Boaz, Naomi is overjoyed—realizing that he, as a close relative of Elimelech, could redeem the family name and inheritance. And surely, she reasoned, this development was from God (verse 20). So God had not abandoned her after all. He had accepted Ruth and would take care of the both of them. After utter despair, Naomi now trusted God to see them through.

Ruth continues gleaning through the barley and then the wheat harvest (verse 23)." [END]

Verse 15 – The Adam Clarke's commentary states: "This was a privilege; for no person should glean till the sheaves were all bound, and the shocks set up."

John Gill states: "pointing to a particular spot where might be the best ears of corn, and where more of them had fallen:"

Verse 17 – Regarding the amount of grain that Ruth gathered, John Gill's commentary states: "Ruth got enough in one day, for herself and her

mother-in-law, which would last five days at least. This was a great deal for one woman to pick up, ear by ear, in one day; and must be accounted for, not only by her diligence and industry, but by the favour shown her by the reapers, under the direction of Boaz, who suffered her to glean among the sheaves, and let fall handfuls for her to pick up.” [END]

Verse 23 – The barley harvest began around the Days of Unleavened Bread and the wheat harvest began around Pentecost, so we have somewhere around 2 to 3 months of time occurring for these harvests.

Day 262 - TUESDAY: October 17th

Ruth 3

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “The word "security" in verse 1 is correctly rendered "rest" in the King James Version. It is describing the "rest" found in marriage (see 1:9), that is, "settling down"—typical of the "rest" of God's coming Kingdom (see Hebrews 3-4), wherein the glorified Church will be married to Jesus Christ (compare Ephesians 5:22-23; Revelation 19:7).

Naomi remarks again on the fact that Boaz is a close relative—a kinsman-redeemer (Ruth 1:2). "The Hebrew word refers to a relative who acted as a protector or guarantor of the family rights. He could be called upon to perform a number of duties (1) to buy back property that the family had sold; (2) to provide an heir for a deceased brother by marrying that brother's wife and producing a child with her [evidently "brother" being understood as a more encompassing family relation than just a literal brother]; (3) to buy back a family member who had been sold into slavery due to poverty; and (4) to avenge a relative who had been murdered by killing the murderer. The Scripture calls God the Redeemer or the 'close relative' of Israel (Is. 60:16), and Jesus the Redeemer of all believers (1 Pet. 1:18, 19)" ("Wordfocus: Close Relative," *Nelson Study Bible*, p. 446).

Indeed, as briefly mentioned earlier, "the concept of the kinsman-redeemer or *goel* (3:9, 'close relative') is an important portrayal of the work of Christ. The *goel* must (1) be related by blood to those he redeems [and Christ came in human flesh] (Deuteronomy 25:5, 7-10; John 1:14; Romans 1:3; Philipians 2:5-8; Hebrews 2:14, 15); (2) be able to pay the price of redemption [as Christ was able through His blood] (2:1; 1 Peter 1:18, 19); (3) be willing to redeem [as Christ was willing] (3:11; Matthew 20:28; John 10:15, 18; Hebrews 10:7); (4) be free himself [from whatever caused the need for redemption, i.e., the redeemer cannot redeem Himself] (Christ was free from the curse of sin). The word *goel*...[thus] presents a clear picture of the mediating work of Christ" (*New Open Bible*, introductory notes on Ruth). It is also of interest that a Christian needs to agree to God's way in order to receive the blessing. A Christian needs to *want* salvation. Ruth wanted Boaz to marry her and she agreed to the system.

Naomi decides it's finally time to act. The end of harvest always meant celebration and feasting in ancient societies. Perhaps she thought Boaz would be most receptive to any appeals or proposals at such a happy occasion. She tells Ruth to wash, put on perfume and dress in nice clothes and then sends her down to the festivities, but not to approach him during them (Ruth 3:3). Rather, Naomi instructs Ruth to follow Boaz and, after he fell asleep, uncover his feet and lie down at them (verse 4). This seems rather strange to us today, but it appears to have been more common and understood in the culture of the time. Today some view it as a sexual advance, accusing Ruth (and Naomi for suggesting it) of immorality. But that is rather unlikely, as we will see.

Boaz goes to sleep out in the open (verse 7). With most of the harvest at the threshing floor, it was not uncommon for the owner or a trusted servant to sleep near the pile of grain to guard against theft. He wakes at midnight, startled to find Ruth at his feet. She says to him, "Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid: for thou art a near kinsman"

(verse 9, KJV). First of all, we should notice that this is a humble petition, as she calls herself his handmaiden—his servant. This may explain her presence at his feet, the position of a lowly petitioner. Furthermore, in the NIV the expression "thy skirt" is rendered "the corner of your garment." Some see this as a reference to a cloak or outer robe that was being used as a blanket (see C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*).

"Boaz probably slept upon a mat or skin; Ruth lay crosswise at his feet—a position in which Eastern servants frequently sleep in the same chamber or tent with their master; and if they want a covering, custom allows them that benefit from part of the covering on their master's bed. Resting, as the Orientals [i.e., Middle Easterners] do at night, in the same clothes they wear during the day, there was no indelicacy in a stranger, or even a woman, putting the extremity of this cover over her" (*Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary*, note on verse 9).

In the plural the Hebrew term translated "skirt" is usually understood to mean *wings*, and thus some translations, such as the New King James Version, translate it here as "wing." God used this terminology in describing His taking of Israel as His wife: "Behold, thy time was the time of love; *and I spread my skirt over thee*, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine" (Ezekiel 16:8, KJV). In the New King James Version, the key phrase here is translated "*so I spread My wing over you.*" Clearly, Ruth's intent was a proposal of marriage—that she come under the wing or cloak of a husband's protection, namely Boaz's.

What is also rather significant in this regard is that Boaz had earlier spoken to her of "the Lord God of Israel, *under whose wings you have come for refuge*" (Ruth 2:12)—here using the plural form of the same Hebrew word. Yet he had not sent her on her way to be protected by

God somewhere else. Rather, to a great degree, he took on the duty of providing and caring for her himself.

Since this true story illustrates the relationship between Christ and the Church, there might seem to be a breakdown in the typology. Jesus said, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you..." (John 15:16). This is after God the Father selects those who are to be part of the bride for His Son (John 6:44). But consider that Ruth did not initiate the relationship. Boaz had already taken a keen interest in her and had shown obvious favor toward her. Indeed, it is likely that he very much wanted to be her husband. But we see that he is an older man who expected Ruth to marry someone much younger. The wise Naomi recognized Boaz's feelings for what they were. She may have known that Boaz was a conservative man who lacked romantic assertiveness. Naomi decided it was time for Ruth to show some initiative as a response to Boaz's interest. Likewise, after being called by God we are to exercise initiative in seeking Him. "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8).

Boaz is deeply touched. And he is immensely impressed with Ruth's great "kindness" (verse 10)—the Hebrew word here, *hesed*, meaning "loyal love" or "covenant faithfulness." Not only had she stuck by Naomi, but now she was seeking to fulfill the obligation of preserving the lineage and inheritance of her deceased husband, which would restore the family line of Elimelech and ensure that Naomi was well provided for.

Boaz's response really helps us to see that no sexual impropriety was occurring. If Ruth had been doing something immoral, his first words would surely not be to bless her in God's name for her faithfulness and moral virtue (verses 10-11). His telling her to sleep there until morning (verse 13) was most likely to ensure her protection. It would not have been safe for her to walk back to town in the middle of the night, when

she might have been accosted—just before dawn would be safer, when no one was awake. It is true that, in verse 14, Boaz does not want anyone to know she'd been there. But that doesn't mean anything wrong had transpired. Perhaps he just didn't want the encounter to be misconstrued and Ruth's reputation brought into question. Or maybe he just didn't want his intent of marriage to become public until he was able to sort out the situation with the other relative he mentions. For Boaz, we find out, was not the nearest kin (verse 12).

In the morning, Boaz sends Ruth home with a gift of grain—6 unspecified measures (verse 15). The New King James has ephahs but that would be around 187 pounds, pretty difficult for her to carry in her shawl. Perhaps Boaz just used a scoop and dumped six full scoops into her shawl. This gift may have been a pledge of his intentions to marry her if possible. At the end of the chapter, Naomi tells Ruth to, in modern parlance, "sit tight and wait and see." Naomi is confident that Boaz, who has repeatedly demonstrated uprightness and compassion toward them, will have the matter resolved before the day is over (see verse 18)." [END]

Verse 11 – Boaz says that everyone knows that Ruth is a “virtuous woman”. This is the same Hebrew word that is used for the Proverbs 31 woman. “Who can find a virtuous woman...” (see Proverbs 31:10).

Verse 12 – The Midrash of Ruth says that Elimelech had a brother still living who was nearer in relation than Boaz. I find it interesting that Boaz had already thought this all through and knew who was the closest relative. To me, this shows he was interested in being her redeemer.

Verse 13 – This verse translated in the NKJV makes it seem Boaz would be pleased if the other would redeem her, but that wording seems to be added. The Literal Standard Version says: “if he redeems you, well:

he redeems". The actual Hebrew is more of a literal fact than a happy outcome. That was the law, if the other decided to act on this duty, there was nothing Boaz could do about it. The law was the law.

Day 263 - WEDNESDAY: October 18th

Ruth 4

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "Because Boaz was not the nearest kinsman, he had to give the choice to the nearer kinsman of whether to redeem Naomi's land and marry Ruth or not. This was a serious choice because it was not just about inheriting land or marrying a widow, it was about continuing a family line. Several interesting things take place in this story. Verse 2 speaks of Boaz going before 10 elders of the city. According to the *Interpreters One Volume Commentary*, this incident provided a precedent for the later view that 10 men formed a quorum.

In addressing his relative before the quorum, Boaz informs him that with the land comes the obligation to marry Ruth (verse 5). But why would this be? And why does the land have to be bought from Naomi? Isn't the whole problem that someone else now possessed the land?

First of all, we should understand that when land was sold in Israel, it was more like a lease or rental agreement since all land reverted to the original owner at the Jubilee, every 50th year. The original owner and his family still possessed title to the land. Elimelech sold his land in time of hardship. That land was redeemable by Elimelech's family through paying the "balance of the lease" to the current occupant. Title would have passed to Elimelech's sons and on down to the nearest of kin. Widows, however, were not listed in the line of inheritance (see Numbers 27:8-11). The nearest kinsman would thus seem to automatically become the new owner of the property. So why would he need to purchase it from the widow?

Keil and Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament* explains: "The question arises, what right had Naomi to sell her husband's land as her own property?... The true explanation is no doubt the following: The law relating to the inheritance of the landed property of Israelites who died childless did not determine the time when such a possession should pass to the relatives of the deceased, whether immediately after the death of the owner, or not until after the death of the widow who was left behind.

"No doubt the latter was the rule established by custom, so that the widow remained in possession of the property as long as she lived; and for that length of time she had the right to sell the property in case of need, since the sale of a field was not an actual transfer of title but simply the sale of the yearly produce until the year of jubilee.

"The field of the deceased Elimelech would, strictly speaking, have belonged to his sons, and after their death to Mahlon's widow (Ruth), since Chilion's widow had remained behind in her own country Moab. But as Elimelech had not only emigrated with his wife and children and died abroad, but his sons had also been with him in the foreign land, and had married and died there, the landed property of their father had not descended to them, but had remained the property of Naomi, Elimelech's widow, in which Ruth, as the widow of Mahlon, also had a share.

"Now, in case a widow sold the field of her deceased husband for the time that it was in her possession, on account of poverty, and a relation of her husband redeemed it, it was evidently his duty not only to care for the maintenance of the impoverished widow, but if she were still young, to marry her, and to let the first son born of such a marriage enter into the family of the deceased husband of his wife, so as to inherit the redeemed property, and perpetuate the name and possession of the deceased in Israel.

"Upon this right, which was founded upon traditional custom, Boaz based this condition, which he set before the nearer redeemer, that if he redeemed the field of Naomi he must also take Ruth, with the obligation to marry her, and through this marriage to set up the name of the deceased upon his inheritance."

In verse 6, the near kinsman realizes that in buying the land he would be eventually giving it to heirs of Elimelech, thereby losing not only the land but also the money used to buy the land and provide for Ruth and Naomi. This he sees as ruining his own inheritance. Perhaps he already has children from a previous marriage who, he feels, would be left insufficiently provided for in such a circumstance.

Whatever the case, he defers the right of redemption to Boaz in verse 7 and gives Boaz his shoe as a witness to make it official (see Deuteronomy 25:5-10). This "custom itself, which existed among the Indians and the ancient Germans, arose from the fact that fixed property was taken possession of by treading upon the soil, and hence taking off the shoe and handing it to another was a symbol of the transfer of a possession or right of ownership" (Keil and Delitzsh).

Deuteronomy 25 required spitting in the face of one who refused to fulfill the obligation of being the redeemer. That appears to be left out here—perhaps indicating some mitigating circumstances in favor of the relative, such as the children he was already providing for. Or perhaps the spitting is simply not recorded. Some believe the fact that the near relative's name is not mentioned in the story connotes a blotting out of his name for refusing his obligation.

Boaz declares his intention to marry Ruth and all is approved. A blessing is even pronounced, invoking the example of Tamar, a former levirate marriage from whom most of the tribe of Judah had descended (Ruth 4:12).

The story comes to a close with Boaz marrying Ruth, and it seems that God blessed them right away with children (verse 13). Interestingly, the concluding scenes are of Naomi. The women of the community recognize that in the face of all of the difficulty Naomi had experienced, the conclusion of the matter was far better than anything that could have been anticipated. Ruth became "better to you than seven sons" (verse 15). Oddly, it is neighbor women who name the son born to Boaz and Ruth—they name him Obed, which means "Serving." Perhaps they played a major part in helping Ruth through her pregnancy, enough so that their input was solicited and accepted.

The book finishes with a review of the genealogy that is very interesting because the genealogy has changed, with Boaz taking the place of Elimelech. Instead of losing everything, as his relative feared, Boaz gained a preeminent place in the history of Israel. In direct descent from Obed is Jesse, the father of David, from whom descended Jesus Christ.

We might wonder how, a few generations later, the descendant of a Moabite becomes the king of Israel, when Deuteronomy 23:3 prohibited the descendants of Moabites from entering the congregation of the Lord for ten generations. "The Jewish Midrash implies that this prohibition related only to the women who wed Moabite males" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on Ruth 1:4). We cannot, of course, know for certain. There is, it should be noted, a problem with Moabite wives in Ezra and Nehemiah's time—but these women are pagan, not courageous women of faith who committed their lives to the true God. Ruth, on the other hand, well illustrates what the apostle Peter later said in Acts 10:34-35: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." Let that be a lesson to all of us." [END

I don't have anything additional to add to this chapter and the conclusion of this wonderful book!

Day 264 - THURSDAY: October 19th

1 Chronicles 2:9 - 55

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "Chapters 2-4 concentrate on the descendants of Judah, particularly the descendants of Judah's son Perez. Yet some descendants of Judah's son Shelah are given (see 1 Chronicles 4:21-23). And a few descendants of Perez's twin brother Zerah are mentioned. Verse 6 of chapter 2 lists Zerah's sons as Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara and says that there were five of them in all. Compare this with 1 Kings 4:31: "For [Solomon] was wiser than all men—than Ethan the Ezrahite [i.e., Zerahite or Zarhite], and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations." The parallel names here would seem to identify Ethan the Ezrahite or Zerahite with Ethan the son of Zerah. Yet Ethan the Ezrahite, composer of Psalm 89, lived after the time of David since his psalm mentions God's covenant with David and even later transgressions by David's descendants. So it seems that the "sons" of Zerah in 1 Chronicles 2:6 must refer to descendants—so that the total of "five" probably refers to those noted for greatness still remembered when Chronicles was recorded. Carmi in verse 7 was another descendant of Zerah noted only for being the father of Achar—the Achan of Joshua 7. (Carmi, named also in 2 Chronicles 4:1, was, according to Joshua 7:26-18, the son of a descendant of Zerah named Zabdi.)

Moving down to 1 Chronicles 2:15, note that David is referred to as the seventh son of Jesse while 1 Samuel 16:10-11 and 1 Samuel 17:12 clearly state that Jesse had eight sons. Various suggestions have been offered, including one son not surviving much beyond 1 Samuel 17 to have children or receive an inheritance. Another that some have

postulated is that the missing son may have had a different mother than the seven mentioned in 1 Chronicles. Whatever the case, the matter is not irresolvable. As usual, such apparent discrepancies actually give the text a more legitimate feel, as the author of a falsified record would likely have been careful to avoid introducing such problems.

This brings us to another matter in 1 Chronicles 2. In its note on verse 18, *The Nelson Study Bible* states: "This Caleb [the son of Hezron and brother of Jerahmeel] was not the famous companion of Joshua (Numbers 13:6, Joshua 14:6-7), who lived several centuries later, during the conquest of Canaan. In fact, one of this Caleb's descendants, Bezalel (v. 20), was a craftsman charged with constructing the wilderness tabernacle (Exodus 31:2)." The later Caleb, son of Jephunneh, is mentioned a few chapters later in 1 Chronicles 4:15. Yet the earlier Caleb, referred to again in 1 Chronicles 2:42, is said to have had a daughter named Achsah (verse 49)—who was evidently the daughter of the later Caleb.

What are we to make of this? In its note on verse 49, the same study Bible states: "The Caleb of Joshua's time had a daughter named Achsah, who became the wife of Israel's first judge, Othniel (Judges 1:12-13). It might appear that the Caleb here in Chronicles must be the same as the later Caleb, but this is ruled out by the consistent use of Caleb throughout the chronicler's genealogy [here] to refer to an earlier individual by that name. The meaning probably is that Achsah is the 'daughter' of the earlier Caleb in the sense that she is his descendant. The later Caleb was doubtless a descendant of the early one, a conclusion supported by the record that both were from the tribe of Judah (1 Chronicles 2:4-5; 1 Chronicles 2:9; 1 Chronicles 2:18; 1 Chronicles 2:42; Numbers 13:6). But is there more to the explanation?

Consider the following lengthy quote regarding 1 Chronicles 2 from Swiss commentator Henri Rossier in his *Meditations on the First Book of Chronicles*. The matter is a bit complex and involved but helps to counter the idea that Scripture is in error here:

"Caleb's genealogy offers a striking example of this disorder [that in some cases existed among the Jews' genealogical records after the Babylonian Exile] and of how fragmentarily the genealogical registers were preserved. Caleb (who is not without purpose, I think, called Chelubai in v. 9) is the son of Hezron and the great-grandson of Judah. We find his genealogy in verses 18-20, and the descendants of his two wives, Azubah and Ephrath. In verses 42-49 we again find descendants of this same Caleb by his concubines. He is called the brother of Jerahmeel (the son of Hezron, v. 9). But at the very end of this enumeration we are suddenly brought into the presence of Achsah the daughter, as we know, of Caleb the son of Jephunneh (Joshua 15:16). In verses 50-55, for the third time in this chapter, we meet the descendants of Caleb, the son of Hezron, through Hur, the first-born of Ephratah, a part of whose genealogy has already been given us in verse 20. [The King James Version makes the Caleb of verse 50 the son of Hur, who was son of the original Caleb of verse 18 (son of Hezron). However, most translations show the Caleb of verse 50 to be the *same* as the original Caleb of verse 18—the *sons* of Hur (rather than singular *son* in the KJV) being his descendants.] Finally, in 1 Chronicles 4:13-15 we find the descendants of Caleb the son of Jephunneh and of his brother Kenaz. But here now, in this portion, this genealogy is truncated.

"Must we conclude from all this that the text of Chronicles is a human and capricious compilation and that thus the historical value of this book is nil? This is what the rationalists assert, but thank God, their reason is always at fault when it attacks His Word. No enlightened Christian will deny that the genealogies of Chronicles are composed of fragments gathered up in the midst of general confusion, yet

documents upon which God sets His seal of approval. So it is true that a number of passages in these genealogies are of very ancient origin, not mentioned in the other books of the Old Testament.

"Caleb's fragmentary genealogy, which we have cited above, is very instructive in this regard. We know from a number of Scripture passages (Numbers 13:6; Numbers 14:30; Numbers 14:38; Numbers 32:12; Numbers 34:19; Deuteronomy 1:36; Joshua 14:1-3) what favour Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, won from God by his perseverance, moral courage, faithfulness, and zeal to conquer a portion in the land of Canaan. The Lord's approval was upon him, whereas Caleb, the son of Hezron and of Judah, despite his numerous descendants, is not mentioned as the object of God's special favor. But if the fragmentary genealogies of Caleb the son of Judah are proof of the existing disorder, God puts these fragments together for a special purpose, and we find a deeper thought in them. Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, is the one whom God has particularly in view, as the Word teaches us; he is the one whom He introduces in so extraordinary a way into the genealogy of the son of Hezron (1 Chronicles 2:49). It is in view of him that this genealogy is inscribed next to that of David, as forming part of the tribe of Judah, from whence the royal race comes.

"But what connection does Caleb the son of Jephunneh, whose daughter was Achsah, have with Caleb the son of Hezron? Here we find a most interesting fact which has perhaps not been given sufficient attention. Caleb the son of Jephunneh was not originally of the people of Judah. In Numbers 32:12 and Joshua 14:6, 14 he is called Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite. Likewise, Caleb's younger brother Othniel, to whom Caleb gave his daughter Achsah as wife, is called 'the son of Kenaz' (Joshua 15:17; Judges 1:13; Judges 3:9; Judges 3:11). Now in Genesis 36:11 we learn that Kenaz is an Edomite name. Hence the conclusion that at some point of time the family of Kenaz, and therefore the family of Caleb the son of Jephunneh, was incorporated

into the tribes of Israel just as so many other foreigners, such as Jethro, Rahab, and Ruth, who in virtue of their faith became members of the people of God. This explains a characteristic phrase in Joshua 15:13: 'And to Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a portion among the children of Judah according to the commandment of Jehovah to Joshua...that is, Hebron.' And in Joshua 14:14: 'Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed Jehovah the God of Israel.'

"Thus Caleb, who by his origin really had no right of citizenship in Israel, received this right amidst Judah by virtue of his faith and was incorporated into the family of Caleb the son of Hezron, as it appears in 1 Chronicles 2:49 and in the passages already cited in Joshua. The fragments preserved of the genealogy of Caleb the son of Hezron confirm the place that God assigned to Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and this substitution is one of the important points the Spirit of God calls our attention to here." [END]

I don't have anything to add to this section.

Day 265 - FRIDAY: October 20th

1 Chronicles 4:1-23

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "Chapter 4 gives more details about the family of Judah. "Sons" in verse 1 refers to descendants, for of those listed here only Perez was Judah's actual son (1 Chronicles 2:3-4). The outline of the genealogies of Judah is as follows: Shelah, son of Judah (1 Chronicles 2:3; 1 Chronicles 4:21-23); Perez, son of Judah (1 Chronicles 2:4-8; 1 Chronicles 4:1-20); and Hezron, son of Perez and ancestor of David (2:9-3:24).

But there is more in 1 Chronicles 4 than just genealogy. In the midst of the nine-chapter-long list of names, a very short but remarkable story

appears out of the blue about a man named Jabez (verses 9-10). It's as if a camera were scanning a crowd of faces and all of a sudden stopped and focused on a single individual.

We know almost nothing about Jabez, but you may well have heard of a popular book about his prayer published in 2000 by author Bruce Wilkinson titled *The Prayer of Jabez: Breaking Through to the Blessed Life*. A number of other books and articles on the subject have followed so that the prayer has become a phenomenon among a number of people—with some unfortunately treating it as some sort of magic formula to get blessings from God. Some of late are focusing on this passage more than any other part of the Bible, and some perhaps almost to the exclusion of the rest of the Bible! That is of course not at all what God wants. For one thing, Christians are to approach God through the name of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, we know from Christ's teachings on prayer that God doesn't want or hear rote prayers (Matthew 6:7), but rather He wants believers to talk to Him in prayer the way a son or daughter would talk to a father. So merely memorizing and reciting the prayer of Jabez is not a key to divine blessing. That being said, despite the wrong approach some have taken we can in any event draw some valuable and helpful lessons from this brief but fascinating story.

The name Jabez means "pain" or "sorrow"—his mother having named him this because she bore him "in pain," that is, "in Jabez." What would have motivated a mother to give her newborn child such a name? It must have been something more than the common physical pain of childbirth. More likely, her life must have been such that she perceived the addition of this child would bring great hardship or difficulty. Perhaps she was in financial straits. As the account says that Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, it may be that she already had sons who had caused problems and feared Jabez would do the same.

Whatever the case, Jabez probably did not have an easy life. Can you imagine growing up with a name like Pain or Sorrow? The teasing from peers would have been relentless. Worse, in Middle Eastern society of that day a name was thought to be a meaningful determiner of destiny. His life was "marked out," so to speak, by his name. He would have been expected to be a perpetual source of pain. And this is not to mention the difficult family situation of growing up with a mother who would give such a name to her child and the dreary circumstances that would have provoked it.

All that being said, Jabez responded to his situation with more honor than the rest of his family. There is only one way out of a nowhere life—and Jabez realized it. So what did he do? Let's notice the prayer of Jabez.

1. *He called on the God of Israel.* Before we can even begin to deal with whatever difficult situation we find ourselves in, it is vital that we recognize that there is only One who can ultimately help us—the God of Israel. Jabez was part of the covenant nation of Israel and called on the nation's God—the only true God. Perhaps he knew the story of Jacob wrestling with God, not letting go until God blessed him and thereby receiving the name Israel, "Prevailer With God." We should recognize that Jabez probably did not just call on God on one afternoon. His prayer was likely a regular one to God—pleading with Him to deliver him from his life's circumstances. And it was probably uttered in various sincere ways, not recited as some kind of mantra.

2. *He prayed earnestly for God to truly bless him.* He said, "Oh, that You *would...*," expressing a great desire. And he did not just ask to be blessed, but to be blessed *indeed*—that is, really and truly blessed. While this might have included physical substance, this is not stated. It probably included spiritual well being. Most likely, he was asking God to bless Him in every way possible, trusting that God would do it. Some

would perceive this as selfish, but we shouldn't jump to that conclusion. As God says that Jabez was honorable it is likely that he was a service-oriented person, seeking the means and opportunity to better serve God and others. Moreover, God says we are to pray to Him for those things we need and desire. The point is that, in praying to Him, we recognize God as the One who is able to fill our wants and needs—and we trust Him to do so.

3. *He prayed for God to increase his boundaries.* His plea to God to "enlarge my territory" makes it look like Jabez's desire was for land and wealth. But the word can be translated territory, boundary, border or coast. It was more likely a request for God to increase the boundaries of his life—to extend his limits beyond those in which he had been confined. Of course, it may have concerned his physical means. Perhaps it involved the recovery of a squandered family inheritance. We can all ask God to increase our affluence, grow our business or extend our influence—if our goal is to serve Him and others. We should all want to be more and do more for God and to have the physical means to do more for others. Only He can give us the means to accomplish this.

4. *He prayed for God's help and direction.* In asking for God's hand to be with him, Jabez recognized that he could not go it alone. He had asked for great blessings and an extension of boundaries. Humanly, he would not even be able to handle this. That's why he needed God's guidance and power to enable him to meet the demands of the blessings and boundaries for which he was asking. He realized his total dependence on God.

5. *He prayed to be kept from evil.* The Hebrew word translated "evil" has a broader meaning than malicious acts we commit or that are committed against us. A more appropriate translation in this context would be "afflictions" or "adversities"—any bad circumstances in life that adversely affect us and our loved ones. We should always be

mindful of the need for God's protection and not take it for granted. This is quite like Jesus' instruction that we pray, "Deliver us from evil." We are asking God to protect us from those evil forces and circumstances that would harm us—especially the evil *one*, Satan the devil, this society over which he reigns, and our own corrupt natures which he has influenced.

6. *He prayed to not be a source of harm to others.* This man who had grown up with a reputation for having caused pain to his mother and a name from her seemingly destining him to be a source of pain wanted no more of it. He wanted to escape. More importantly, he simply did not want to hurt others. This was an attitude of loving one's neighbor. As Romans 13:10 says, "Love does no harm to a neighbor..." Indeed, the verse goes on to say that fulfilling God's law is love—as His law forbids harming others. We see here that Jabez had an attitude of living by God's law and covenant. It was this more than His nationality that gave him the right to call on the covenant God of his nation.

So we see it isn't a matter of saying certain words in prayer, but rather of having the right heart or character. When we seek the right heart, living the way we understand God wants us to live, the "right" words will come when we talk with Him in prayer. God blesses the person with the right heart, not the one who utters a "magic prayer."

Jabez prayed his heartfelt, desperate prayer for great blessing and a changed, hope-filled life...and something remarkable happened: "So God granted him what he requested" (1 Chronicles 4:10). This should fill us all with hope and faith. As the late U.S. President Ronald Reagan once stated, "There is nothing impossible for man, if he will only join himself in prayer to God!"

Interestingly, the name Jabez appears in only one other place in Scripture—two chapters earlier in 2:55 as the name of a place where

the scribes dwelt. It could be that the Jabez of chapter 4 acquired this land as part of the answer to his prayer and then used it in God's service.

Verse 11 of chapter 4 recommences with the genealogies so matter-of-factly that many do not even notice the remarkable two verses prior.”
[END]

I don't have anything additional to add.

Day 266 - SATURDAY: October 21st

1 Samuel 1

Book Overview: The UCG reading program's overview of this book states: "After Judges, the next books of the Prophets section of the Hebrew Bible are Samuel and Kings. We will read Samuel and Kings and the rest of the Prophets in harmony with most of Chronicles and with certain other Old Testament writings, such as some of the Psalms. Though Chronicles also belongs to the Writings—in fact, concludes that section—most of it overlaps Samuel and Kings in great detail. Therefore, a harmony of these books will give us a more complete picture of what happened during this period of time. (The genealogies at the beginning of Chronicles will be read with the Writings section.)

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book in the Hebrew canon. Samuel certainly wrote parts of the book bearing his name. In 1 Chronicles 29:29 he is mentioned as an author. However, he is dead after 1 Samuel 24 (his death is recorded in 1 Samuel 25:1). According to Jewish tradition, Nathan and Gad were the other authors. *The Nelson Study Bible* points out in its introduction to 1 Samuel that "another editor at a later date could have taken the memoirs of Samuel, Nathan, Gad, and others and woven them under the guidance of the Holy Spirit into the wonderfully unified book we have today." It further points out in its introduction to 2 Samuel: "Indeed, some notes may have been

added even after the division of the monarchy in 930 b.c. (1 Sam. 27:6). In the absence of any reference to the fall of Samaria, the capital of the northern Kingdom, it is reasonable to assume that the books were complete by 722 b.c. The majority of composition of the Books of Samuel may have been done during David and Solomon's reigns (c. 1010-930 b.c.), with only a small number of notations coming from later periods."

Then we come to 1 and 2 Kings, which were also originally one book, a compilation of a nearly 400-year period. Though its authorship is contested by some scholars today, Jewish tradition maintains that the prophet Jeremiah wrote 1 and 2 Kings. The author was at least a contemporary of Jeremiah. Other records would have to have been available to the author—among them "the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" (1 Kings 14:29), "the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" (verse 19), "the Chronicles of King David" (1 Chronicles 27:24), "the Chronicles of Samuel the seer" (29:29).

The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles were also one book originally. *Nelson's* introduction states: "The overall consistency of style in the book indicates that although several contributors might have worked on it at various stages, one editor shaped the final product. Jewish tradition identifies the editor as Ezra... [a view that] can be accepted if it is remembered that Ezra was a compiler. He used sources and documents that account for the stylistic differences between the Book of Ezra and Chronicles.... The chronicler made use of the books of Samuel and Kings for about half the narrative." Thus our decision to read the accounts contained within them in harmony.

As the book of 1 Samuel opens, Eli the priest is judging Israel (1 Samuel 4:18). As we shall see, his judgeship has some problems. God has determined to use a transitional figure as a prophet-judge in Eli's place,

who will also be used to anoint the first two kings of Israel as the nation moves into the period of the monarchy.”

Chapter 1:

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “Verse 1 refers to Elkanah, the father of Samuel, as an Ephraimite (Ephrathite in the KJV), and further adds that he dwelt in the mountains of Ephraim. He is from the town of Ramah, introduced here by its full name Ramathaim-Zophim (see verse 19). Ramathaim is rendered in the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament as Arimathaim, which would seem to make it synonymous with the New Testament Arimathea—the home of *Joseph* of Arimathea, who gave his tomb to be Jesus Christ's burial place. In Joshua 18:25, a Ramah is listed as a town in the territory of Benjamin, located about 5 miles north of Jerusalem and about 4 miles south of the Benjamite border with Ephraim. This is probably the same town, in the mountainous area that mostly belonged to Ephraim. Also, cities sometimes overlapped with another tribe's rural territory and Ephraim may have claimed it at this time (compare Joshua 16:8-9). However, Elkanah was clearly a Levite, as his genealogy in 1 Chronicles 6:33-38 points out. Levites had no territory of their own, and Elkanah is apparently being identified here by his place of residence, rather than by his ancestral tribe.

Note also in this genealogy that Samuel was a direct descendant of Korah—the same Korah who died along with his companions and his companions' immediate families for their presumptuous attempt to expropriate priestly duties (see Numbers 16:10). Korah, first cousin to Moses and Aaron (see Exodus 6:18-21), was probably about the same age as Moses, and his sons were likely well along in years with families of their own at the time of the rebellion. Apparently Korah's sons did not participate in their father's sin, for it is clear they did not die with him (see Numbers 26:9-11). It seems ironic that his descendant Samuel

apparently ended up exercising certain priestly duties in his obedience and faithfulness to God—some of the duties Korah died trying to usurp.

Elkanah journeys to the tabernacle at Shiloh yearly to worship and sacrifice (1 Samuel 1:3, 7, 21; 2:19). This was undoubtedly referring to Passover, as this was the only time the people were required to bring a sacrifice. At one of these visits, Hannah, who was barren, prays for a son. Part of her vow was that "no razor shall come upon his head" (1 Samuel 1:11), indicating that Samuel would be a Nazirite from birth (compare Numbers 6:2-6), as Samson was (see Judges 13:5)." [END]

Verse 6 – Here again we see the terrible impact of multiple wives on a family. Time and time again it brought terrible consequences.

Verse 11 – It's sometimes in our lowest moments that we resort to bartering or making oaths to God. Remember that God always expects us to keep our word to Him.

Verse 24 – Regarding the NKJV stating that she brought "three bulls", the Adam Clarke commentary states: "The Septuagint, the Syriac, and the Arabic, read, a bullock of three years old; and this is probably correct, because we read, 1Sa 1:25, that they slew את הפר eth happar, The bullock. We hear of no more, and we know that a bullock or heifer of three years old was ordinarily used, see Gen 15:9."

The JFB commentary also agrees with this assessment.

Several other commentaries believe it was in fact 3 bulls. The Benson commentary states: "As they were not to appear before the Lord empty, so upon this occasion they brought an ample offering to him, to testify their gratitude. And it is highly probable that one of these bullocks was wholly offered to God as a burnt-offering, and the other two were peace-offerings; or, as some rather think, one a sin-offering, and the other a peace-offering" The John Gill commentary states: "she

took him up with her; to the tabernacle at Shiloh, at a yearly festival: with three bullocks; for three sorts of offerings, burnt offering, sin offering, and peace offering; or since one only is spoken of as slain, that is, for sacrifice, the other two might be for food to entertain her family and friends with while there; or as a present to the high priest, to whose care she committed her son:"