

CbC to Aug 30

August 24 Su Reading A236 — Judges 20 — War with Benjamin

Audio: [Judges 20 \(ESV\)](#)

Growing from Questions — Today's reading generates several questions for me. First, why wasn't the tribe of Benjamin willing to give up the men of Gibeon who violated the Levite's concubine? (v. 13). It would have provided justice and saved over 65,000 deaths in the resulting war. It sounds like the problem was Benjamin's pride and foolish stubbornness. Their hearts were not set on pleasing the Lord. Second, why did God allow 40,000 Israelites to die in the first two attempts to conquer Gibeon? (vv. 21, 25). Were they being punished for their own drifting away from God? Only 600 fighting men of Benjamin survived the battles. It seems to be a huge waste. There are many such questions that come up in our reading of the Bible. What should we think about them? Too often, Christians criticize God for something bad that has happened, but the problem is largely our lack of knowledge. We do not see the bigger picture that He sees, and we must remember that the character of God is perfect. He does nothing that violates His character. Also, it is often God's choice not to supply us with all the information we want to know. There needs to be enough of our lack of understanding to maintain our need for faith. When we have questions about what we read in God's Word, we must allow it to be a challenge for us to trust God's wisdom and goodness over our feelings and knowledge.

August 25 M Reading A237 — Judges 21 — Wives for Benjamin

Audio: [Judges 21 \(ESV\)](#)

Weak Wisdom — We saw a glimmer in this final chapter of Judges that there was some spiritual hope for Israel: They wept before God (v. 2) and asked Him why this tribal tragedy had happened (v. 3); they built an altar and presented sacrifices to God (v. 4); and they had compassion on the defeated tribe of Benjamin (vv. 6, 15), proclaimed peace to them (v. 13), and arranged to provide wives for the 600 surviving Benjamite soldiers. The means they used, however, showed their spiritually weak condition. They were making decisions based on their own logic, not on God's wisdom or direction. They made two foolish oaths before God. One was not to give their daughters in marriage to the tribe of Benjamin (v. 1). The other was to put to death any soldier who did not assemble with them to fight against Benjamin. As we learned earlier when Jephthah made a foolish vow involving his daughter, the Law provided a way out of rash vows through the offering of a lamb in sacrifice. The people of Israel in today's reading were apparently ignorant of that provision, using their own faulty wisdom instead. Twice they asked each other, "*What shall we do...*?" (vv. 7, 16), but they didn't ask God. Their solution was to punish the city of Jabesh-gilead for not sending any soldiers by wiping out their city and capturing 400 of their virgins (v. 8). Still being 200 short, they decided to let the single men of Benjamin steal virgin daughters of Shiloh at an outdoor dance celebration (v. 21). This bypassed their first oath because these Israelite girls were *taken*, not *given*. When we have "*What shall we do?*" questions, we should take them first to the Lord to ask for His wisdom and guidance, not depending on our own. Fittingly, this book ends with the familiar, revealing statement that "*Everyone did what was right in his own eyes*" (v. 25).

August 26 Tu Reading A238 — Ruth 1 — Famine and Death

Audio: [Ruth 1 \(ESV\)](#)

Unwavering Commitment — The books of Ruth and Esther are the only ones named for a woman, and both are riveting stories. The story of Ruth, driven by the need for food, begins at Bethlehem, which means "house of bread." A famine there encouraged the family of Elimelech and Naomi to move temporarily to Moab on the east side of the Dead Sea. Naomi's situation got much worse with the deaths of her husband and two sons, which she attributed to God's action against her (v. 13). The need for food drove her to return to Bethlehem 10 years later (v. 6), taking her Moabite daughter-in-law, Ruth, along with her. Ruth's character of love and commitment to Naomi was shown as she

clung to her (v. 14), making this well-known declaration: *“where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God”* (v. 16). It was both a commitment to Naomi and to God. Although Naomi probably thought God was punishing her for some sin, this seems to be a matter of the rain falling on the just and unjust, as Jesus said (Matt. 5:45). We also may sometimes feel like “everything is against me.” If it is because of sin, it should be confessed and turned away from, but if it is from general circumstances like famine, we need to trust God to lead us through it and teach us along the way. Naomi remained committed to Yahweh, as we will see in the rest of this story, and God brought blessing to her. God used the tragic deaths of Elimelech and his two sons to provide a way for Ruth to be the great-grandmother of King David, through whom the Messiah was born. God can bring great results from our tragedies.

August 27 W Reading A239 — Ruth 2 — Ruth Faithfully Gleans

Audio: [Ruth 2 \(ESV\)](#)

Creating Character — This chapter shows us a lot about the character qualities of both Ruth and Boaz. Ruth displayed that she was industrious and persistent, asking Naomi’s permission to go out to glean in the fields, working all day to pick up scraps that the harvesters left behind (vv. 2, 7). She also showed humility in asking permission from the lead reaper to glean in his field (v. 7) and in bowing down in gratitude to Boaz (v. 10). Twice, she was praised for *“All that you have done”* (v. 11; cf. v. 12) in her commitment to Naomi. Boaz showed positive qualities of commitment to Yahweh (v. 4, 12). He also graciously protected, provided for, comforted, and showed kindness toward Ruth (vv. 8-20). Each of these character qualities were mutually drawing Ruth and Boaz together for God’s purposes. God works in similar ways today to bring us together with our mate to produce the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren He fits into His future glorious plan. God both creates and develops character in our lives to bless others and to prepare for a wonderful future we could not even imagine.

August 28 Th Reading A240 — Ruth 3 — Ruth Proposes

Audio: [Ruth 3 \(ESV\)](#)

Dramatic Actions — This chapter is like a mini-drama. In the first scene, Naomi guides, telling Ruth, *“should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you?”* (v. 1). Her instructions involved sending Ruth at night to Boaz (vv. 3-4). Naomi was taking care of Ruth and preparing for her future wellbeing. The second scene shows Ruth making a bold but chaste offer for Boaz to marry her, saying, *“Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer”* (v. 9). This is very unusual in that ancient Hebrew culture, but Boaz is impressed, considering it as a great kindness to him (v. 10). The third scene is Boaz’s acceptance, promising that *“I will do for you all that you ask”* (v. 11), and that *“I will redeem you”* (v. 13), which would involve marriage. All this happened because of Naomi’s foresight and direction. She seemed to know in advance how it was going to turn out, saying first, *“he will tell you what to do”* (v. 4), and later, that Boaz *“will settle the matter today”* (v. 18). The actions of both Naomi and Ruth were unusual for their culture, but they were done boldly and with faith that God was the ultimate Hand guiding them.

August 29 F Reading A241 — Ruth 4 — Boaz, the Redeemer

Audio: [Ruth 4 \(ESV\)](#)

ACCOUNTABILITY TIME!

The Plan Comes Together — The property once owned by Elimelech could not be passed on to his two sons who had died childless. The only hope for its continuance was through Ruth, the former wife of the youngest son, Mahlon. If someone married her, as a representative of Mahlon, and caused her to bear a son, it would *“perpetuate the name of the dead”* (vv. 5, 10). Boaz accomplished that by purchasing back the land, marrying Ruth, and producing her son, Obed (meaning “serving” or

“servant”). This was more than *Boaz’s* child, however, because “*the LORD gave her conception*” (v. 13). Like Rachel and Leah before her (v. 11), she had been barren but was divinely granted conception from God. Obed “served” to establish a line of descendants that would include David and, ultimately Jesus. Naomi’s direction, Ruth’s devoted commitment, and Boaz’s kindness were brought together by God to lead to His great plan for later generations. We never know what positive effects God might produce from our own direction, commitment, and kindness today. Be faithful!

ACCOUNTABILITY TIME! If you are up to date in your reading as of today, please [click here](#) to leave your email address or let me know at accbibleread@gmail.com.

August 30 Sa Reading A242 — 1 Samuel 1 — Hannah’s Answered Prayer **Audio:** [1 Samuel 1 \(ESV\)](#)

ACCOUNTABILITY REMINDER

Suffering in Silence — The book of 1 Samuel begins with the birth of the last judge of Israel and the prophet God would use to begin the kingdom period of Israel’s history. The first chapter presents an emotional conflict between the two wives of Elkanah. The fruitful Peninnah acted like a brat toward Hannah as her “*rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her*” (v. 6), doing it continuously “*year by year*” (v. 7). Her words were intentionally meant to hurt Hannah, as the fruitful Hagar used to treat barren Sarah in Abraham’s day. Barren Hannah seemed to take it quietly but painfully. She even prayed silently in asking for God’s help (v. 16). Her pain was expressed in several ways: she “*wept and would not eat*” (v. 7), was “*deeply distressed ... wept bitterly*” (v. 10), was “*troubled in spirit*” (v. 15), and had “*great anxiety and vexation*” (v. 13). You may feel like Hannah at times, feeling neglected and deprived while others flourish. Hannah would be a good model to follow, not to retaliate toward others but to turn to God for help. When she presented her request before God and was blessed by the high priest, Eli, “*her face was no longer sad*” (v. 18). Her attitude changed before her prayer was answered. She began to trust God before He acted. In fact, it seems that God did not answer her request immediately because it was “*in due time*” that she conceived (v. 20). Pray, trust, and wait!

ACCOUNTABILITY REMINDER If you are up to date in your reading as of today, but did not report yesterday, please [click here](#) to leave your email address or let me know at accbibleread@gmail.com.