

Ir-ot-20
“Thou Art a Virtuous Woman”
(Ruth 1; Samuel 1-2)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(The scriptures say that the price of a virtuous woman is far above rubies. These scriptures contain valuable lessons from the lives of two great and virtuous women. Here too is inspirational background showing their *true* lives had prophetic meaning).

I. The Life of Hannah

- A. What virtues made Hannah so honorable? (Faith in God; willingness to sacrifice (1 Samuel 1:11).
- B. How did Hannah keep her vow after Samuel was born? (She took her son, received from the Lord, back to the Lord, and consecrated him to the Lord) (1 Sam.1:24-28).
- C. Was Hannah bitter or reluctant to keep her promise? (While she must have experienced many heartaches, still she rejoiced in the Lord, knowing Samuel had been a gift from Him. And because she truly loved the Lord, she sought to exalt Him by her gift) (1 Sam. 2:1-2).
- D. How does Hannah’s sacrifice compare to Abraham’s? (While Abraham’s sacrifice of his son was stayed, Hannah’s was not. Though her sacrifice was not of the magnitude of Abraham’s, yet it was great, and fully required).
- E. How is it that she can praise the Lord under the circumstances? (Among other things, because of her sacrifice, Hannah is blessed with other children (2:20-21).
- F. Contrast the sacrifice Hannah makes with the sacrifice many mothers and fathers make in sending their sons and daughters into unknown and even dangerous parts of the world as servants of the Lord today. What similarities are there?
 1. What comforts can we receive through Hannah’s example, in sending our children on missions?
- G. We all know sorrow of some kind or another. Seeing how Hannah dealt with her sorrows can teach us that trusting in the Lord, remaining faithful, and being willing to sacrifice, will eventually bring us great blessings.
 1. For a true story of one who knew Hannah’s sorrows, childlessness, but received great blessings in a different way, see, “Just the Two of Us --- for Now,” by Ardeth G. Kapp, February *Ensign*, 1989.)
 - a. Note that Sister Kapp, while never having children of her own, was called to serve as Young Women’s General President, and had the responsibility of having all the Young Woman as her “children,” to love and care for.

II. Hannah’s life was also prophetic.

- A. Hannah sees that her wondrous “birth after barrenness” foreshadows the birth of the Messiah who will come only after Israel’s long waiting and prayers for Him. (And compare Mary’s rejoicing in Luke 1:46-55. What similar phrasings are there?).
- B. Note Samuel’s and Jesus’ boyhood experiences are also expressed in exactly the same way (1 Sam. 2:26 and Luke 2:52). This verifies Hannah’s and Samuel’s lives are “similitudes; they foreshadowed Jesus the Christ” [See Hosea 12:10].
- C. In what ways was Samuel like Jesus? In what ways was he like Joseph Smith?

I. The Life of Ruth

- A. What virtues made Ruth honorable? (Her faith. Though born outside of Israel and a Gentile, **she chose to follow the true God of Israel**) (Ruth 1:15-16).
- B. Other answers could include love and devotion to Naomi, her sacrifices, her willingness to work, etc.

II. The Prophetic Meaning of the Life of Ruth

- A. Ruth's story is a touching one which verifies the love of the Lord for those outside of Israel, who long to be a part of and are accepted into His house.
- B. Many Biblical scholars see the story of Boaz and Ruth as pointing toward Christ as Bridegroom, with Ruth symbolizing His covenanted people among the Gentiles.
- C. In fact, **the events of Boaz as Bridegroom reveal seven important truths concerning Christ.**

1.The Bridegroom would covenant with those outside Israel.

Boaz observed that Ruth, a Gentile, had accepted Israel's God. He therefore had mercy on her, insuring that **she would receive the gleanings of his harvest. He later brought her under His covenant with all its blessings.** These very events in reality occurred in the Meridian of Time when believing Gentiles began to enter into Christ's Church and make covenants with him (See writings of Paul).

2.The Bridegroom would provide a covering for the bride.

Ruth went to Boaz while asleep, pleading he cover her with his skirt (Ruth 3:1-9). Ruth's request, while inappropriate to us, had special implications. It was a request he marry her.¹ The prophet Ezekiel was one who connected covering with skirts to making one a bride. "...*I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine*" (Ezekiel 16:8). (Note: because of these and other scriptures, it became a tradition for an Israelite bridegroom to drape a portion of his outer clothing over the bride at the wedding ceremony).

Today, **all who faithfully covenant with Christ receive the covering of His atonement.** [One meaning of the word "atonement" in Hebrew means "to cover"]. This means Christ also took upon Himself our nakedness when He took upon Himself our sins. Consider that His skin was shredded through His scourging. He therefore became "Naked" that we might be covered. Furthermore, He bore the shame and humiliation of our Nakedness **upon the cross.** For these reasons, Isaiah prophesied, "By his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

3.The Bridegroom would purchase His bride.

Boaz paid a bride price for Ruth. "Moreover Ruth ... have I purchased to be my wife..." (Ruth 4:10). All those who come into Christ's household are *purchased* through His atonement. **Jesus paid the heaviest of all "bride prices," which all Israelite bridegrooms paid. He paid for us with His Innocence, with His Agony, with His Life and with His shed blood.**

4. The time of union would be at the harvest (Ruth 2:2-5).

Boaz' and Ruth's union occurred at the first harvest of grains. Later, Christ performed His great acts of atonement at the spring harvest of grains, enabling the receptive to become a part of His Household.

5. Ruth's gleaning after the initial harvest taught that the Gentiles would receive the covenants of the gospel only after being first offered to Israel.

Jesus Himself taught that Gentiles would receive the Gospel after the Jews, but then used different imagery. When approached by a Gentile woman asking that her daughter be healed, Jesus' response was that it was not proper to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs. (Jesus did not use the term dogs in a derogatory manner, but meant little pets who are loved.) Whereupon the woman argued that those pets are allowed to eat leftovers from the master's table. Because of her faith, the Savior blessed her (Matthew 15:22-28). From His other teachings we know the Lord always meant the Gospel would go to the Gentiles, *but its timing would be after it was first offered to the House of Israel.*ⁱⁱ

6. Ruth's going to Boaz while he was sleeping was likely a witness that it would be *after Christ's death* that the Gentiles would be taught of Jesus Christ, and many would accept His covenant, that they and their posterity might live!ⁱⁱⁱ

7. In fact, Boaz, in purchasing Ruth, purchased her *“to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off ...”*

- a. Jesus then became the true “Kinsman Redeemer” whom Boaz exemplified. And His redemption would reach to both the Gentiles, *and to all the deceased!*

ⁱ. Daniel I. Block, “Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel,” in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*, ed. Ken M. Campbell (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), pp. 44-45.

ⁱⁱ James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, pp. 355-56. 367

ⁱⁱⁱ For one example see Samuel Mather, *The Figures or Types of the Old Testament* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1969), 65-66. He gives the most detailed argument that brides who came to their bridegrooms while sleeping, specifically Eve to Adam, but this would include Boaz, was a witness of those who would believe in and make their covenants with Christ after His death, *which is almost all of us true followers of Jesus the Christ!*