



Weekly Bible Study Resources

Bible Characters for Your Weekly Bible Study

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For week of August 8 - 14, 2011

SUBJECT: SOUL

Haworth-Booth, Ben., “Awake, My Soul,” POEM, Journal, Vol. 24 (May 1906), p. 84.

GIVER of all good gifts, I thee implore:
Open the eyes that still are closed and blind,
Enlarge our hearts to know thee more and more
The Soul and source of all,—eternal Mind,—
The Father, Mother, God of all mankind.

O Love divine, that holdest in thine hand
This orb'd earth, the countless stars of light,
How can I hope to come and take my stand
Immaculate and sinless in thy sight!
'Tis Love alone can wash my garment white....

When I awake in thee, the psalmist sings,—
I shall be satisfied, when I awake
After thy likeness. See the glimmerings
And flecks of rosy-fingered morning break
Over the fading stars! Awake, my soul, awake!

SECTIONS II-V: The story of Ruth

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: ‘Given the uncertainty about dating the composition of Ruth, authorship can hardly be determined.’ (Interpretation series) “Jewish tradition credits Samuel as the author, which is plausible since he did not die (I Sam. 25:1) until after he had anointed David as God’s chosen king (I Sam. 16:6-13).” (MacArthur Bible Commentary) Probably written c. 1000 BC.

“This short book tells the story of a widow whose devotion to her mother-in-law, faith in God, and integrity in the face of hostile circumstances were recognized and rewarded by God.” (Complete Bible Handbook) “Ruth is a story of love, devotion, and redemption set in the distressing context of the period of the judges.” (Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps)

Elimelech	=	Naomi			
Mahlon	=	Ruth (a virtuous woman)	=	Boaz	
				Obed	= Unknown
				Jesse	= <u>Nitzevet</u>
				David	= Maacah
					Tamar = Judah
					Pharez
Chilion	=	Orpah			

Elimelech: [Ē lim'uh leck] (“my God is king”)

“Elimelech was an Ephrathite clan member who emigrated to Moab [**modern Jordan**] when a great famine broke out in Bethlehem of Judah during the period of the judges.” (HarperCollins Dictionary) “That Elimelech would go to Moab demonstrates the severity of the famine and his own desperation.” (All the People of the Bible)

“After his death, his two sons married local women. The ensuing story is narrated in the book named after Ruth, one of Elimelech’s daughters-in-law.” (HarperCollins Dictionary)

Naomi: [Nā ō'mē] (“pleasant, my joy”)

Naomi was the wife of Elimelech and mother-in-law of Ruth, probably in the time of Gideon. Naomi left Judea [**central Israel/West Bank**] with her husband and two sons, in a time of famine, and went to the land of Moab [**Jordan**]. Here her husband and sons died. She later returned to Bethlehem with Ruth.

“Naomi’s prominence continues [in chapter 2]. Her name...links her to a wealthy kinsman named Boaz.” (Women in Scripture) Naomi advised Ruth to work for him and to seek his favor. When Boaz and Ruth eventually married, they had a son, whom they named Obed.

“The story of the bond between Naomi and Ruth has become a paradigm of filial love.” (All the People in the Bible)

Mahlon: [Mah'lahn] (“sickly”)

Mahlon is the elder of Elimelech the Bethlehemite's two sons by Naomi. He married Ruth and died childless, in the land of Moab [**Jordan**].

Ruth: [Rooth] (“friendship”)

“Ruth is the heroine of the book of Ruth. The book is a gripping short story, incorporating folkloric features that make for ease of appreciation as common human experience, as well as distinctive cultural features commending Israel’s theology and ethics.” (Oxford Guide to People & Places)

The story of Ruth is one of constancy and loving cooperation. She was a woman of Moab [**Jordan**] who married Mahlon, one of the two sons of Elimelech and Naomi. It was the custom during those times that a widow would return to her own family after her husband’s death. When Elimelech and Mahlon died, she choose instead to go with Naomi, her mother-in-law, to the land of the Israelites. Her words of devotion to her mother-in-law are often quoted, “*And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:*” (Ruth 1: 16)

After making their way home to Bethlehem, Ruth humbled herself by gleaning in the fields of a wealthy farmer by the name of Boaz. Boaz was attracted to Ruth and married her. In due course, Ruth gave birth to a son, named Obed, and through him Boaz and Ruth become the great-grandparents of King David.

“Her story ends, however, not with the male elders but with the women of Bethlehem (see 1:19). In transferring Ruth’s child to Naomi, they remind her that ‘*your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him*’ (4:14-15).” (All the People of the Bible)

Chilion: [Kil'ē uhn] (“wasting away/the pining one"/Heb. "weakness”)

Chilion is the younger son of Elimelech and Naomi, and husband of Orpah, a Moabite woman. He is Ruth's brother-in-law. Upon his death, Orpah returned to her own people, unlike Ruth.

Orpah: [Oar' pah] (Heb. "nape of the neck")

"Orpah was a Moabitess [a Jordanian], the wife of Chilion. On the death of her husband she accompanied Naomi, her mother-in-law, part of the way to Bethlehem, and then returned to Moab." (Easton Bible Dictionary)

Boaz: [Bō'az] (Heb. "strength")

Boaz was a kinsman of Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, from the tribe of Judah, and the husband of Ruth, Naomi's widowed daughter-in-law. "He was a wealthy and honorable landowner in the town of Bethlehem." (Who Was Who in the Bible) "He was a faithful Jew, and as such would have been careful to obey the laws governing the harvest." (All the People of the Bible) One spring day he went to his barley field, where his servants were reaping the harvest. He noticed that behind them a comely young woman was gleaning the scattered ears left behind by the reapers. He learned on inquiry that was Ruth, the widow of his relative Mahlon, son of Elimelech, and that she had just arrived in Bethlehem from her native land of Moab [Jordan] with her widowed mother-in-law Naomi. Boaz spoke kindly to Ruth and praised her for her devotion to Naomi. He told her to go on gleaning his fields with his servants, where she would not be molested, and invited her to share their food and water.

At the end of the harvest Boaz spent the night on the winnowing floor after the usual feasting. Under Naomi's guidance, Ruth dressed herself in her best clothes and went to lie at the feet of the sleeping Boaz.

Later, Boaz married Ruth. "A son was born to them whom they called Obed. In due course Obed's son, Jesse, became the father of King David, who was therefore the great-grandson of Boaz and Ruth (Book of Ruth; I Chr 2:11,12)." (Who's Who in the Old Testament)

Obed: [Oh'bid] (serving; worshipping)

"Obed was a son of Boaz and Ruth, the grandfather of David, and an ancestor of Jesus." (Who Was Who in the Bible) He is "a man about whom there is no story in the Bible apart from the record of his birth to Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 4:13-22)." (HarperCollins Dictionary)

Jesse: [Jěs'ê] ("firm", or "a gift")

Jesse was "the grandson of Boaz (Ru 4 22; Mt 1 5), and, apparently, a prominent inhabitant of Bethlehem." (Funk and Wagnalls Dictionary) He was "the father of King David (I Sam 16:18-19) and an ancestor of Jesus. Jesse was the father of eight sons—Eliab, Abinadab, Shimea (Shammah), Nethanel, Raddai, Ozem, Elihu, and David—and two daughters, Zeruah and Abigail (I Chron 2: 13-16)." (Who Was Who in the Bible)

David: (See Section VI, below)

Tamar: [Tay'mahr]

“Tamar, whose story is embedded in the ancestor narratives of Genesis, is the ancestress of much of the tribe of Judah and, in particular, of the house of David.” (Women in Scripture)

Tamar was the wife of Er, first son of Judah. According to Levite custom, she was to become the wife of Er's brother, Onan, upon Er's death. Onan refused to marry her, and died. After Onan died, Shelah, Jacob's third son, should have married Tamar; their first child would have been regarded as his brother's and would have carried on his name. However, Judah withheld Shelah from marrying Tamar. Undaunted, Tamar disguised herself as a harlot and offered herself to Judah. Twin sons, Perez (Pharez) and Zerah were born of their union.

Pharez: [Pir'ez] (“breakthrough”)

“The firstborn of the twin sons of Judah by Tamar (Gen 38:29). Perez was an ancestor of David and Jesus (Ruth 4:12,18; Matt 1:3; Luke 3:33).” (Who Was Who in the Bible) His family appears “to have been a family of importance for many centuries.” (Peloubet's Dictionary)

Elimelech and family move to Moab. After a famine and his death, Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem (Ruth 1: 1, 3-5, 8, 14-16 and Orpah, 22)

“This introduction to Ruth [vv.1-5] sets in motion the following events (1:6—4:22), which culminate in Obed's birth and his relationship to the Davidic line of [Jesus].” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

“Nothing short of the compulsion of famine could have induced a Hebrew to migrate into this foreign country [*Moab*, v.1] where he would have no right of citizenship, this unclean land where Jehovah could not be worshipped.” (Dummelow Commentary)

“Naomi's initiative [vv.6-13] marks a new beginning. But the real initiative is YHWH's in showing his care for his people by ‘giving them food (v.6). (Oxford Bible Commentary)

“This title [*Ruth, the Moabitess*, v.22] also appears at 2:2, 21; 4:5,10. Ruth stands out as a foretaste of future Gentile conversions (cf. Rom. 11).” (MacArthur Bible Commentary) The *barley harvest* is “normally the middle to the end of April.” (Ibid)

Stopfel, Virginia (Bible researcher), "**Biblical women: portraits of our heritage**," Part one, Journal, Vol. 116 (March 1998), p. 24.

--...from the very beginning of the Bible and the way it speaks to life, religious life, and church life have been in a male-dominated voice.

--Judaism was a patriarchal society.

--...if there ever was a woman's story in a man's world, it's the story of Ruth.

- It begins with “*a certain man of Bethlehem-judah...*” [Ruth 1:1] And goes on to say that Elimelech and Naomi and their two sons have left Judah for Moab because of famine. Now, Naomi is a fortunate woman indeed. She has a husband and two sons, both married, which promises many grandchildren. But her husband dies; then her two sons die; they are childless, and Naomi is left alone.

What made her valuable as a female, before, is no longer hers. All that remains are two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, widows like herself.

Leishman, Thomas L., “**Ruth and Naomi**,” THE CONTINUITY OF THE BIBLE, Journal, Vol. 84 (November 1966), p. 588.

--Closely associated with “*the days when the judges ruled*” (Ruth 1: 1) in Israel is the vivid account recorded in the book of Ruth in which the leading characters are Ruth herself and her mother-in-law, Naomi.

- Although Naomi and her husband, Elimelech, came originally from Bethlehem in Judah, they and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, had settled in Moab to the east of the Dead Sea, and the two young men had married Moabite wives, named Ruth and Orpah respectively.

--When Naomi decided to return to the land of her birth, Ruth and Orpah offered to accompany her; but while Orpah was eventually dissuaded from doing so, nothing could shake Ruth’s determination and touching constancy.

--Together Ruth and Naomi made their way to Bethlehem, arriving there at the start of the barley harvest.

Boaz receives Ruth in his fields (Ruth 2: 2 [to 1st.], 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 [to :], 11 *It*, 12)

"Two widows, newly at home in Bethlehem after Naomi's ten-year absence, needed the basics of life. Ruth volunteered to go out and glean the fields for food (cf. James 1:27). In so doing, she unintentionally went to the field of Boaz, a close family relative, where she found great favor in his sight." [vv.1-23] (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"The Mosaic Law commanded that the harvest should not be reaped to the corners nor the gleanings picked up (Lev 19:9,10). Gleanings [v.2] were stalks of grain left after the first cutting (cf. 2: 3,7,8,15,17)." (Ibid)

“*Full reward* [v.12] denotes completion and perfection. Boaz asks God not to shortchange Ruth or cheat her out of what should be hers. Boaz believes that God is obligated to reward those who seek refuge under God’s wings (Ps. 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 91:4; cf. Deut 32:11).” (Theological Bible Commentary)

Flamand, Josette, “**The story of Ruth**,” INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE: For Kids, Sentinel (29 June 1998), p. 19. (**puzzle**)

--The two women arrived in Bethlehem in the spring, during the barley harvest.

- Barley was used as flour for making bread and was harvested by hand with sickles.

- Ruth asked her mother-in-law for permission to glean food for the two of them.

--In the morning, Ruth went to glean in a field.

- She did not know that the field was owned by a man named Boaz, who had been related to Naomi’s husband.

- When Boaz found out who Ruth was and heard that she had gleaned for hours in the hot sun with hardly any rest, he talked kindly with her.

- He told her that she could continue to glean in his fields, and he invited her to drink his reapers’ water and to share their meal.

Gilbreath, William S., “**Protection and Justice**,” *Sentinel*, Vol. 11 (6 March 1909), p. 524.

--In the 2d chapter of Ruth I find these good words: "*The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.*"

- We trust in the Lord God of Israel, knowing that He led our fathers, and this trust is in one sense a prayer, for we as Christian Scientists know our prayers to be a continual affirmation of God's goodness; therefore we can affirm continually that He will recompense our work.

---As an element of justice seems to enter into the case, we must remember that the Bible is continually declaring God's justice and judgment....

--..."*Our statute is spiritual, our Government is divine. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'*" (Science and Health, p. 442).

- Speaking of our toil, the apostle James says, "*Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*"

Ruth's interaction with Boaz (Ruth 3: 11, 12, 13 if [to 2nd :])

"Boaz next speaks of God, employing the language of blessing, when he awakes to find Ruth at his feet (Ruth 3:10). Boaz expresses a belief in blessing as a reward for obedience." (Theological Bible Commentary)

"Ruth clearly feels safe with Boaz. In this encounter with him she abandons the servile demeanor that characterized their first meeting." (Eerdmans Commentary)

Coate, Lloyd B. (CS), “**The Stranger within Our Gates**,” *Sentinel*, Vol. 21 (10 May 1919), p. 703.

--Mrs. Eddy wrote (p. 266): "*Would existence without personal friends be to you a blank? Then the time will come when you will be solitary, left without sympathy; but this seeming vacuum is already filled with divine Love. When this hour of development comes, even if you cling to a sense of personal joys, spiritual Love will force you to accept what best promotes your growth.*" Mrs. Eddy bore witness to the fact that this prophecy had been fulfilled in her experience and its blessings realized.

--And what were these experiences that came to patriarchs, prophets, and to other good men and women? Were they not proofs of the operation of the law of God which lovingly compels all "*to exchange the pleasures and pains of sense for the joys of Soul*" (Science and Health, p. 390)?

--The Bible contains many object lessons and illustrations which Christian Science illumines.

- It is interesting to note how the children of Israel were admonished to treat the stranger in their midst. They were commanded to love the stranger, but never to oppress or vex him; never to oppress the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, but give them food and raiment when in need. One of the striking Bible illustrations of the operation of this law of love is recorded in the experience of Ruth, who gleaned in the fields of Boaz.

Householder, Emily, “**Ruth, the Moabitess**,” POEM, *Sentinel*, Vol. 20 (17 November 1917), p. 229.

To follow Truth, and leave the seeming all
For paths untried in erstwhile alien mead,
And see unlesened penalty from ripe harvest fall,
Annul the law, by sweat of brow shall be thy bread.

To glean with joy for every hope deferred

The precious sheaf of dauntless, patient trust;
To find in every thwarted aim the purpose stored,
Is answered prayer, replete and just;

To bring these treasures to Love's threshing floor,
Where tares nor moth nor mildew e'er can come,
Is garnered substance, full to running o'er,--
Is kingdom, heaven, and home.

Boaz redeems Ruth (Ruth 4: 1 [to :] 3, 4-6 *If* [to :], 9, 11, 12)

“As the women wait, the men, in typical patriarchal fashion ignore them and concentrate on the dead man Elimelech's land (4:3-4).” (Eerdman's Commentary)

Then went Boaz up to the gate, v.1: “Apparently the threshing floor was below the level of the gate. Compare Ruth 3:3, ‘go down to the threshing floor.’” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

“God is mentioned by the townspeople at the end of the transaction between Boaz and another kinsman. They petition God to grant offspring to Ruth, thereby building up Naomi's ‘house,’ or family (4:11-12). The people affirm the belief that offspring are the result of divine action. And, indeed, this is the case. The only direct action that God takes in the entire book is to cause Ruth to conceive (4:13).” (Theological Bible Commentary)

Leishman, Thomas L., “**Ruth the Moabitess**,” *Journal*, Vol. 61 (July 1943), p. 411.

--The sequel to this encounter in the harvest field gives us an illuminating insight into an ancient Hebrew custom regarding marriage, in accordance with which the brother or nearest male relative of a man who had died, was expected to marry his widow, unless he formally relinquished his status in favor of someone else.

- Thus while Boaz was a kinsman of Ruth's former husband, and was anxious to marry her himself, he could not do so without the permission of a still closer relative.

--The interesting ceremony by which the permission referred to was both sought and granted was of course, performed at the city gate, at which in those days all official business was transacted, and when the requisite regulations had been fulfilled, as recorded in the fourth chapter of the book of Ruth, “*Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife*” (4:13), receiving the cordial blessing of the community upon this union.

Stone, W. Taylor, “**The Threshing Floor**,” *Journal*, Vol. 34 (February 1917), p. 613.

--AS mentioned in Scripture the threshing floor is typical of the point where the accumulated result of patience and industry is gathered, and where the good and useful is separated from the bad and useless.

- It is a metaphor freely used in the Bible and is synonymous with purification, as every Bible student is aware.

--How little did the sorrowing Ruth, a beautiful type of devotion and purity, realize as she walked with broken-hearted Naomi what immense issues were involved in that journey, and that each step was bringing her nearer and nearer to that point where divine wisdom and Love would reveal to her that she was to take part in forming the connecting link in the "chain of scientific being."

- She was advancing to that point where the belief of material generation would be separated from the spiritual understanding of the divine order.

A virtuous woman: her worth and her witnesses (Prov 31: 10-12, 25, 26, 28, 31)

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: "Proverbs was not assembled in its final form until Hezekiah's day [744-698 BC] or thereafter." (MacArthur Bible Commentary) Chapter 31 reflects "the words of Lemuel [King of Massa], who perhaps was Solomon." (Ibid)

"Most of the references to women and their role in society that have appeared earlier in Proverbs have been of a markedly negative character. Predominantly in chs. 1-9 the threat the young men posed by the 'unattached,' or 'loose,' woman is given prominence." (Eerdmans Commentary)

This passage from Proverbs is also referred to as "The Good Wife. These verses are in the form of an acrostic poem in which each one begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. As characterized in the poem, the good wife is an industrious housewife; a shrewd businesswoman; an enterprising trader; a generous benefactor (v.20); and a wise teacher (v.26). Her husband has complete confidence in her, since he knows that his wealth and his reputation are safe in her hands (vv.11-12)." (Oxford Bible Commentary)

Who can find a virtuous woman?, v. 10: "The Hebrew *chayil* is translated in other places as strong, wealthy, and able. Literally, the question asks, Who can find a fine wife?" (King James Bible Commentary)

"Verse 29 reads literally 'many daughters,' rather than the 'many women' usually rendered." (HarperCollins Bible Commentary)

Smith, J. Woodruff, "**Appreciating Spiritual Womanhood**," *Sentinel*, Vol. 42 (27 April 1940), p. 686.

--It is regrettable that the world generally considers the qualities of womanhood to be weak.

- True womanhood naturally bears fruit in gentleness, intuition, tenderness, loving forbearance and forgiveness, faith in good.

---Surely there is nothing so strong, so noble, as an all-forgiving love, a gentle but unyielding insistence upon right, held to in the face of apparently insurmountable odds!

--Few there must be who would deny that those individuals have served humanity best who have expressed qualities of true womanhood.

--Let us be faithful to our beloved Leader's vision by bringing out the true spiritual idea of both manhood and womanhood; for this will manumit mortals from misunderstanding, fear, hate, war, and establish the kingdom of heaven, harmony, and brotherly love upon this earth.

God rewards Boaz and Ruth with a son (Ruth 4: 13, 14, 16, 17)

SECTION VI: King David's righteous branch; a reference to the coming Messiah (Jer 23: 5)

RELATED SCRIPTURE: Isa 4:2; 11:1-5; Jer 33:15,16; Zech 3:8; 6:12,13

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: Dictated by Jeremiah to the scribe, Baruch, c. 600 BC.

"Jeremiah uses this introductory formula [*Behold the days come*, v.5] fourteen times in the book to prepare a message of hope for the future." (King James Bible Commentary)

"The Messiah is pictured as a branch [v.5] (lit. 'shoot') out of David's family tree, who will rule over God's people in the future." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

David
[Dā'vid] (“beloved”)

(Abbreviated)

“David is one of the most enigmatic characters in the Bible. He is honored as...the root from whom the Messiah would come, and the key to Jesus’ ancestry.” (All the People in the Bible) David exhibited many roles during his lifetime: warrior, fugitive hero, King of Judah, King of Israel, musician, and ancestor of Jesus. He was the second king of Israel, who enlarged the kingdom, moved the capital to Jerusalem, and strengthened the armed forces. In later times, David was looked on as the ideal ruler who would return, or it was believed that a descendant of his would arise, to restore the kingdom of Israel. His life may be divided into three portions:

His youth before his introduction to the court of Saul; his relations with Saul; his reign.

"David’s story emerges primarily in the books of Samuel, concluding in I Kings chapters 1 and 2." (Oxford Guide to People & Places) "1 and 2 Chronicles offer quite a different version of David's life. This work is later than Samuel-Kings, composed perhaps in the fifth century [BC], and draws upon a version of those books which it revises and supplements." (Ibid)

Knott, Mrs. Annie Macmillan (CSD, Lecturer, Assistant Editor, Associate Editor, Trustee, Bible Lesson Committee, and Director), “**An Everlasting King**,” EDITORIAL, Journal, Vol. 36 (9 December 1918), p. 455.

--AT the dawn of the world's first Christmas we read that the wise men from the East came to Jerusalem and inquired there for the newly born King of the Jews.

- We all know the story as given in the second chapter of Matthew, and we see how little Herod's duplicity and savagery availed to save himself or his dynasty, for there was not a single quality within the range of his thought which had any relation to the "everlasting king" of Jeremiah's prophecy,—the "*King of nations*,"—whose kingship endures whether men recognize it or not.

---In commenting upon the appearing of the Christ-idea through "*the Bethlehem babe*," Mrs. Eddy says in "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" (Pref p. vii), "*The Wisemen were led to behold and to follow this daystar of divine Science, lighting the way to eternal harmony.*"

--When the angel announced to Mary the coming of Jesus, the announcement held this promise: "*The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*"

Weeks, Harold Taylor, “**The Key of David**,” Sentinel, Vol. 63 (6 May 1961), p. 754.

--That portion of Science and Health which Mrs. Eddy terms Key to the Scriptures is introduced by a passage from Revelation which reads (3:7,8), "*These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.*"

- In her writings, our Leader employs the figure of a key as it is used in the above passage to symbolize the bringing of spiritual understanding to mankind.

---In Science and Health she writes (p.99): "*Truth has furnished the key to the kingdom, and with this key Christian Science has opened the door of the human understanding. None may pick the lock nor enter by some other door.*"

--The figure of the key may also be used to symbolize the locking of the door of thought to error.

- Christian Science teaches that this locking out of error with truth first requires the detection of error.

--For one who, like our Master, has toiled for and won "*the spiritually indispensable*," who has in his hand the key of David, the promise of John's exalted vision still stands, "*Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.*"

The healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter (Matt 15: 21-28)

PARALLEL GOSPEL: Mark 7: 25-30

TIME LINE: The Year of Opposition and Development (Jesus' 3rd year of ministry), summer 29 AD in the region of Tyre and Sidon; then to Galilee.

This event "followed the death of John the Baptist and further rejection by the religious leadership of Israel. Thus, Jesus actually left the country and went into parts of Tyre and Sidon [v.21] leaving Herod's jurisdiction to retire to Phoenicia for a time of seclusion which was interrupted by the woman of Canaan." (King James Bible Commentary)

"How did [the woman] know that Jesus was descended from David [*thou son of David*, v.22]?...Probably because the fame of Jesus, and the popular title by which [he] was known, had spread far beyond the confines of Galilee." (Dummelow Commentary)

His first response was silence [*he answered her not a word*, v.23], which would have been considered the proper response according to Jewish custom and not rude at all.

"By children [vv.26-28] the Lord means Jews, and by dogs, Gentiles. Our Lord's attitude was intended to test the woman's faith, which was rewarded by a miraculous healing." (King James Bible Commentary) "The lost sheep of the house of Israel must be fed before the 'little dogs.'" (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"This miracle is interesting as one of the rare cases in which the ministrations of Jesus were extended to a pure heathen." (Dummelow Commentary)

"a woman of Canaan"/The Syrophœnician Woman

"In contrast to the tradition-rooted opposition of the Jerusalemites stands the faithful persistence of a Canaanite woman, the only person in the Gospel to best Jesus in a verbal contest (15:22-28). Her great faith compels Jesus for a moment to loosen his focus on the people of Israel, so that her daughter can be healed." (Theological Bible Commentary)

"...Mark calls her 'a Greek, a Syrophœnician by race'; i.e. she spoke Greek, but belonged by race to those Syrians who dwelt in Phœnicia. The Phœnicians were of Canaanite descent." (Dummelow Commentary) "There is no contradiction here because the term Greek was commonly used to distinguish Gentiles from Jews." (All the Women of the Bible)

"Like Mark, Matthew omits the woman's name; rather than an indication of sexism, anonymity is characteristic of those for whom Jesus performs mighty works." (Women in Scripture)

"Although she is a pagan from a faraway place and probably has been fully absorbed by the care of her child, she has "heard about" Jesus." (Women in the New Testament) She asked Jesus to heal her daughter who was "vexed with the devil." The Jews had been bidden to exterminate her nation, and was therefore more hateful than an ordinary heathen. However, "this woman is humble. She is willing to be called a dog, and to acknowledge the Jews as masters." (Dummelow) Jesus granted her request.

"her daughter"

"Unnamed, like most beneficiaries of Jesus' miracles, the daughter is 'severely possessed' (15:22; contrast Mark 7:25's 'unclean spirit'; Matthew avoids implications of impurity). Like the 'ruler's' daughter (9:18-26) and epileptic boy (17:14-20), she requires parental intercession; a Gentile, like the centurion's son or servant (8:5-13)...." (Women in Scripture) "She was healed instantaneously by Jesus, though [he] did not even see her." (All of the Women in the Bible)

Dean, John M., "**Absent Treatment**," *Journal*, Vol. 32 (January 1915), p. 583.

--It may be a surprising statement to make, but the weight of evidence justifies the conclusion that all the Christian churches, theoretically at least, believe in absent treatment and teach its practice to their adherents. True, in this as in their teaching and practice regarding prayer for those present in the body, their belief in healing usually extends to sin only, and takes no note of physical disease; though if it be true that God can heal the sinner afar off, it must also be true that the same rule will apply to the healing of the sick, provided it is once conceded that He can and does heal sickness through the spiritual understanding of the practitioner who is present with the patient.

--It must, then, be plain that if God can heal the sick or sinning at hand, He can by the same token heal the sick and the sinning afar off, else His omnipotence and omnipresence are myths and the Bible needs to be rewritten.

• "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?...neither...height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Hastings, Fanny DeGroot, "**Son of David**," POEM, *Journal* (Vol. 57, 1939), p. 130.

She came to him because her child was mad,
Grievously vexed with devils, and she had
The lovely sanity to disregard
His more exalted titles. Since a bard,
A sweet singer in Israel, you recall,
Once played and sang the madness out of Saul,
She now addressed this heir, this later one,
This instrument of unseen Mind, as son
Of David, and she asked him to restore
Peace to her daughter. Feigning to ignore,
Then testing her and finding faith rock-built,
And being Master of such Soul-filled chords
As never flute or harp resolved, our Lord's
Fair answer came, "Be it...as thou wilt."
And at that hour, though no human hand
Gave sound to strings, the maid could understand.

Andrews, Glenn Nicholas, "**A woman of Canaan**," *Journal*, Vol. 53 (August 1935), p. 282.

--...while [the Canaanite woman] freely confessed what she believed to be the presumptuousness of her claim to the Messianic blessing, she fervently prayed the privilege of partaking of the crumbs which fell from the table.

--In "Miscellaneous Writings" (p.127) Mrs. Eddy gives her followers this assurance: "When a hungry heart petitions the divine Father-Mother God for bread, it is not given a stone,--but more grace, obedience, and love."

--Mortals are turning to Christ, Truth, for surcease and deliverance from conditions which have become burdensome and intolerable.

- And like the Canaanite, many question:

Am I altogether worthy?

May there not be some requisite or condition that I am not able to meet?

---It is a fact that all who seek the healing Christ must become “*poor in spirit*” in order to realize that “*their’s is the kingdom of heaven.*”

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

The Bibliography is provided only in the first Sunday’s Lesson each month.

*The weekly Bible Lessons are made up of selections from the King James Version of the Bible and the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science.

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