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The Book of Ruth

.... the story of Ruth the Moabite ?

Here is the surprising truth about the identity of a young Israelitish widow Ruth, the central figure of the Book of Ruth, of the Bible. Ruth was not a Moabite.

Why is the identity of this woman important? How does this relate to our time or to Christianity? The answer to these questions and more, you will find as the truth unfolds about this amazing woman of the Bible.

Historical perspective: Ruth lived in "the land of Moab", which had been conquered several generations earlier, at the time of Joshua, by the Israelites. They had killed all the Moabites and Ammonites north of the Arnon river, and it became Israelite territory. Ruth was not racially a Moabite.

The Controversy of Race and the Lineage of Christ

The nationality of [Jesus Christ](#) has become obscured, by controversy. Four of the women in Matthew's [account](#) of Christ's lineage are said to be Gentiles, by both Jewish and Christian theologians. These women are Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba. Recently, Christ's nationality has been the focus of controversy. On March 29, 1997, The Vancouver Sun, Saturday Review, G4, had an article "The Many Faces of Jesus". He was depicted as being both Negro and Caucasian. A little confusing?

In a book, "Beyond Roots: In Search of Blacks In The Bible", a black American author argued that a white Jesus had to be invented because He was useful to white slave masters. The author said that, far from being the white, European-looking man of popular imagery, Jesus was definitely middle eastern in appearance, and could even have been of African descent.

The Executive Director of a group called Men Enhancing Community Cultural Awareness, based in Gary, Indiana, declared that it is actually harmful to depict Jesus as white. He feels that this causes psychological damage to black peoples.

In this age of being politically correct, it is easy to see how the "white Jesus" of established Christianity is under attack. The colour of His skin has taken precedence over the strength of His message.

In his book, "Mystery of The Ages", the late evangelist Herbert W. Armstrong made several striking statements on this issue. He wrote: "Jesus Christ was born of the tribe of Judah, and it was necessary that He be of the original pure racial strain, even as Noah was" (page 173, hard copy edition). He further wrote: "God's chosen nation Israel was white. Jesus was white" (page 148, hard copy edition).

What is the truth? Was Jesus a Jew? Was He white? Can anything about this issue be found and proven from the pages of your Bible?

The specific purpose of this article is to take the story of one of Christ's ancestors, Ruth, and make plain what the Bible says about the lineage of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

The Dilemma of Race and Israelite Inheritance in the Book of Ruth

It has always been a DILEMMA, that God would allow a GENTILE - a racial Moabite - to alter the family tree of the Messiah. It was strictly FORBIDDEN for any Israelite to marry a Moabite FOREVER: "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the congregation of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the congregation of the Lord FOREVER". (Deuteronomy 23:3) This is a real problem for the Royal House of Judah. The truth of the matter is, God would never instruct His people NOT to allow a Moabite into the congregation, and then leave us an example of doing just the opposite, especially within the Jewish Royal Family. God does not say one thing and do another. God DOES NOT LIE!

The simple fact is that God kept the lineage of the coming Messiah pure up to the time of Noah. For we read in Genesis 6:9, "Noah was a just man, PERFECT IN HIS GENERATIONS."

The Hebrew could easily be translated: "undefiled in his

descent", in what is a clear reference to his family tree.

It is interesting that the term Semitic goes back to the time of Noah. A Shemite is the origin of the term Semite, where we get the modern derivation "Semitic". It comes from Noah's son Shem. These Shemites lived in Mesopotamia, and later migrated to modern Europe. The Germanic and Anglo-Saxon-Celtic peoples are from the line of Shem. The Jews are not the only Semites.

The kings of the nation of Israel had to come from the tribe of Judah. The Messiah was to come from that line of Jewish kings. God instructs: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes..." (Genesis 49:10).

God made it clear that no foreigner is to rule over the nation of Israel. "...You shall surely set a king over you whom the

Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you MAY NOT set a FOREIGNER over you, who is not your brother." (Deuteronomy 17:15). God makes race an issue, with the kings of Israel. This is NOT for man to change!

This is true of Jesus Christ, our Messiah. He had to be an Israelite, of the tribe of Judah. After all, if He was a gentile or genetically more gentile than Israelite, He could not come back "to His own" (John 1:11). He might as well have come back as the Messiah of the Canaanites or Moabites, if His racial background were such.

The Messiah was born as King of the Jews and King of Kings. He could NOT be a foreigner.

Several times the lineage of the Messiah could have been subverted. One example, is when Judah married a Canaanite.

The lineage would have produced NO offspring of PURE Hebrew descent. God intervened through the Hebrew woman Tamar. She put her life on the line, when she foresaw the problem was with Judah, not Shelah, Judah's half-breed son. Tamar seduced Judah and produced twin Hebrew boys, Perez and Zerah as heirs to the Royal House of Judah, and the throne which Jesus Christ will ultimately occupy.

As Judah himself said of this situation with Tamar: "She has been more righteous than I..." (Genesis 38:26).

The Lineage of King David

More proof that the lineage of the kings of Israel had to be of the tribe of Judah, comes from the pages of history. During the Maccabean Period lead by the Hasmoneans, 142 to 63 B.C., the controversy of bloodline arises again.

We read in the Encyclopedia Judaica, under the title, Genealogy: "Thus the Hasmoneans, who had to defend themselves against the contention that only Davidic descendants could lay claim to kingship, in turn questioned the **purity** of King David's blood, in view of his descent from Ruth the Moabite."

We further read in this article, why Jewish families marry so closely within immediate family lines, to maintain their family roles in the Levitical temple worship. "...Herod, who also had to face a challenge to the legitimacy of his rule, forged for

himself a pedigree going back to King David, after first DESTROYING THE GENEALOGICAL RECORDS maintained in the temple..."

The racial purity and lineage of the Kings of Judah were important right up to the time of Christ. That is why Matthew and Luke record the genealogies of both Joseph and Mary. Genealogy was critical to kingship! The Messiah had to come from the lineage of King David!

The Book of Ruth - the Story

The book of the Bible, that both the Jews and the Church of God associate most with The Feast of Weeks or "Pentecost", is the Book of Ruth. The scenario takes place during the spring harvest season.

This story of Boaz finding a wife, Ruth, is analogous of Christ and the Church - Christ taking a bride. This book centers around the Jewish royal family and the redemption of their inheritance, through the child Obed.

The Book of Ruth is a story of a young ISRAELITISH widow, who produced offspring for the Royal House of Judah, whose descendants were residing in the area of Bethlehem.

Ruth had been living in the territory still known as the land of Moab. This territory north of the Arnon River, and east of the Jordan River, was occupied by the tribes of Israel known as Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. Like their brothers on the

western side of the Jordan (who retained the name of the land of Canaan), the three tribes to the east were said to live in the "land of Moab".

Ruth moved to Bethlehem, with her mother-in-law, and married a man named Boaz, of the Royal House of Judah. When she bore the child Obed, the stage was being set for the future kings of the nation of Israel, and the coming of the Messiah.

THREE BASIC PROOFS

There are three basic proofs as to Ruth's true nationality. These are found in a book entitled: *Far Above Rubies*, by Isabel Hill Elder, published in 1957.

The first deals with the question of who inhabited the "land of Moab", mentioned in the Book of Ruth. The second involves Ruth's own very famous statement to her mother-in-law. The third relates to who has the legal right to inherit land under the ancient Levirate Law of Marriage and the Jubilee System of land redemption.

Proof Number One:

The Israelites conquered the land of Moab, east of the Jordan river, and north of the Arnon River. Israel took all the cities and killed ALL the inhabitants of the land.

"So the Lord our God also delivered into our hands Og king of Bashan, with all his people, and we attacked him until he has

no survivors remaining." "And at that time we took the land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who were on this side of the Jordan, from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon..." (Deuteronomy 3:3,8).

In another place the Bible records that no racial Moabites were left alive in the land (Deuteronomy 2:34). The land was now inhabited by the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh (Deuteronomy 29:8).

This territory retained the name "land of Moab", just as the land west of the Jordan remained "the land of Canaan". Joshua 13:32 summarizes the conquest: "These are the areas which Moses had distributed as an inheritance in the PLAINS OF MOAB on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward."

In the first chapter of the Book of Ruth, the expression the "country" of Moab is used. This word used for "country" in the

original Hebrew translates best as "land". The reference is to the PHYSICAL LAND not to the occupying people of the land. This term is not pointing to the nation, but to the territory.

At the time of Joshua, the most dramatic statement relating to Israelites dwelling in the plains of Moab, comes in the twenty-second chapter of the Book of Joshua.

The western tribes of Israel almost went to war with their brothers living on the eastern side of the Jordan, because of a misunderstanding over an impressive monument built near the eastern bank of the Jordan River. The tribes of Reuban, Gad, and Manasseh built a replica of an altar, to remind the western tribes that Israelites lived on the eastern side of the river.

Here is the explanation: "Therefore we said, 'Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice, but that it may be A WITNESS between you and

us and our generations after us...that your descendants may not say to our descendants in time to come, "You have no part in the Lord.""" (Joshua 22:27)

The tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan were afraid of losing their identity. In effect they were saying: "We are the SAME PEOPLE and we worship the SAME GOD." (Remember this, for proof number two.)

It has been a habit of Israelites to keep the name of the original inhabitants of the land - even to this day. Are the men living in the Dakotas all Dakota Indians? Are Albertans all Albertan Indians? How about those living in the city of Miami, Florida, are they all Miami Indians. How about the peoples in the Province of Manitoba, Canada, are they all Manitoban Indians? (The name "Canada" is of North American Indian origin.) Again, are they all Native Indians living in these places? The answer is, certainly NOT! Yet, we have retained

the names of the original inhabitants of the land.

Do you get the point? We do the same thing today in the United States of America, and in Canada. Ruth was an Israelite living in the land of Moab, occupied by the eastern tribes of Israel.

Proof Number Two:

The most amazing proof that Ruth was a Israelite, and possibly a Jewess, comes from her most famous and misunderstood statement to her mother-in-law, Naomi.

"...For wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. (Ruth 1:16).

It is important for you to notice that in most Bibles, the words "shall be" are in italics. This is done because the words ARE

NOT in the original text. Hebrew is written with consonants only, NO VOWELS. The vowels are added in the spoken language. One of the things this does, is leave word 'tense' for the individual to add when reading. You have to understand THE CONTEXT in order to correctly read aloud the Hebrew.

To put things in plain English, it is impossible for Ruth to become (ie. "shall be") a part of Naomi's tribe, if she was not of the same genetic strain. "A Gentile in the woodpile", would make Ruth a Gentile, not an Israelite of pure racial strain. The future tense, then, is not correct.

If Ruth's ancestors were, at one time, of the same tribe, then the translation "used to be" would not be correct, because somewhere a Gentile would have entered her pedigree, changing it to that of a Gentile. The past tense would not be logical.

The only translation which makes sense, and fits the situation is: "...Your people are my people, and your God, is my God." Ruth's statement is one of CONFIRMATION. She is saying the same thing as her ancestors, of the eastern side of the Jordan, said to the tribes of the western side, earlier in history. She is paralleling, what was said in the twenty-second chapter of Joshua. Remember proof number one.

Ruth is confirming that she worships the same God of Israel, just as her forefathers did in the time of Joshua. That is why God placed that story of the altar on the western shore of the Jordan River in the Book of Joshua.

God intended that the Book of Ruth be a "mystery" until our time. Even the Hasmoneans did not understand the TRUTH of the matter two millennia ago. Joseph and Mary understood, and so did the apostles!

We read in Ephesians 5:31,32: " 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This a GREAT MYSTERY, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." There are things which God intends to be known in "the end time". He has kept these things hidden for His own purpose. It IS TIME to realize the truth about this woman, Ruth.

Proof Number Three:

Only an Israelite could inherit land under the nation's Jubilee System, and receive restoration of that inheritance, under the Levirate Law of Marriage. An understanding as to the historical background of these two laws, is necessary to grasp the restrictions placed on inheritances within the nation of Israel.

Levirate Law Of Marriage

In the story of Ruth, a single man, a relative of her dead husband, is supposed to intervene and marry Ruth. The purpose of this is to "...raise up the name of the dead on his inheritance..." (Ruth 4:10). This custom is known as the "levirate Law of Marriage". This Hebrew law predates the nation of Israel. The purpose is to not let an inheritance go out of the family. This law protects the inheritance and birthright of rulers from Adam to Noah and then to his son Shem, after the Great Flood.

The first time it is mentioned in the Bible is in Genesis 38:8.

"Go in to your (dead) brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother." This is part of the story of Judah and Tamar.

Instructions were given to the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy 25:5,6: "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her, and it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel."

Note the importance of keeping the inheritance within the family. No STRANGER is to inherit!

No Gentile would have been allowed to inherit land under the levirate Law of Marriage. This law was there to keep the

inheritances and the land of Israel in the possession of Israelites ALONE!

From Noah to Abraham

What is not commonly known is that the inherited line of rulers goes from Noah to Abraham and to the kingly line of David. The story of Ruth is the rescuing of this royal lineage - a coveted inheritance!

Noah lived three years into the life of Abraham. Shem lived

seventy-five years into the life of Abraham. Abraham was told to depart from the land of the Hebrews: "Get out of your country, from your kindred and from your father's house..." (Genesis 12:1), at the AGE of SEVENTY-FIVE.

The details of the passing of the authority of Noah to Shem and Abraham, are not recorded in history or the pages of the Bible. The principle followed by the patriarchs is using the "laying on of hands" to pass on an inheritance and kingly authority.

Shem had the authority of God, and an army, which traveled to Egypt and killed Nimrod. In the Compendium of World History Book I, by Dr. Hermon L. Hoeh, pages 246-247, we read of Shem's exploits: "...Mes-kiag-gasher is the Sumerian name of Shem!...Mes-kiag-gasher was also a high priest. From Egyptian records historians have discovered that Semsem - the Great Shem - of Dynasty I of Thinis was also pictured as a

HIGH PRIEST! This famous man crossed from Asia over the water to the mountains of Europe. Shem traveled far and wide to put down the government of Nimrod."

Abraham had an army of three hundred and eighteen "trained men" (Genesis 14:13). Abraham was a PRINCE, who had influence in Mesopotamia. Abraham was also a priest of God, as he could SACRIFICE on an altar, and this was acceptable to God. He gave up the opportunity to use this influence when he followed God's instructions to leave the land of the Hebrews. Upon Shem's death, and Abraham's leaving the scene, an opening was made for Gentile world-ruling empires to influence and shape the known world. God was removing His direct hand from secular history, as was present through His servants from Seth to Shem.

What is not said, in the Bible, is that if Abraham had not left for Egypt when God instructed, other Shemites would have

conspired to put Abraham to death. Before he died, Shem laid hands on Abraham and "anointed" Abraham, passing on his authority given to him from Noah.

Shemites in Assyria, covetous of that authority, and the birthright carried with it, would have killed Abraham, and claimed the birthright for their side of the family. This is the same birthright passed on down to the kingly line of David. Therein lies the importance of the inheritance. It is the inheritance of KINGS and PRIESTS of God.

God had chosen to grant rulership through a lineage that came from Seth to Noah, and then to Abraham and the nation of Israel - His CHOSEN people. This lineage would also provide the Messiah, or King of Kings. Jesus Christ is to rule over a nation of King-Priests, in the World Ahead.

Racial Purity a Must

The significance of an unbroken link between Adam and Jesus Christ is of the utmost importance. That is why God inspired us to know that up to the time of Noah, there is a chain of inheritors to the kingly line - an unbroken genetic racial strain (Genesis 6:9). God is particular of the national characteristics which would be inherent in His nation of Priest-Kings! National characteristics are PASSED ON by our genes. There is other evidence in the Bible that genetic background is important to God and the nation of Israel.

Levites were not to marry outside of their tribe, in order to preserve their characteristics as teachers and men who could carry out duties as priests. God instructed in Leviticus 21:14,15: "...he shall take a virgin OF HIS OWN PEOPLE as wife. Nor shall he PROFANE his POSTERITY...". The Levites were to set an example for the nation, by marrying within their own tribe. Racial purity WAS an ISSUE in ancient Israel.

The sons of Shelah (Shelanites) were considered half-breeds (half-Canaanites). They were not granted the same status within the nation of Israel as were the rest. This family became the weavers of cloth, gardeners and greenhouse workers (I Chronicles 4:29-23). They were not given the same royal duties as the families of Perez and Zerah.

What is interesting, is that Shelanites were allowed to rule over Moabites. (I Chronicles 4:22) They were not rulers in Israel.

During the Second Temple Period, Jews were very conscious of the purity of their family tree. They established ten categories of families to determine eligibility to work in the temple. Record of descent was of prime importance.

The Israelites would not even eat a meal with a Gentile, never mind allow one of them to marry into the Royal House of Judah. This presence of mind carried right on into the time of Christ. Gentiles were considered "unclean". A Jew considered his posterity "defiled" if any of his family married a Gentile.

A Modern Perspective

A simple way of looking at it today, is with the present royalty in Britain. Would the English take it lightly if Prince Charles, the heir of the throne of England, brought home from the British Commonwealth, a dark woman to be his bride and the next Queen of England? The British tabloids would have a field day with that one. It is not acceptable today! It was not acceptable then.

You would think that church historians would have seen the paradox of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, listed amongst the lineage of Christ, in the book of Matthew, and the fact that both the Protestant and Jewish communities falsely consider all four women to be all, or part Gentile, in their racial origin. The truth is, Tamar was a Hebrew woman, the other three were Israelites. Their stories are fascinating and inspiring, as to God's intervention in the lives of His chosen people, Israel.

"A Restorer of Life"

The Book of Ruth is one of RESTORATION. Naomi was the equivalent to the "Queen Mother" in Britain today. She was as beloved then as the Queen Mother is today. Notice Ruth 1:19: "...ALL THE CITY was EXCITED because of them; and the women said, 'Is this Naomi?'" It was Naomi who anguished over the possibility of her family name and inheritance disappearing into oblivion.

The essence of the story is in Ruth 4:13-17: "So Boaz took

Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son." (It appears that God intervened and made sure that a male heir was conceived.) "Then the women said to Naomi, 'Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a NEAR KINSMAN ; and may his name be famous in Israel! And may he be to you a RESTORER OF LIFE...'. "Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, 'There is a son BORN TO Naomi.'"

This ancient levirate Law of Marriage was fulfilled and the Royal House of Judah was rescued, with an heir to the future throne!

Boaz tells of his actions in Ruth 4:9-10: "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to raise up the name of the dead on HIS INHERITANCE,

that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his place."

Boaz paid off the family debt of Naomi, and proclaimed the occupancy of the property to be given back to Naomi, all according to the Jubilee System of the restoration of property rights.

Furthermore, the elders of the city proclaimed their knowledge of the importance nationally, of this event. Following the story in Ruth 4:11,12: "And all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, 'We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two WHO BUILT the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah (the equivalent to the Queen's Windsor castle, in England) and be famous in Bethlehem. May your house be like the house of Perez, whom TAMAR bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the Lord will give to you from this young

woman."

These elders saw the parallel to the story of Tamar rescuing the Royal lineage for Judah. They saw how critical the situation was for the nation.

Conclusion

In looking into the concepts surrounding the Book of Ruth and facing the reality of the details of the story, it is obvious that the lineage of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, has to be of pure

racial strain. This is only one aspect of the message - that of RACE.

The aspect that **most** concerns us is that of GRACE, that is: redemption, salvation, inheriting the Kingdom of God, and the analogy of Christ and the Church. These are the **weightier matters**. In order to understand these things we must FIRST get the story of Ruth correct.

Ruth was an Israelite, who in analogy, represents the Bride of Christ.

Links to Similar Articles on other Web Sites :

<http://www.ensignmessage.com/archives/ruth.html>

http://www.lasotell.com.au/bi/Ruth_and_Rahab.pdf

[Note: the information being referenced here, is about the woman Ruth, of the bible. Cry Aloud Cybermagazine has serious questions as to the validity of the material presented on this link to the pdf web page about the woman, Rahab.

Bibliography

1. [Far Above Rubies](#) ; by Isabel Hill Elder; Chapter viii: Ruth (Book of Ruth); The Covenant Publishing Co., Ltd.; 1957
2. [Mystery Of The Ages](#) ; by Herbert W. Armstrong; Chapter 4: Mystery of Civilization; Chapter 5: Mystery of Israel; Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc.; 1985; First Edition; (hard cover only - in later editions some material is edited out

and reworded.)

