

## Sabbath School Lesson #11 – Ruth and Esther – 7-13 June 2025

**C**hrist would have us undertake a study of women's work in connection with the cause of God in Old Testament times for lessons that will enable us to meet emergencies in the work today. Of Esther, read, "And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre" (Esther 5:2). We are told, "Through Esther the queen, the Lord accomplished a mighty deliverance for His people. At a time when it seemed that no power could save them, Esther and the women associated with her, by fasting and prayer and prompt action, met the issue and brought salvation to their people" – Ellen White {25LtMs, Lt 22, 1911, par. 4}.

**Sunday: Famine in "The House of Bread"** – Read Ruth 1:1-5; what hardship fell on Naomi and Ruth, and what caused them? How does this reflect the situation that the entire human race now faces? In verse 1 we read that there was famine in Bethlehem of Judah. The subtitle captures the irony: according to Strong's 1035, the word 'Bethlehem' means "place of bread" and verse 1 says there was lack of bread in the place of bread. So, one man and his wife, moved into the land of Moab in search of bread. Throughout history, we see people, even God's people, moving in time of famine to look for bread. We are familiar with famine in our world. But there is another worldwide famine that was foretold is coming.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it" (Amos 8:11-12). There is no record that this prophecy has ever been fulfilled; but it will be fulfilled, as surely as there is a God in heaven, whose Word is truth. Men have not generally cared much about the Word of God; if they had the history of the world would not be such a record of continual apostasy even in Adventism. They have never valued it enough to search for it from sea to sea. But there is coming a time when they will value it enough to seek it far and near, but without success; when they will feel the lack of it as keenly as they feel a famine that deprives them of food for their bodies.

Many in Adventism do not want to hear the truth, they are waiting for their ministers first to embrace the truth. "Are we hoping to see the whole church revived? That time will never come" {RH March 22, 1887, par. 2}. When probation closes suddenly, former Adventists will feel a famine and in agony turn to their ministers: "The people turned upon their ministers with bitter hate and reproached them, saying, "You have not warned us. You told us that all the world was to be converted, and cried, Peace, peace, to quiet every fear that was aroused. You have not told us of this hour; and those who warned us of it you declared to be fanatics and evil men, who would ruin us." But I saw that the ministers did not escape the wrath of God. Their suffering was tenfold greater than that of their people" {EW 282.1}.

It will be a peculiar time when this is so, for ordinarily men will go without the Word of God to the point of spiritual starvation, without feeling any concern. Events will be turned out of their ordinary course. Men "shall seek peace, and there shall be none" (Ezekiel 7:25-26). They will be like Saul. "When Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets" (1 Samuel 18:6). Saul experienced what in Amos 8:11-12 is foretold for the earth in general – a famine for the Word of God. Under distress such as the world has never yet known, men will feel as did Saul the ancient king of Israel.

The experience of Saul will be repeated. As his apostasy ended in distress, so will it now in "a time of trouble, such as never was" (Daniel 12:1). As Saul's mind was in darkness, so now darkness covers the earth, "and gross darkness the people" (Isaiah 60:2). As he sought in vain for some word from the Lord, so will men seek in the time soon coming. As he finally obtained, through the witch of Endor, what he thought was the word of the Lord, so now in the coming famine, men will be driven to seek, as Saul did, to the dead, and through an apparent communication with them will receive that which they will accept as light and truth.

If we receive and hide the Word of the Lord in our hearts, we shall escape the coming famine. We must walk in the light while we have it (John 12:35-36), else it will be darkness (Matthew 6:23). By refusing to let the Word of God shape and control our lives, we are doing

as Saul did, bringing upon ourselves the darkness which came upon him. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Samuel 15:23). The light of God's Word is given us that we may walk in it; not that we may stand still. We must step out upon the Word of God, with faith in its power to hold us up. Then will our pathway be "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18).

**Monday: Ruth and Boaz** – Read Ruth 2:5-20; why is this a pivotal moment in the story? Why do you think Naomi's discovery of the benefactor's identity was such good news? After Naomi had returned to her own land, and her daughter-in-law, Ruth, had returned with her, then Ruth went out into the field of Boaz to glean. When she returned, 19th verse of the 2nd chapter, "And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to day is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen." Boaz was one of the kinsman-redeemers per Levitical law: "If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold" (Leviticus 25:25). That is, Naomi said, this man Boaz is one who is so closely related to us by flesh and blood relationship that according to the Levitical law he can step in and redeem our inheritance that went away from us when we went out into the land of the Moabites.

**Tuesday: Boaz as Redeemer** – Read Ruth 3 and 4; what lesson is taught about not only redeeming Ruth and Naomi but also our redemption? In the third chapter, when Ruth went to lie down in the threshing floor and Boaz made inquiry (9th verse), he said who art thou, and she answered, "I am Ruth, thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid for thou art a near kinsman" – a kinsman-redeemer. When she said, "Thou art a redeemer," she really asked him in that way to redeem their inheritance that was lost by their going out among the Moabites. But he says let us first ask the kinsman who is closer to you than I, if the other does not redeem you, then I will (see verse 12). Now the next day Boaz went up into the gate where all such business was transacted in the Eastern cities. In the fourth chapter, it turned out that the one who was nearer of kin than Boaz did not dare to undertake to redeem the inheritance for Ruth and for Naomi, and so he stood aside and then it fell to Boaz. It was his right then, as being the next of kin, as being the redeemer who dared undertake to redeem the lost inheritance. So, we read in the fourth chapter, fourteenth verse: "Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a kinsman-redeemer. May his name become famous in Israel" (Berean Bible). The book of Ruth gives us an object lesson, it teaches us that Jesus Christ, the redeemer of the lost inheritance, was one near of kin, next of kin, one who of right could redeem, and one who was able to redeem. And Blessed be the Lord. He did not let a redeemer cease from us.

**Wednesday: Haman and Satan** – Read Esther 3:5-15; 5:14; 8:8; what lesson do we learn for the suffering and redemption of God's people? The history of God's people is that the blessings of God have ever been preceded by great affliction. No decree was passed honouring the "Israel of God" in the least, until after Haman had made the gallows upon which to hang Mordecai. It was not until after the three Hebrew children were cast into the furnace of fire that they were promoted in Babylon (Daniel 3:30). It was not until after the Messiah had fasted, and withstood the tempting Devil forty days, that angels were sent to minister to Him (Matthew 4:11). It was not until Paul and Silas had been cruelly beaten, put into jail, and their feet made fast in the stocks, that success crowned their labours in Philippi and Thessalonica. Thus, we find the road to every blessing is strewn with afflictions.

**Thursday: For Such a Time as This** – Read Esther 4:13-14; 5:1-3; 9:20-28; what lessons can we draw from these passages? We owe to God and to His cause all our influence of position, all our responsibility of place, wherever it may be; and when a crisis comes, we are, like the fair queen Esther, to show our faithfulness, trusting in God for the result. It was for just such a time as this that she was brought to that place, and now if she should fail in her responsibility, she would show herself entirely unworthy of the place. And so, it is ever. God's gifts are not for nothing. He expects them to be used for His glory.