

LESSON 24

Ruth; 1 Samuel 1-7

OVERVIEW:

The book of Ruth happens the same time as the Book of Judges. It was probably written by Samuel.

It serves as a transition between the period of the Judges and Israel's scattering by forecasting the scattering and gathering of Israel.

Ruth is an ancestor of David and Jesus.

It also shows how we should take care of new converts.

Elimelech and family go to Moab because of famine—Marriages—Death of father and sons—Ruth the Moabitess, her husband having died, remains constant to Naomi—They come to Beth-lehem. Ruth gleanes in fields of Boaz, a near kinsman of Naomi—He treats Ruth kindly.

(Here, embosomed amidst the hills of Judah, where afterwards David pastured his father's flocks, and where shepherds heard angels hail the birth of "David's greater Son," we seem to feel once again the healthful breath of Israel's spirit, and we see what moral life it was capable of fostering alike in the individual and in the family. If Boaz was, so to speak, the patriarch of a village, in which the old Biblical customs were continued, the humblest homes of Bethlehem must have preserved true Israelitish piety in its most attractive forms. For, unless the Moabitess Ruth had learned to know and love the land and the faith of Israel in the Bethlehemite household of Elimelech, transported as it was for a time into the land of Moab, she would not have followed so persistently her mother-in-law, away from her own home, to share her poverty, to work, if need be, even to beg, for her. And from such ancestry, nurtured under such circumstances, did the shepherd king of Israel spring, the ancestor and the type of the Lord and Savior of men. These four things, then, seem the object of the Book of Ruth: to present a supplement by way of contrast to the Book of Judges; to show the true spirit of Israel; to exhibit once more the mysterious connection between Israel and the Gentiles, whereby the latter, at the most critical periods of Israel's history, seem most unexpectedly called in to take a leading part; and to trace the genealogy of David. Specially perhaps the latter two. For, as one has beautifully remarked: If, as regards its contents, the Book of Ruth stands on the threshold of the history of David, yet, as regards its spirit, it stands, like the Psalms, at the threshold of the Gospel. Not merely on account of the genealogy of Christ, which leads up to David and Boaz, but on account of the spirit which the teaching of David breathes, do we love to remember that Israel's great king sprang from the union of Boaz and Ruth, which is symbolical of that between Israel and the Gentile world. Edersheim, Vol 3, Ch 21)

SCRIPTURES:

THE BOOK OF RUTH CHAPTER 1

Elimelech and family go to Moab because of famine—Marriages—Death of father and sons—Ruth the Moabitess, her husband having died, remains constant to Naomi—They come to Beth-lehem.

1 NOW it came to pass in the days when the ^ajudges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two

sons. (Famine in the land. Why call the city Bethlehem-Judah? Because there also a Bethlehem in Zebulun. A family went to Moab. A man, his wife and two sons. Bethlehem means house of bread. The departure from Bethlehem was prophetic of the scattering of Israel. The original Moab was the son of Lot's oldest daughter, and thus the Moabites were akin to the Israelites, but represented a different way of life and religion. Latter-day Commentary on the Old Testament, p. 201.)

2 And the name of the man *was* ^aElimelech, (Heb my God is king) and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, ^bEphrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. (The family is described as "Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah." The expression is apparently intended to convey, that the family had not been later immigrants, but original Jewish settlers - or, as the Jewish commentator have it, patrician burghers of the ancient Ephrath, or "fruitfulness" (Genesis 35:19; 48:7; comp. 1 Samuel 17:12; Micah 5:2). At one time the family seems to have been neither poor nor of inconsiderable standing (Ruth 1:19-21; 2; 3). But now, owing to "the famine," Ephrath was no longer "fruitfulness," nor yet Bethlehem "the house of bread;" and Elimelech, unable, on account of the troubles in the west, to go for relief either into Philistia or into Egypt, migrated beyond Jordan, and the reach of Israel's then enemies, to "sojourn" in Moab. Edersheim)

3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.

4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one *was* Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. (The two sons have wives, Orpah and Ruth and live there 10 years. During this time Ruth is converted to the Lord. She lives with a wonderfully religious family who teaches her the ways of Jehovah. Abraham alone is the father of us all, speaking after the manner of the flesh, and all who receive the blessings of the gospel are either natural or adopted sons in his everlasting family. Thus, also, Nephi says: As many of the Gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord; and as many of the Jews as will not repent shall be cast off; for the Lord covenanteth with none save it be with them that repent and believe in his Son, who is the Holy One of Israel, Bruce R. McConkie, The Millennial Messiah, p. 245)

5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband. (The two sons die leaving all three women widows.)

6 ¶ Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.

7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. (Naomi hears that the famine is over and they decide to return to Bethlehem. Prophetic of the gathering of Israel and the restoration of the gospel in the latter days. Israel returning to the house of bread, or to the Bread of Life, or to the Savior.)

8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each *of you* in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? *are* there yet *any more* ^asons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

12 Turn again, my daughters, go *your way*; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, *if* I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons;

13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me. (Naomi tells her daughters-in-law to return to their previous homes.)

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth ^aclave unto (ie held fast to) her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou

after thy sister in law. (Orpah leaves, but Ruth stays with Naomi.)

16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from ^afollowing after thee: for whither thou goest, I will ^bgo; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy ^cpeople *shall be* my people, and thy God my ^dGod: (Ruth has truly been converted to the Lord.)

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me.

18 When she saw that she was ^astedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her. (Ruth pleads that she remain with Naomi. Naomi relents and Ruth goes with her. The distance they travel is between 30 and 40 miles.)

19 ¶ So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, *Is* this Naomi?

20 And she said unto them, Call me not ^aNaomi, (ie pleasant) call me ^bMara: (ie a name given to Naomi by herself, which means "bitter," or "very sad.") for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21 I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why *then* call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath ^atestified against me (or humbled me (so also in the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate), and the Almighty hath afflicted me? (Naomi was not complaining, just stating the facts.)

22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest. (They return to Bethlehem around the harvest time, April or May. And now tidings reached Moab, that "Jehovah had visited his people to give them bread." Naomi heard in it a call to return to her own land and home. According to eastern fashion, her daughters-in-law accompanied her on the way. When Naomi deemed that duty of proper respect sufficiently discharged, she stopped to dismiss them - as she delicately put it - to their "mother's" houses, with tenderly spoken prayer, that after all their sorrow the God of Israel would give them rest in a new relationship, as they had dealt lovingly both with the dead and with her. Closely examined, her words are found to convey, although with most exquisite delicacy, that, if her daughters-in-law went with her, they must expect to remain for ever homeless and strangers. She could offer them no prospect of wedded happiness in her own family, and she wished to convey to them, that no Israelite in his own land would ever wed a daughter of Moab. It was a noble act of self-denial on the part of the aged Hebrew widow by this plain speaking to strip herself of all remaining comfort, and to face the dark future, utterly childless, alone, and helpless. And when one of them, Orpah, turned back, though with bitter sorrow at the parting, Naomi had a yet more trying task before her. Ruth had, indeed, fully understood her mother-in-law's meaning; but there was another sacrifice which she must be prepared to make, if she followed Naomi. She must not only be parted from her people, and give up for ever all worldly prospects, but she must also be prepared to turn her back upon her ancestral religion. But Ruth had long made her choice, and the words in which she intimated it have deservedly become almost proverbial in the church. There is such ardor and earnestness about them, such resolution and calmness, as to lift them far above the sphere of mere natural affection or sense of duty. They intimate the deliberate choice of a heart which belongs in the first place to Jehovah, the God of Israel (1:17), and which has learned to count all things but loss for the excellency of this knowledge. Although the story of Ruth has been invested with romance from its sequel, there is nothing romantic about her present resolve. Only the sternest prose of poverty is before her. Not to speak of the exceedingly depressing influence of her language (1:13, 20, 21), Naomi had been careful to take from her any hope of a future, such as she had enjoyed in the past. In truth, the choice of Ruth is wholly unaccountable, except on the ground that she felt herself in heart and by conviction one of a Hebrew household - an Israelitish woman in soul and life, and that although she should in a sense be disowned by those with whom she had resolved to cast in her lot. Edersheim.)

CHAPTER 2

Ruth gleanes in fields of Boaz, a near kinsman of Naomi—He treats Ruth kindly.

1 AND Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was ^aBoaz. (Heb in him is strength, swiftness, quickness) (Naomi had a relative named Boaz. Her husband's relative.)

2 And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and ^aglean ears of ^bcorn (or grain) after *him* in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. (“Harvesting was difficult work and demanded long hours. Young men moved through the fields grasping handfuls of the grain and cutting through the stalks with sickles. These small bunches of grain were then bound into bundles called sheaves. As the men worked rapidly, a number of stalks fell to the ground. If the men were careful and took the time, these too could be gathered up. However, any stalks that dropped were allowed to remain where they fell. Poor people, following the reapers, were permitted to ‘glean,’ or gather, the random stalks—possibly all that stood between them and starvation. In addition, the edges of the field, where the sickle was not as easily wielded, were left unharvested. The poor were welcome to that portion, as well. “The destitute of Bethlehem now included Ruth and Naomi, and Ruth offered to go into the fields and glean.” (*Great People of the Bible and How They Lived*, p. 129.))

3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her ^ahap (or chance, good fortune) was to light on a part of the field *belonging* unto Boaz, who *was* of the kindred of Elimelech. (Ruth gleanes in Boaz' field. Landowners were expected to leave the “corners” of the fields for the less fortunate members of the community to glean from. Leviticus 23:22 reads: “And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger.”)

4 ¶ And, behold, Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD *be* with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee.

5 Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel *is* this?

6 And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It *is* the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab:

7 And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.

8 Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to ^aglean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here ^bfast (or close) by my maidens:

9 *Let* thine eyes *be* on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of *that* which the young men have drawn. (Boaz treats Ruth with great generosity. He asks her to glean only in his field.)

10 Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take ^aknowledge (or notice) of me, seeing I *am* a stranger?

11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and *how* thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.

12 The LORD recompense thy work, and a full ^areward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose ^bwings thou art come to trust. (Ruth bows to Boaz acknowledging his great kindness toward her, even though she is a stranger to him. Boaz speaks to Ruth and mentions he has heard of her and that she has been converted to Jehovah.)

13 Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken ^afriendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

14 And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched ^acorn, (or grain) and she did eat, and was sufficed, and ^bleft. (ie left some food) (Boaz asks her to dinner.)

15 And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not:

16 And let fall also *some* of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave *them*, that she may glean *them*, and rebuke her not.

17 So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah (29-50 pounds) of barley. (Boaz tells his reapers to leave what they cut to Ruth so she can glean it.)

18 ¶ And she took *it* up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.

19 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 ^ashewed (or told) her mother in law with whom she had ^bwrought, (or worked) and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to day *is* Boaz.

20 And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who hath not ^aleft (or ceased) 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 ^bnext (or redeemers; one of those having the right to redeem) ^ckinsmen. (Ruth returns to Naomi. She gleans in the fields all through the harvest. About two months. Boaz is capable of redeeming Naomi and her property. Naomi wanted to help her faithful daughter-in-law secure a husband and family. To do this, Naomi considered the levirate marriage, a practice that had prevailed for many years in Israel. Deuteronomy 25:5–10 is the scriptural reference for the levirate marriage obligation in Israelite families. “The word here rendered ‘redeemer’ we translate literally from Hebrew *go'el* and this is its proper translation. It is rendered merely ‘kinsman’ in the King James English translation. The function of a *go'el* was to make it possible for a widow who had lost home and property to return to her *former status* and *security* and to have *seed* to perpetuate her family. “It is easy to see why the later prophets borrowed this word from the social laws of Israel and used it to describe the functions of Him who would become the Divine *Redeemer*: Think of what He does to restore us to proper status with God, and to give us future security and eternal ‘seed.’” (Rasmussen, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1:157.) Institute Manual, 263))

21 And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep ^afast (or close) by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.

22 And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, *It is* good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they ^ameet (or find) thee not in any other field.

23 So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law.

CHAPTER 3

By Naomi's instruction, Ruth lies at feet of Boaz—He promises, as a kinsman, to seek her to wife.

1 THEN Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek ^arest for thee (implying marriage), that it may be well with thee?

2 And now *is* not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor.

3 Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the ^afloor: (ie threshing floor) *but* make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.

4 And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.

5 And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do. (To seek rest meant to be married. Naomi tells Ruth to lie at the feet of Boaz while he sleeps. He is guarding the harvest.)

6 ¶ And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her.

7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of ^acorn: (or grain) and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. (She uncovers Boaz's feet and lies down at his feet.)

8 ¶ And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

9 And 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 ^akinsman. (This idiom means, be my protector, or husband. “When Boaz awoke from his sleep by the pile of grain, which he was guarding as was the custom during harvest time, he was startled by Ruth’s presence. She was direct in her proposal. The word rendered ‘skirt’ also means ‘wing,’ and her request is not unlike our idiom ‘take me under your wing.’ Gesenius, the famous Hebraist, says it was a proper proposal of marriage—even though the girl was doing the proposing!” (Rasmussen, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1:157.) The idiom means “protect me,” or, in other words, “be my protector or husband.” “According to our customs, indeed, this act of Naomi and Ruth appears a very objectionable one from a moral point of view, but it was not so when judged by the customs of the people of Israel at that time. Boaz, who was an honourable man, and, according to [Ruth 3:10], no doubt somewhat advanced in years, praised Ruth for having taken refuge with him, and promised to fulfil her wishes when he had satisfied himself that the nearer redeemer would renounce his right and duty [see vv. 10–11]. As he acknowledged by this very declaration, that under certain circumstances it would be his duty as redeemer to marry Ruth, he took no offence at the manner in which she had approached him and proposed to become his wife. On the contrary, he regarded it as a proof of feminine virtue and modesty, that she had not gone after young men, but offered herself as a wife to an old man like him. This conduct on the part of Boaz is a sufficient proof that women might have confidence in him that he would do nothing unseemly. And he justified such confidence.” (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 2:1:483.))

10 And he said, Blessed *be* thou of the LORD, my daughter: *for* thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.

11 And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou *art* a ^avirtuous woman.

12 And now it is true that I *am thy* ^anear kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.

13 Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, *that* if he will perform unto thee the ^apart of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman’s part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, *as* the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning. (Boaz awakes, because of the cool night air on his feet, and discovers Ruth. He talks to her and asks her to stay with him through the night. She tells him to spread his skirt over her. This was a proposal of marriage to Boaz. Boaz is flattered that she is interested in marrying him, an old man, and that she is not interested in the young men. Ruth has a reputation of being a virtuous woman. Boaz says there is a kinsman nearer than he that he must talk to first. If the near kinsman will not do his obligation, then Boaz will do it.)

14 ¶ And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. (meaning it was still dark outside.) And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.

15 Also he said, Bring the ^avail (or cloak, mantle; a square piece of cloth used as an outer robe.) that *thou hast* upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six *measures* of barley, and laid *it* on her: and she went into the city.

16 And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who *art* thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her.

17 And she said, These six *measures* of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law.

18 Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day. (Boaz gives Ruth 6 measures of Barley and she returns to Naomi.)

CHAPTER 4

Next kinsman declining, Boaz takes Ruth to wife—Ruth bears Obed, through whom came David the king.

1 THEN went Boaz up to the ^agate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the ^bkinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, ^cHo, (Heb, a manner of address to a certain unnamed person as “Mr So & So.”) such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.

2 And he took ten men of the ^aelders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

3 And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which *was* our brother Elimelech’s:

4 And I thought to advertise thee, saying, ^aBuy *it* before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt ^bredeem *it*, redeem *it*: but if thou wilt not redeem *it*, *then* tell me, that I may know: for *there is* none to redeem *it* beside thee; and I *am* after thee. And he said, I will redeem *it*.

5 Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy *it* also of Ruth the Moabitess, the ^awife of the dead, to raise up the ^bname of the dead upon his inheritance.

6 ¶ And the kinsman said, I cannot ^aredeem *it* for myself, lest I ^bmar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem *it*.

7 Now this *was the manner* in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning ^achanging, (or exchanging, doing business) for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his ^bshoe, and gave *it* to his neighbour: and this *was* a testimony in Israel.

8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy *it* for thee. So he drew off his shoe. (The gate of the city was where men went to transact business. The ten men are legal witnesses of the transaction. Boaz meets with the man who is the next of kin to Naomi offering him Naomi’s land and Ruth. He agrees to buy the land, but then finds out there are strings attached. He refuses to buy the land and marry Ruth. He gives his shoe as token of the sale.)

9 ¶ And Boaz said unto the elders, and *unto* all the people, Ye *are* witnesses this day, that I have bought all that *was* Elimelech’s, and all that *was* Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, of the hand of Naomi.

10 Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the ^aname of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye *are* witnesses this day.

11 And all the people that *were* in the gate, and the elders, said, *We are* witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and ^ado thou worthily (or may you do well) in Ephratah, and be famous in Beth-lehem:

12 And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman. (Boaz purchases the land and agrees to marry Ruth.)

13 ¶ So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.

14 And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed *be* the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel.

15 And he shall be unto thee a restorer of *thy* life, and a nourisher of thine ^aold age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him.

16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

17 And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he *is* the father of Jesse, the father of David. (Boaz marries Ruth. They have a son named Obed, who was the father of Jesse, the father of David. Boaz is a restorer. This was where one

could restore one's property as though it had not been lost. (Deuteronomy 25:5-6 talks about the Levirate law of marrying one's deceased brother's childless wife to raise up an heir to his name.))

18 ¶ Now these *are* the generations of ^aPharez: Pharez begat Hezron,

19 And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,

20 And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon,

21 And Salmon begat ^aBoaz, and Boaz begat Obed,

22 And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David. (The genealogy of David. Who was married to Salmon? Rahab. Why include Ruth? In the entire story, there is no king, no royalty, no priests, Levites, judges, or prophets. All the characters in the story were ordinary people who lived in a town far removed from the centers of power, intrigue, and violence. It is a story of loyalty, love, and generosity. It shows an example of how one family truly lived their religion. The story is a reminder that converts to the church and kingdom of God are welcome from all kindreds, nations, tongues, and peoples. The marriage of Boaz and Ruth is symbolic. It typifies the process by which Israel and gentiles receive the promised blessings of the gospel. Boaz is a redeemer. Christ is often called the bridegroom and the church the bride. Only through the power of his redemption can both Naomi and Ruth receive the blessings of inheritance for themselves and posterity.)

(YET another story of a very different kind from that of Samson remains to be told. It comes upon us with such sweet contrast, almost like a summer's morning after a night of wild tempest. And yet without this story our knowledge of that period would be incomplete. It was "in the days when the judges judged"* - near the close of that eventful period. West of the Jordan, Jair and Eli held sway in Israel, while east of the river the advancing tide of Ammon had not yet been rolled back by Jephthah, the Gileadite. Whether the incursions of the Ammonites had carried want and wretchedness so far south into Judah as Bethlehem (Judges 10:9), or whether it was only due to strictly natural causes, there was a "famine in the land," and this became, in the wonder-working Providence of God, one of the great links in the history of the kingdom of God.**

* Critics differ widely as to the exact time when the events recorded in the Book of Ruth took place. Keil makes Boaz a contemporary of Gideon; but we have seen no reason to depart from the account of Josephus, who lays this history in the days of Eli.

** The Book of Ruth occupies an intermediate position between that of the Judges and those of Samuel - it is a supplement to the former and an introduction to the latter. So much "romance" has been thrown about the simple narrative of this book, as almost to lose sight of its real purport.

Bearing in mind the general characteristics of the period, and such terrible instances of religious apostasy and moral degeneracy as those recorded in the two Appendices to the Book of Judges (Judges 17-21), we turn with a feeling of intense relief to the picture of Jewish life presented to us in the Book of Ruth.* Sheltered from scenes of strife and semi-heathenism, the little village of Bethlehem had retained among its inhabitants the purity of their ancestral faith and the simplicity of primitive manners.

* The Book of Ruth numbers just eighty-five verses. In the Hebrew Bible it is placed among the Hagiographa, for dogmatic reasons on which it is needless to enter. In Hebrew MSS. it is among the five Megilloth "rolls" (Song, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther). Among the Jews it is very significantly read on the feast of weeks.

Here, embosomed amidst the hills of Judah, where afterwards David pastured his father's flocks, and where shepherds heard angels hail the birth of "David's greater Son," we seem to feel once again the healthful breath of Israel's spirit, and we see what moral life it was capable of fostering alike in the individual and in the family. If Boaz was, so to speak, the patriarch of a village, in which the old Biblical

customs were continued, the humblest homes of Bethlehem must have preserved true Israelitish piety in its most attractive forms. For, unless the Moabitess Ruth had learned to know and love the land and the faith of Israel in the Bethlehemite household of Elimelech, transported as it was for a time into the land of Moab, she would not have followed so persistently her mother-in-law, away from her own home, to share her poverty, to work, if need be, even to beg, for her. And from such ancestry, nurtured under such circumstances, did the shepherd king of Israel spring, the ancestor and the type of the Lord and Savior of men. These four things, then, seem the object of the Book of Ruth: to present a supplement by way of contrast to the Book of Judges; to show the true spirit of Israel; to exhibit once more the mysterious connection between Israel and the Gentiles, whereby the latter, at the most critical periods of Israel's history, seem most unexpectedly called in to take a leading part; and to trace the genealogy of David. Specially perhaps the latter two. For, as one has beautifully remarked:* If, as regards its contents, the Book of Ruth stands on the threshold of the history of David, yet, as regards its spirit, it stands, like the Psalms, at the threshold of the Gospel. Not merely on account of the genealogy of Christ, which leads up to David and Boaz, but on account of the spirit which the teaching of David breathes, do we love to remember that Israel's great king sprang from the union of Boaz and Ruth, which is symbolical of that between Israel and the Gentile world.

* Professor Cassel in his Introduction to the Book of Ruth.

Everything about this story is of deepest interest - the famine in Bethlehem, "the house of bread," evidently caused, as afterwards its removal, by the visitation of God (Ruth 1:6); the hints about the family of Elimelech; even their names: Elimelech, "my God is king;" his wife, Naomi, "the pleasant," and their sons Mahlon (or rather Machlon) and Chilion (rendered by some "the weak," "the faint;" by others "the jubilant," "the crowned").*

* The rendering of the names by Josephus is evidently fanciful. The widely differing translations, which we have given in the text, show the divergence of critics, who derive the name from so very different roots.

The family is described as "Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah." The expression is apparently intended to convey, that the family had not been later immigrants, but original Jewish settlers - or, as the Jewish commentator have it, patrician burghers of the ancient Ephrath, or "fruitfulness" (Genesis 35:19; 48:7; comp. 1 Samuel 17:12; Micah 5:2). At one time the family seems to have been neither poor nor of inconsiderable standing (Ruth 1:19-21; 2; 3). But now, owing to "the famine," Ephrath was no longer "fruitfulness," nor yet Bethlehem "the house of bread;" and Elimelech, unable, on account of the troubles in the west, to go for relief either into Philistia or into Egypt, migrated beyond Jordan, and the reach of Israel's then enemies, to "sojourn" in Moab.

There is no need to attempt excuses for this separation from his brethren and their fate on the part of Elimelech, nor for his seeking rest among those hereditary enemies of Israel, outside Palestine, on whom a special curse seems laid (Deuteronomy 23:6). We have only to mark the progress of this story to read in it the judgment of God on this step. Of what befell the family in Moab, we know next to nothing. But this we are emphatically told, that Elimelech died a stranger in the strange land. Presently Machlon and Chilion married Moabite wives - Machlon, Ruth (Ruth 4:10); Chilion, Orpah.*

* Professor Cassel renders Ruth "the rose;" and Orpah "the hind." The Midrash makes Ruth a daughter of king Eglon.

So other ten years passed. Then the two young men died, each childless, and Naomi was left desolate indeed. Thus, as one has remarked: "The father had feared not to be able to live at home. But scarcely had he arrived in the strange land when he died. Next, the sons sought to found a house in Moab; but their house became their grave. Probably, they had wished not to return to Judah, at least till the famine

had ceased - and when it had ceased, they were no more. The father had gone away to have more, and to provide for his family - and his widow was now left without either children or possession!" Similarly, we do not feel it needful to attempt vindicating the marriage of these two Hebrew youths with Moabite wives. For there really was no express command against such unions. The instances in Scripture (Judges 3:6; 1 Kings 11:1; Nehemiah 13:23), which are sometimes quoted as proof to the contrary, are not in point, since they refer to the marriage of Hebrews in the land of Israel, not to that of those resident outside its boundaries (comp. Deuteronomy 7:3), and in the case of such marriages this is evidently an important element.

And now tidings reached Moab, that "Jehovah had visited his people to give them bread." Naomi heard in it a call to return to her own land and home. According to eastern fashion, her daughters-in-law accompanied her on the way. When Naomi deemed that duty of proper respect sufficiently discharged, she stopped to dismiss them - as she delicately put it - to their "mother's" houses, with tenderly spoken prayer, that after all their sorrow the God of Israel would give them rest in a new relationship, as they had dealt lovingly both with the dead and with her. Closely examined, her words are found to convey, although with most exquisite delicacy, that, if her daughters-in-law went with her, they must expect to remain for ever homeless and strangers. She could offer them no prospect of wedded happiness in her own family, and she wished to convey to them, that no Israelite in his own land would ever wed a daughter of Moab. It was a noble act of self-denial on the part of the aged Hebrew widow by this plain speaking to strip herself of all remaining comfort, and to face the dark future, utterly childless, alone, and helpless. And when one of them, Orpah, turned back, though with bitter sorrow at the parting, Naomi had a yet more trying task before her. Ruth had, indeed, fully understood her mother-in-law's meaning; but there was another sacrifice which she must be prepared to make, if she followed Naomi. She must not only be parted from her people, and give up for ever all worldly prospects, but she must also be prepared to turn her back upon her ancestral religion. But Ruth had long made her choice, and the words in which she intimated it have deservedly become almost proverbial in the church. There is such ardor and earnestness about them, such resolution and calmness, as to lift them far above the sphere of mere natural affection or sense of duty. They intimate the deliberate choice of a heart which belongs in the first place to Jehovah, the God of Israel (1:17), and which has learned to count all things but loss for the excellency of this knowledge. Although the story of Ruth has been invested with romance from its sequel, there is nothing romantic about her present resolve. Only the sternest prose of poverty is before her. Not to speak of the exceedingly depressing influence of her language (1:13, 20, 21), Naomi had been careful to take from her any hope of a future, such as she had enjoyed in the past. In truth, the choice of Ruth is wholly unaccountable, except on the ground that she felt herself in heart and by conviction one of a Hebrew household - an Israelitish woman in soul and life, and that although she should in a sense be disowned by those with whom she had resolved to cast in her lot.

There was stir in the quiet little village of Bethlehem - especially among the women* - when Naomi unexpectedly returned after her long absence, and that in so altered circumstances. The lamentations of the widow herself made her even repudiate the old name of Naomi for Mara ("bitter"), for that "Jehovah" had "testified against," and "Shaddai"*** afflicted her. Whether or not Naomi and her acquaintances really understood the true meaning of this "testifying" on the part of Jehovah, certain it is, that the temporary excitement of her arrival soon passed away, and the widow and her Moabite companion were left to struggle on alone in their poverty. Apparently no other near relatives of Elimelech were left, for Boaz himself is designated in the original as "an acquaintance to her husband,"*** though the term indicates also relationship. And thus through the dreary winter months only grew worse and worse, till at last early spring brought the barley-harvest.

* The Hebrew text significantly marks "they said," "call me not" (Ruth 1:20) with the feminine gender.

** Professor Cassel quotes parallel passages from Genesis to show that Shaddai means specially the God Who gives fruitfulness and increase.

*** Not, as in the Authorized Version, "a kinsman of her husband's." The Rabbis make him a nephew of Elimelech, with as little reason as they represent Naomi and Ruth arriving just as they buried the first wife of Boaz! The derivation of the word Boaz is matter of dispute. We still prefer that which would render the name: "in him strength."

It was one of those arrangements of the law, which, by its exquisite kindness and delicacy - in such striking contrast to the heathen customs of the time - shows its Divine origin, that what was dropped, or left, or forgotten in the harvest, was not to be claimed by the owner, but remained, as a matter of right, for the poor, the widows, and emphatically also for the "stranger." As if to confute the later thoughts of Jewish narrowness, "the stranger" alone is mentioned in all the three passages where this command occurs (Leviticus 19:9, 10; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19-22).*

* May we ask those who doubt the early authorship of Deuteronomy, how they account for this circumstance?

Thus would the desolate share in Israel's blessings - and that as of Divine right rather than of human charity, while those who could no longer work for others might, as it were, work for themselves. Yet it must have been a bitter request, when Ruth, as if entreating a favor, asked Naomi's leave to go and glean in the fields, in the hope that she might "find favor" in the sight of master and reapers, so as not to be harshly spoken to, or roughly dealt with. And this was all - all that Ruth had apparently experienced of the "blessedness of following the Lord," for Whose sake she had left home and friends! But there is a sublimeness in the words of Scripture which immediately follow - a carelessness of effect, and yet a startling surprise characteristic of God's dealings. As Ruth went on her bitter errand, not knowing whither, Scripture puts it: - "her hap happened the portion of field belonging to Boaz" - the same Divine "hap" by which sleep fled from Ahasuerus on that decisive night; the same "hap" by which so often, what to the careless onlooker seems a chance "occurrence," is sent to us from God directly.

The whole scene is most vividly sketched. Ruth has come to the field of Boaz; she has addressed herself to "the servant that was set over the reapers," and obtained his leave to "glean" after the reapers, and to "gather in the sheaves."* From early morn she has followed them, and, as the overseer afterwards informs Boaz (2:7), "her sitting in the house," whether for rest or talk, had been "but little."**

* Professor Cassel has pointed out the distinction between the expression "in the sheaves" (2:7) and "between the sheaves" (ver. 15), the former being after the reapers, the latter among them.

** So correctly, and not as in the Authorized Version, which misses the meaning.

And now the sun is high up in the heavens, when Boaz comes among his laborers. In true Israelitish manner he salutes them: "Jehovah with you!" to which they respond, "Jehovah bless thee!" He could not but have known "all the poor" (in the conventional sense) in Bethlehem, and Ruth must have led a very retired life, never seeking company or compassion, since Boaz requires to be informed who the Moabite damsel was. But though a stranger to her personally, the story of Ruth was well known to Boaz. Seen in the light of her then conduct and bearing, its spiritual meaning and her motives would at once become luminous to Boaz. For such a man to know, was to do what God willed. Ruth was an Israelite indeed, brave, true, and noble. She must not go to any other field than his; she must not be treated like ordinary gleaners, but remain there, where he had spoken to her, "by the maidens," so that, as the reapers went forwards, and the maidens

after them to bind the sheaves, she might be the first to glean; she must share the privileges of his household; and he must take care that she should be unmolested.

It is easier, even for the children of God, to bear adversity than prosperity, especially if it come after long delay and unexpectedly. But Ruth was "simple" in heart; or, as the New Testament expresses it, her "eye was single," and God preserved her. And now, in the altered circumstances, she still acts quite in character with her past. She complains not of her poverty; she explains not how unused she had been to such circumstances; but she takes humbly, and with surprised gratitude, that to which she had no claim, and which as a "stranger" she had not dared to expect. Did she, all the while, long for a gleam of heaven's light - for an Israelitish welcome, to tell her that all this came from the God of Israel, and for His sake? It was granted her, and that more fully than she could have hoped. Boaz knew what she had done for man, and what she had given up for God. Hers, as he now assured her, would be recompense for the one, and a full reward of the other, and that from Jehovah, the God of Israel, under Whose wings she had come to trust. And now for the first time, and when it is past, the secret of her long-hidden sorrow bursts from Ruth, as she tells it to Boaz: "Thou hast consoled me, and spoken to the heart of thine handmaid."

What follows seems almost the natural course of events - natural, that Boaz should accord to her the privileges of a kinswoman; natural also, that she should receive them almost unconscious of any distinction bestowed on her - keep and bring home part even of her meal to her mother-in-law (2:18), and still work on in the field till late in the evening (ver. 17). But Naomi saw and wondered at what Ruth's simplicity and modesty could have never perceived. Astonished at such a return of a day's gleaning, she had asked for details, and then, without even waiting to hear her daughter's reply, had invoked God's blessing on the yet unknown dispenser of this kindness. And so Ruth the Moabitess has begun to teach the language of thanksgiving to her formerly desponding Hebrew mother! But when she has told her story, as before to Boaz, so now to Naomi its spiritual meaning becomes luminous. In her weakness, Naomi had murmured; in her unbelief, she had complained; she had deemed herself forsaken of God and afflicted. All the while, however she and hers might have erred and strayed, God had never left off His kindness either to the living or to the dead!* And it is only after she has thus given thanks, that she explains to the astonished Ruth: "The man is near unto us - he is one of our redeemers" (comp. Leviticus 25:25; Deuteronomy 25:5). Still even so, no further definite thoughts seem to have shaped themselves in the mind of either of the women. **And so Ruth continued in quiet work in the fields of Boaz all the barley-harvest and unto the end of the wheat-harvest, a period of certainly not less than two months.**

* It has been rightly observed, that this acknowledgment implied belief in the immortality of the soul - that the dead had not perished, but only gone from hence.

But further thought and observation brought a new resolve to Naomi. The two months which had passed had given abundant evidence of the utter absence of all self-consciousness on the part of Ruth, of her delicacy and modesty in circumstances of no small difficulty. If these rare qualities must have been observed by Naomi, they could not have remained unnoticed by Boaz, as he daily watched her bearing. Nor yet could Ruth have been insensible to the worth, the piety, and the kindness of him who had been the first in Israel to speak comfort to her heart. That, in such circumstances, Naomi, recognizing a true Israelitess in her daughter-in-law, should have sought "rest" for her - and that rest in the house of Boaz, was alike to follow the clear indications of Providence, and what might be called the natural course of events. Thus, then, all the actors in what was to follow were prepared to take their parts. The manner in which it was brought about must not be judged by our western notions, although we are prepared to defend its purity and delicacy in every particular. Nor could Naomi have well done otherwise than

counsel as she did. For the law which fixed on the next-of-kin the duty of redeeming a piece of land (Leviticus 25:25), did not connect with it the obligation of marrying the childless widow of the owner, which (strictly speaking) only devolved upon a brother-in-law (Deuteronomy 25:5); although such seems to have been the law of custom in Bethlehem, and this, as we believe, in strict accordance with the spirit and object, if not with the letter of the Divine commandment. Thus Naomi had no legal claim upon Boaz - not to speak of the fact, of which she must have been aware, that there was a nearer kinsman than he of Elimelech in Bethlehem. Lastly, in accordance with the law, it was not Naomi but Ruth who must lay claim to such marriage (Deuteronomy 25:7, 8).

Yet we should miss the whole spirit of the narrative, if, while admitting the influence of other matters, we were not to recognize that the law of redemption and of marriage with a childless widow, for the purpose of "not putting out a name in Israel," had been the guiding principle in the conduct of all these three - Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz. And, indeed, of the value and importance of this law there cannot be fuller proof than that furnished by this story itself - bearing in mind that from this next-of-kin-union descended David, and, "according to the flesh," the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of David.

Keeping all this in view, we proceed to gather up the threads of our story. By the advice of her mother-in-law, Ruth puts off alike her widow's and her working dress. Festively arrayed as a bride - though, assuredly, not to be admired by Boaz, since the transaction was to take place at night - she goes to the threshing-floor, where, as the wind sprang up at even, Boaz was to winnow his barley. Unobserved, she watcheth where he lies down, and, softly lifting the coverlet, lays herself at his feet. At midnight, accidentally touching the form at his feet, Boaz wakes with a start - and "bent down, and, behold a woman lying at his feet!" In reply to his inquiry, the few words she speaks - exquisitely beautiful in their womanly and Scriptural simplicity - explain her conduct and her motive. Two things here require to be kept in mind: Boaz himself sees nothing strange or unbecoming in what Ruth has done; on the contrary, he praises her conduct as surpassing all her previous claims to his respect. Again, the language of Boaz implies that Ruth, although daring what she had felt to be right, had done it with the fear which, in the circumstances, womanly modesty would prompt. We almost seem to hear the low whispered tones, and the tremor of her voice, as we catch the gentle, encouraging words of Boaz' reply: "My daughter," and as he stills the throbbing of her heart with his kindly-spoken, fatherly: "Fear not!" No thought but of purity and goodness,* and of Israel's law intruded on the midnight converse of those who were honored to become the ancestors of our Lord.

* Professor Cassel reminds us of a legal determination in the Mishnah (Yebam ii. 8), which the learned reader may compare. The reference, though apt, however, rather breaks in as prose upon the sublime beauty of the scene. It needed not such determinations to guard the purity of the threshing-floor of Boaz.

And now he, on his part, has explained to Ruth, how there is yet a nearer kinsman, whose claims must first be set aside, if the law is to be strictly observed. And, assuredly, if observance of the law of redemption, with all that it implied in Israel, had not been the chief actuating motive of Boaz and Ruth, there would have been no need first to refer the matter to the nearer kinsman, since there could be no possible hindrance to the union of those whose hearts evidently belonged to each other.

The conduct of each party having been clearly determined, they lie down again in silence. What remained of the short summer's night soon passed. Before the dawn had so far brightened that one person could have recognized another, she left the threshing-floor, bearing to her mother the gift of her kinsman, as if in pledge that her thoughts had been understood by him, and that her hope concerning the dead and the living would be realized.*

* We mention, without pronouncing any opinion upon it, that some - alike Jews and Christians - have seen a symbolism in the number six of the measures of barley which Ruth brought with her, as if days of work and toil were done, and "rest" about to be granted.

The story now hastens to a rapid close. Early in the morning Boaz goes up to the gate, the usual place for administering law, or doing business. He sits down as one party to a case; calls the unnamed nearer kinsman, as he passes by, to occupy the place of the other party, and ten of the elders as witnesses or umpires - the number ten being not only symbolical of completeness, but from immemorial custom, and afterwards by law, that which constituted a legal assembly. To understand what passed between Boaz and the unnamed kinsman, we must offer certain explanations of the state of the case and of the law applying to it, different from any hitherto proposed. For the difficulty lies in the sale of the property by Naomi - nor is it diminished by supposing that she had not actually disposed of, but was only offering it for sale. In general we may here say, that the law (Numbers 27:8, 11) does not deal with any case precisely similar to that under consideration. It only contemplates one of two things, the death of a childless man, when his next-of-kin (speaking broadly) is bound to marry his widow (Deuteronomy 25:5); or else a forced sale of property through poverty, when the next-of-kin of the original proprietor may redeem the land (Leviticus 25:25). It is evident, that the former must be regarded as a duty, the latter as a privilege attaching to kinship, the object of both being precisely the same, the preservation of the family (rather than of the individual) in its original state. But although the law does not mention them, the same principle would, of course, apply to all analogous cases. Thus it might, for example, be, that a man would marry the widow, but be unable to redeem the property. On the other hand, he never could claim to redeem property without marrying the widow, to whom as the representative of her dead husband the property attached. In any case the property of the deceased husband was vested in a childless widow. In fact, so long as the childless widow lived, no one could have any claim on the property, since she was potentially the heir of her deceased husband. All authorities admit, that in such a case she had the use of the property, and a passage in the Mishnah (Yebam. iv. 3) declares it lawful for her to sell possessions, though it does seem very doubtful whether the expression covers the sale of her deceased husband's land. Such, however, would have been in strict accordance with the principle and the spirit of the law. In the case before us then, the property still belonged to Naomi, though in reversion to Ruth as potentially representing Elimelech and Machlon, while the claim to be married to the next-of-kin could, of course, in the circumstances, only devolve upon Ruth. Thus the property still held by Naomi went, in equity and in law, with the hand of Ruth, nor had any one claim upon the one without also taking the other. No kinsman had performed the kinsman's duty to Ruth, and therefore no kinsman could claim the privilege of redemption connected with the land. With the hand of Ruth the land had, so to speak, been repudiated. But as the kinsman had virtually refused to do his part, and Naomi was unable to maintain her property, she disposed of it, and that quite in the spirit of the law. There was no wrong done to any one. The only ground for passing the land to a kinsman would have been, that he would preserve the name of the dead. But this he had virtually refused to do. On the other hand, it was still open to him to redeem the land, if, at the same time, he would consent to wed Ruth. It would have been the grossest injustice to have allowed the privilege of redeeming a property to the kinsman who refused to act as kinsman. Instead of preserving a name in Israel, it would in reality have extinguished it for ever.

This was precisely the point in discussion between Boaz and the unnamed kinsman. Boaz brought, first, before him the privilege of the kinsman: redemption of the land. This he accepted. But when Boaz next reminded him, that this privilege carried with it a certain duty towards Ruth, and that, if the latter were refused, the former also was forfeited, he ceded his rights to Boaz.* The bargain was ratified according to ancient custom in Israel by a symbolical act, of which we find a modification in Deuteronomy 25:9. Among all ancient nations the "shoe" was a symbol either of departure (Exodus 12:11), or of taking possession (comp. Psalm 60:8).**

* The reason which he assigns (Ruth 4:6), admits of different interpretations. Upon the whole I still prefer the old view, that his son by Ruth would have been the sole heir - the more so, that in this particular case (as we find in the sequel, 4:15) Ruth's son would be obliged to be "the nourisher" of Naomi's "old age."

** A popular illustration of the former is the custom of throwing a shoe after a bride on her departure from her father's home. This also explains the custom of kissing the Pope's slipper, as claiming possession of, and dominion in the Church.

In this instance the kinsman handed his shoe to Boaz - that is, ceded his possession to him. Alike the assembled elders, and those who had gathered around to witness the transaction, cordially hailed its conclusion by wishes which proved, that "all the city knew that Ruth was a virtuous woman," and were prepared to receive the Moabitess as a mother in Israel, even as Tamar had proved in the ancestry of Boaz. It had all been done in God and with God, and the blessing invoked was not withheld. A son gladdened the hearts of the family of Bethlehem. Naomi had now a "redeemer," not only to support and nourish her, nor merely to "redeem" the family property, but to preserve the name of the family in Israel. And that "redeemer" - a child, and yet not a child of Boaz; a redeemer-son, and yet not a son of Naomi - was the father of Jesse. And so the story which began in poverty, famine, and exile leads up to the throne of David. Undoubtedly this was the main object for which it was recorded: to give us the history of David's family; and with his genealogy, traced not in every link but in symbolical outline,* the Book of Ruth appropriately closes. It is the only instance in which a book is devoted to the domestic history of a woman, and that woman a stranger in Israel. But that woman was the Mary of the Old Testament.

* This is not the place to enter into the question of the Old Testament genealogies, but it is evident that five names cannot cover the period of 430 years in Egypt, nor yet other five that from the Exodus to David. On the other hand, it deserves notice that the names mentioned amount exactly to ten - the number of perfection, and that these are again arranged into twice five, each division covering very nearly the same length of period. Edersheim)

1 Samuel

(Two great institutions were now to be prominently brought forward and established, both marking a distinct advance in the history of Israel, and showing forth more fully than before its typical character. These two institutions were the Prophetic Order and the Monarchy. Both are connected with the history of Samuel. And this explains alike why the books which record this part of sacred history bear the name of Samuel, and why they close not with the death of David, as might have been expected in a biography or in a history of his reign, but with the final establishment of his kingdom (2 Samuel 20). At the close of 2 Samuel four chapters (21-24.) are added as a sort of appendix, in which various events are ranged, not chronologically, but in accordance with the general plan and scope of the work, which is: to present Israel as the kingdom of God, and as under the guidance of the spirit of prophecy. This also explains two other peculiarities. In a work compiled with such an object constantly in view, we do not expect, nor do we find in it, a strictly chronological arrangement of events. Again, we notice large gaps in the history of Samuel, Saul, and David, long periods and important facts being omitted, with which the author must have been acquainted - and to which, indeed, in some instances, he afterwards expressly refers, - while other periods and events are detailed at great length. All these peculiarities are not accidental, but designed, and in accordance with the general plan of the work. For, we must bear in mind, that as in the case of other parts of Holy Scripture, so in the Books of Samuel, we must not look for biographies, as of Samuel, Saul, and David, nor yet expect merely an account of their administration, but a history of the kingdom of God during a new period in its development, and in a fresh stage of its onward movement towards the end. That end was the establishment of the kingdom of God in Him to Whom alike the Aaronic priesthood, the prophetic order, and Israel's royalty were intended to point. These three institutions were prominently brought forward in the new period which opens in the books of Samuel.

First, we have in the history of Eli a revival of the interest attaching to the priesthood. Next, we see in Samuel the real commencement of the Old Testament prophetic order. Not that the idea of it was new, or the people unprepared for it. We can trace it so early as in Genesis 20:7 (comp. Psalm 105:15); and we find not only Moses (Deuteronomy 34:10), but even Miriam (Exodus 15:20; Numbers 12:2) designated by the title of prophet; while the character and functions of the office (if "office" and not "mission" be the correct term) are clearly defined in Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:9-22. Edersheim, Vol 4, Ch 1)

SCRIPTURES:

THE FIRST BOOK OF
SAMUEL
OTHERWISE CALLED
THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS
CHAPTER 1

Hannah prays for a son, and vows to give him to the Lord—Eli the priest blesses her—Samuel is born—Hannah loans him to the Lord.

1 NOW there was a certain man of ^aRamathaim-zophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name *was* ^bElkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite:

2 And he had two wives; the name of the one *was* Hannah (**favor, grace**), and the name of the other Peninnah (**pearl or coral**): and Peninnah had children, but **Hannah had ^ano children.** (**Most likely he had two wives because the first had no children.**)

3 And this man went up out of his city ^ayearly (**Passover**) to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in ^bShiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, *were* there. (**Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Hannah had no children. Elkanah went to the temple yearly.**)

4 ¶ And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:

5 But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb. (**Hannah received the portion for two people, twice as much as Peninnah.**)

6 And her adversary also ^aprovoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.

7 And *as* he did so year by year, when she went up to the ^ahouse of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.

8 Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? *am* not I better to thee than ten sons? (**Hannah went to the temple annually.**)

9 ¶ So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a ^aseat by a post of the temple of the LORD.

10 And she *was* in ^abitterness of soul (**or sadness, grief**), and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

11 And she ^avowed a ^bvow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine ^chandmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no ^drazor come upon his head. (**Hannah had in mind a lifelong Nazarite vow for Samuel.**)

12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli ^amarked (**ie saw**) her mouth.

13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have ^apoured out my soul before the LORD.

16 Count not thine handmaid for a ^adaughter of ^bBelial: (Heb worthlessnes; good-for-nothing, base wickedness) for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

17 Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

18 And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*. (Hannah prays and promises that if she has a son, she will give him to the Lord and cause him to be a Nazarite. While Hannah prays, her lips move and Eli thinks she is drunk. Eli promises that her prayers will be answered. Hannah has perfect faith that her prayer will be answered. She was happy first, before her prayer was realized. D&C 98:1-3: 1 VERILY I say unto you my friends, **^afear not, let your hearts be comforted; yea, rejoice evermore, and in everything give ^bthanks; 2 ^aWaiting patiently on the Lord**, for your prayers have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, and are recorded with this seal and testament—the Lord hath sworn and decreed that they shall be granted. 3 Therefore, he giveth this promise unto you, with an immutable covenant that **they shall be fulfilled**; and all things wherewith you have been ^aafflicted shall work together for your ^bgood, and to my name’s glory, saith the Lord.)

19 ¶ And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to ^aRamah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD ^bremembered her.

20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a ^ason, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the LORD. (Hannah has a son named Samuel (heard of God).)

21 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the ^ayearly sacrifice, and his vow.

22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, and *then* I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.

23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. (Elkanah goes to the temple, but Hannah stays behind and says that when Samuel is weaned, then she will take him to the temple to live. Weaning usually lasted until the child was three.)

24 ¶ And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child *was* young.

25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

26 And she said, O my lord, *as* thy soul liveth, my lord, I *am* the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD.

27 For this ^achild I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be ^alent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there. (Hannah brings Samuel to Eli in the temple and gives Samuel to him to be the Lord’s.)

CHAPTER 2

Hannah sings praises to the Lord—Samuel ministers before the Lord—Eli blesses Elkanah and Hannah, and they have sons and daughters—Sons of Eli reject the Lord and live in wickedness—The Lord rejects the house of Eli.

1 AND Hannah ^aprayed, and said, My heart ^brejoiceth in the LORD, mine ^chorn (Heb for horn, used figuratively means power, capacity) is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy ^dsalvation.

2 *There is* ^anone holy as the LORD: for *there is* none beside thee: neither *is there* any ^brock like our

God. (These are prophecies about the Savior.)

3 Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let *not* arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD *is* a God of ^aknowledge, and by him ^bactions are weighed.

4 The bows of the mighty men *are* broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.

5 *They that were* full have hired out themselves for bread; and *they that were* hungry ceased: so that the ^abarren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.

6 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he ^abringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

7 The LORD ^amaketh ^bpoor, and maketh ^crich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

8 He ^araiseth up the ^bpoor out of the dust, *and* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the ^cpillars of the earth *are* the LORD's, and he hath set the world upon them.

9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be ^asilent in darkness; for by ^bstrength shall no man prevail.

10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall ^ajudge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his ^banointed. (In the Septuagint Greek version, the noun is christos) (When she went to the temple at Shiloh to deliver her son to the Lord, by entrusting him to the ministry of the temple under the priest Eli, she prayed a prayer in the form of a song (or poem) of joyous thanksgiving and praise to the Lord. This poem seems to be the model for the Magnificat – Mary's song of thanksgiving which she uttered after the conception of the Savior. Luke 1:46-55: 46 And Mary ^asaid, My soul doth ^bmagnify the Lord, 47 And my spirit hath ^arejoiced in God my ^bSaviour. 48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his ^ahandmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me ^bblessed. 49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great ^athings; and ^bholy *is* his name. 50 And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from generation to generation. 51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the ^aproud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of ^alow degree. 53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. 54 He hath ^aholpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy; 55 As he spake to our ^afathers, to Abraham, and to his ^bseed for ever. David R. Seely, *Studies in Scriptures*, 3:272. Jesus' mother, Mary, was also given to the temple. Mary's parents were Anna & Jehoaikim (McConkie says Jacob). They were wealthy. Anna had trouble having a child and promised the Lord that if he would bless her with a child, she would dedicate that child to the Lord. When the child was born they named her Miriam (Mary). After weaning the child, at about age 3, they took her to the temple to live and be reared by the priests. Such a child was called the candlestick of the Lord. Mary would serve in the temple the spring and fall of the year and spend her summers in Nazareth. Several years later her parents died and she inherited everything that was theirs.)

11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. ^aAnd the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest. (Heb And the youth served the Lord in the presence of Eli, the priest.)

12 ¶ Now the ^asons of Eli *were* ^bsons of ^cBelial; (Meaning they were wicked) they knew not the LORD.

13 And the priests' custom with the people *was, that*, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was ^ain seething (or boiling), with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; ("Of these offerings, the portion which legally fell to the priest as his share was the heave-leg and wave-breast. And this he was to receive after the fat portions of the sacrifice had been burned upon the altar [see Leviticus 7:30–34]. To take the flesh of the sacrificial animal and roast it before this offering had been made, was a crime which was equivalent to a robbery of God. . . . Moreover, the priests could not claim any of the flesh which the offerer of the sacrifice boiled for the sacrificial meal, after burning the fat portions upon the altar and giving up the portions which belonged to them, to say nothing of their taking it forcibly out of the pots while it was being boiled [see 1 Samuel 2:12–17]. Such conduct as this on the part of the young men (the priests' servants), was a great sin in the sight of the Lord, as they thereby brought the sacrifice of the Lord into contempt.") (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 2:2:35–36.)

The poor example of the priests caused others in Israel to abhor “the offering of the Lord” (v. 17). But these actions were not all, for the sons of Eli seduced women and engaged in adulterous acts at the very door of the tabernacle, evidently by misusing their office of priest to entice the women (see v. 22). Under the law of Moses, willful disobedience to parents was punishable by death, and the parents were obliged to see that the punishment was carried out (see Reading 20-9). Hophni and Phinehas compounded their already serious sins by disobeying their father, and Eli failed in his parental responsibility as well as in his office as the presiding priest. Although he rebuked his sons, he took no action to see that the abomination in his family and at the tabernacle was corrected. Therefore, “a man of God” (some unnamed prophet) came to Eli and pronounced the Lord’s curse upon Eli’s house because “[thou] honourest thy sons above me” (vv. 27, 29). That is, Eli’s relationship with his sons was of more value to him than his relationship with God. Institute Manual, 268-69)

14 And he struck *it* into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest ^atook for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest’s servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have ^asodden (or cooked, boiled) flesh of thee, but raw.

16 And *if* any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat ^apresently, (ie first of all) and *then* take *as much* as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, *Nay*; but thou shalt give *it me* now: and if not, I will take *it* by force.

17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men ^aabhorred the offering of the LORD.

18 ¶ But Samuel ministered before the LORD, *being* a child, girded with a linen ^aephod. (BIBLE DICTIONARY - EPHOD - Part of the dress of the high priest (Ex. 29: 6, etc.), shaped like a waistcoat with two shoulder pieces and a girdle. It was of richly variegated material, blue, purple, and scarlet. On the shoulder pieces were two onyx stones on which were engraved the names of the 12 tribes. To the ephod was fastened the Breastplate of Judgment. An ephod of all priests (1 Sam. 22: 18). It was also worn by Samuel (1 Sam. 2: 18), and by David when he brought up the Ark (2 Sam. 6: 14). The ephod at one time became the object of idolatrous worship (Judg. 8: 27; 17: 5). The name may possibly in these last passages have been used to denote an image of some kind.)

19 Moreover his ^amother made him a little coat, and brought *it* to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

20 ¶ And Eli ^ablessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for ^bthe loan (Heb the petition which she asked) which is ^clent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home.

21 And the LORD ^avisited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare **three sons and two daughters**. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.

22 ¶ Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

24 *Nay*, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD’s people to ^atransgress. (Eli does not deal properly with his sons. He is too lenient with them.)

25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall ^ajudge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them. (They were solemnly announced to Eli by a prophet (comp. Judges 13:6), since by his culpable weakness he shared the guilt of his sons. As so often in His dealings with His own people, the Lord condescended to reason, not only to exhibit the rightness of His ways, but to lay down principles for all time for the guidance of His church. Had He not dealt in special grace with the house of Aaron? He had honored it at the first by special revelation; He had singled it out for the privilege of ministering unto Him at the altar; for the still higher function of presenting in the incense the prayers of His people; and for that highest office of "wearing the ephod" in the solemn mediatorial services of the

Day of Atonement. Moreover, He had made ample provision for all their wants. All this had been granted in perpetuity to the house of Aaron (Exodus 29:9). It had been specially confirmed to Phinehas on account of his zeal for the honor of God (Numbers 25:13). But even the latter circumstance, as well as the nature of the case, indicated that the whole rested on a moral relationship, as, indeed, the general principle holds true: "Them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." In accordance with this, Eli and his house would become subjects of special judgment: none of his descendants, so long as they held office, should attain old age (1 Samuel 2:31); in punishment of their own insolence of office they would experience constant humiliation (ver. 32); another and more faithful line of priests should fill the highest office (ver. 35); and the deposed family would have to seek at their hands the humblest places for the sake of the barest necessities of life (ver. 36). Thus justice would overtake a family which, in their pride of office, had dared to treat the priesthood as if it were absolutely their own, and to degrade it for selfish purposes. As for the chief offenders, Hophni and Phinehas, swift destruction would overtake them in one day; and their death would be the sign of the commencement of those judgments, which were to culminate in the time of Solomon (1 Kings 2:27; comp. Josephus' Antiq. 5. 11, 5; 8. 1, 3). Edersheim, Vol 4, Ch 2)

26 And the child Samuel ^agrew on, and was in ^bfavour both with the LORD, and also with men. (Like Jesus)

27 ¶ And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?

28 And did I ^achoose him out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ^bephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the ^cofferings made by fire of the children of Israel?

29 Wherefore ^akick ye (ie treat with scorn) at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded *in my* habitation; and ^bhonourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?

30 Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed *that* thy house, and the ^ahouse of thy father, should ^bwalk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that ^chonour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly ^desteemed.

31 Behold, the ^adays come, that I will ^bcut off thine arm, (arm is another word for power.) and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. (Eli's family is to be destroyed.)

32 And thou shalt see an enemy *in my* habitation, in all *the wealth* which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever.

33 And the man of thine, *whom* I shall not cut off from mine altar, *shall be* to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.

34 And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall ^adie both of them.

35 And I will ^araise me up a faithful ^bpriest, *that* shall do according to *that* which *is* in mine heart and in my mind: and ^cI will build him a sure house; (ie his progeny shall be perpetuated) and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

36 And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left in thine house shall come *and* crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

(D&C 121: 34 Behold, there are many ^acalled, (Joseph Fielding Smith: Now who are those who are called? I take it that every man who is ordained to an office in the priesthood has been called. The Lord is willing that any man should serve him. (CR, October 1945, p. 97.)) but few are chosen. (Elder David A. Bednar: **To be or to become chosen is not an exclusive status conferred upon us. Rather, you and I ultimately determine if we are chosen.** Please now note the use of the word *chosen* in the following verses from the Doctrine and Covenants: "Behold, there are many called, but few are *chosen*."

And why are they not *chosen*? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men" (D&C 121:34–35; emphasis added). I believe the implication of these verses is quite straightforward. God does not have a list of favorites to which we must hope our names will someday be added. **He does not limit "the chosen" to a restricted few. Rather, it is *our hearts and our aspirations and our obedience which definitively determine whether we are counted as one of God's chosen.*** Enoch was instructed by the Lord on this very point of doctrine. Please note the use of the word *choose* in these verses: "Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency; "And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should *choose* me, their Father" (Moses 7:32–33; emphasis added). **As we learn in these scriptures, the fundamental purposes for the gift of agency were to love one another and to choose God. Thus we become God's chosen and invite His tender mercies as we use our agency to choose God.** One of the most well-known and frequently cited passages of scripture is found in Moses 1:39. This verse clearly and concisely describes the work of the Eternal Father: "For behold, this is *my work* and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (emphasis added). A companion scripture found in the Doctrine and Covenants describes with equal clarity and conciseness our primary work as the sons and daughters of the Eternal Father. Interestingly, this verse does not seem to be as well known and is not quoted with great frequency. "Behold, this is *your work*, to keep my commandments, yea, with all your might, mind and strength" (D&C 11:20; emphasis added). Thus, the Father's work is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His children. Our work is to keep His commandments with all of our might, mind, and strength—and we thereby become chosen and, through the Holy Ghost, receive and recognize the tender mercies of the Lord in our daily lives. CR Apr 2005.) **And why are they not chosen?** (The Prophet Joseph Smith drew upon the experiences of the previous months to pen these inspired words. These thoughts reflect the sorrow of seeing friends become traitors and then war against the Saints. They were given by way of explanation as to how those who had been sustained as presiding authorities of the Church could apostatize and become enemies of the kingdom of God. It was a difficult lesson for the Saints to endure—that wickedness may be found even among those of high and holy station. The Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, the presidency of the Church in Missouri, and six members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had lost their rights to and the authority of the priesthood. Foremost among those who betrayed the Saints was Thomas B. Marsh, former president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. After the Saints had been driven from Nauvoo, Illinois, and settled in the Rocky Mountains, he went to Salt Lake City, where he confessed to the wrongs he had committed and pleaded for forgiveness. He was called on to speak to the Saints at the Tabernacle. Marsh stated: "Many have said to me, 'How is it that a man like you, who understood so much of the revelations of God as recorded in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, should fall away?' . . . "I have sought diligently to know the Spirit of Christ since I turned my face Zionward, and I believe I have obtained it. I have frequently wanted to know how my apostasy began, and I have come to the conclusion that I must have lost the Spirit of the Lord out of my heart. "The next question is, 'How and when did you lose the Spirit?' I became jealous of the Prophet, and then I saw double, and overlooked everything that was right, and spent all my time in looking for the evil; and then, when the Devil began to lead me, it was easy for the carnal mind to rise up, which is anger, jealousy, and wrath. I could feel it within me; I felt angry and wrathful; and the Spirit of the Lord being gone, as the Scriptures say, I was blinded, and I thought I saw a beam in brother Joseph's eye, but it was nothing but a mote, and my own eye was filled with the beam; but I thought I saw a beam in his, and I wanted to get it out; and, as brother Heber says, I got mad, and I wanted everybody else to be mad. I talked with Brother Brigham and Brother Heber, and I wanted them to be mad like myself; and I saw they were not mad, and I got madder still because they were not. Brother Brigham, with a cautious look, said, 'Are you the leader of the Church, brother Thomas?' I answered, 'No.' 'Well then,' said he, 'Why do you not let that alone?' "Well, this is about the amount of

my hypocrisy—I meddled with that which was not my business" (Journal of Discourses, 5:206-7). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 953-54)

35 Because their ^ahearts are set so much upon the things of this ^bworld, and ^caspire to the ^dhonors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—

36 **That the ^arights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, (Power in the priesthood differs from authority in the priesthood in that it does not come by the laying on of hands but rather through righteousness, faith, and knowledge. Thus, no two priesthood holders have the same power in their priesthood. To give, for instance, a patriarchal blessing, one must both hold the office of a patriarch and be so living as to enjoy a rich outpouring of the spirit of revelation. The office comes by ordination; the inspiration or ability to receive revelation comes through the companionship of the Holy Ghost, having a clear understanding of the principles of the gospel, and experience in responding to the direction of the Spirit. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 954-55) and that the powers of heaven cannot be ^bcontrolled nor handled only upon the ^cprinciples of righteousness.**

37 That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to ^acover our ^bsins, or to gratify our ^cpride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or ^ddominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens ^ewithdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. (Wilford Woodruff: You cannot use the priesthood for any other purpose under heaven but to build up the kingdom and do the will of God; and when you attempt to do otherwise your power will be taken from you. (CR, April 1880, p. 83.))

38 Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to ^akick against the pricks, (This imagery comes from the direction of the Lord to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-5). The image elicited is of an ox resisting its owner's sharp goading stick by kicking back against it, only to drive the sharp point into its hoof. The message is that those who fight against the Lord or his people destroy themselves with self-inflicted wounds. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 955) to ^bpersecute the saints, and to ^cfight against God.

39 We have learned by sad experience (Orson F. Whitney: All men who hold position do not abuse its privileges, and the man who serves God humbly and faithfully never will, for the moment he yielded to the temptation so to do, that moment would he cease to serve the Lord; but there are many, alas! who sadly misuse the functions of their office, and prostitute every power and privilege to the gratification of self and the injury and embarrassment of their fellow men. It is dangerous to put some men into power. They swell up and become so distended with the ideas of their greatness and importance, that we are forcibly reminded of so many inflated toy balloons, which the slightest prick of a pin would burst and ruin forever. A very small office and a very little authority is sufficient to intoxicate some men and render them entirely unfit for duty. In Rich, Scrapbook of Mormon Literature, 2:511-12) that it is the ^anature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little ^bauthority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise ^cunrighteous dominion. (The priesthood bears the name Melchizedek, which means "king of righteousness." The priesthood holder is expected to be a king, one who rules and reigns in righteousness. Anything that is unrighteous stands outside the bounds, or dominion, of his kingdom. Revelations of the Revelation, p. 955)

40 Hence many are called, but ^afew are chosen.

41 **(Verses 41-46: These verses are the foundation of power to preside in the priesthood in time and in eternity, and reveal how God the Father exercises power and authority. Each of the approaches and characteristics mentioned reveal his nature. The doctrine of the priesthood contained herein includes truths by which we may become like him. He is a "Man of Holiness" (Moses 6:57). Through the spirit of truth, he invites his children to do good without force or compulsion (Moroni 7:16). He is long-suffering as he waits for them to discover and learn the exactness and veracity of his doctrines. He is gentle and meek in teaching them truth and allowing**

them to make it part of their lives. He does not seek his own good but does all things out of pure love for his children. He does not feign love as a disguise for manipulating and controlling them. Even in his chastisement, his motive is pure love (D&C 95:1). He does not seek to dominate by virtue of his fatherhood. In the words of Alma, he asks his children to "give place" in their hearts for the truths he teaches them (Alma 32:27). He is virtuous in thought and deed, possessing perfect purity. We know that we may put our everlasting trust and faith in him. All who give him dominion over them do so with the utmost confidence in his sincere and fatherly intent to bring to pass their immortality and eternal life. The grand secret of presiding in the priesthood is that there is power in righteousness. Virtuous beings will freely give honor and glory to their Father, who is in every respect a "Man of Holiness." The guidelines in these verses are given as truths that cannot be trampled upon. Each priesthood bearer must learn them and make them part of his character if he is to ever preside over a family in righteousness. Likewise, those who are called to presiding offices in the Church should govern upon these principles of righteousness. By doing so they will also receive power in the priesthood within their sphere of teaching and presiding over the Saints. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 955-56) No ^apower or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the ^bpriesthood, only by ^cpersuasion, by ^dlong-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

42 By ^akindness, and pure ^bknowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the ^csoul without ^dhypocrisy, and without ^eguile— (Joseph F. Smith: Change the focus of your view, and of your eyes, from watching for evil to watching for that which is good, that which is pure, and leading, prompting those who err into that path which has no error in it, and that will not admit of mistakes. Look for good in men, and where they fail to possess it try to build it up in them; try to increase the good; and speak as little about the evil as you possibly can. It does not do any good to magnify evil, to publish evil or to promulgate it by tongue or pen. There is no good to be obtained by it. (CR, April 1913, pp. 7-8.))

43 ^aReproving betimes (Betimes means at an early time, in good time, in due time, while there is yet time, before it is too late, in a short time, soon, speedily. Oxford Dictionary) with ^bsharpness, (Sharpness means with clarity) when ^cmoved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of ^dlove toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; (Those who cherish truth know that **chastening may be a manifestation of love** (D&C 95:1). "A frank and open rebuke provoketh a good man to emulation," the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote from Liberty Jail; "and in the hour of trouble he will be your best friend"(History of the Church, 3:295). **"If you are ever called upon to chasten a person," President Brigham Young counseled, "never chasten beyond the balm you have within you to bind up"** (Journal of Discourses, 9:124-25). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 956)

44 That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of ^adeath.

45 Let thy ^abowels also be full of charity towards all men, (Joseph Fielding Smith: Considering the fact that at the time this epistle was written [Section 121] the Prophet and his fellow prisoners were suffering intensely and unjustly at the hands of their enemies the nobleness and greatness of his character stands out most clearly. When we consider that he could write in the spirit of forgiveness, charity and humility, such as we find in this great document, we know surely the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. I repeat, that this is one of the great letters ever written. This we discover when we take the time to analyze it. Not all of this communication has been placed in the Doctrine and Covenants as revelation. It does appear in full in the Documentary History, Vol. 3, pages 289-305. The closing paragraphs of Section 121 are wonderfully inspiring and contain a beauty of sentiment and promise that should rejoice the heart of every Latter-day Saint: [Sec. 121:45-46, quoted.] (CHMR, 1949, 3:199-200.)) and to the household of faith, and let ^bvirtue garnish (to prepare, to equip, to protect, or to arm) thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy ^cconfidence wax strong in the ^dpresence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood (Bruce R. McConkie: **"What then is the doctrine of the priesthood? And how shall we live as the servants of the Lord? This doctrine is that God our Father is a glorified, a perfected,**

and an exalted being who has all might, all power, and all dominion, who knows all things and is infinite in all his attributes, and who lives in the family unit. It is that our Eternal Father enjoys this high status of glory and perfection and power because his faith is perfect and his priesthood is unlimited. It is that priesthood is the very name of the power of God, and that if we are to become like him, we must receive and exercise his priesthood or power as he exercises it. It is that he has given us an endowment of heavenly power here on earth, which is after the order of his Son and which, because it is the power of God, is of necessity without beginning of days or end of years. It is that we can enter an order of the priesthood named the new and everlasting covenant of marriage (see D&C 131:2), named also the patriarchal order, because of which order we can create for ourselves eternal family units of our own, patterned after the family of God our Heavenly Father. It is that we have power, by faith, to govern and control all things, both temporally and spiritual; to work miracles and perfect lives; to stand in the presence of God and be like him because we have gained his faith, his perfections and his power, or in other words the fulness of his priesthood. This, then, is the doctrine of the priesthood, than which there neither is nor can be anything greater. This is the power we can gain through faith and righteousness. Truly, there is power in the priesthood—power to do all things! If the world itself was created by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can move mountains and control the elements. If one-third of the hosts of heaven were cast down to earth by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can put at defiance the armies of nations or stay the fall of atomic bombs. If all men shall be raised from mortality to immortality by the power of the priesthood, surely that same power can cure the diseased and the dying and raise the dead. Truly there is power in the priesthood—a power which we seek to acquire to us, a power which we devoutly pray may rest upon us and upon our posterity forever" (Conference Report, April 1982, 50.) **shall distil upon thy soul as the dew from heaven.**

46 The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant ^acompanion, (Heber C. Kimball: **The Holy Ghost in the people of God will control not only our domestic animals, our families, our servants, and our handmaids, but it will control the armies of men that are in the world, the mountains, seas, streams of water, tempests, famines and pestilence and every destructive power, that they come not nigh unto us, just as much as we can keep sickness from us by the power of faith and prayer and good works. If we live our religion, we shall never suffer as the world suffers. We shall not be perplexed with famine and pestilence, with the caterpillar, and other destructive insects which the Lord will send in the last days to afflict the wicked. (JD, October 7, 1859, 7:330.)) **and thy scepter** (A scepter is a staff or rod, which, like a throne or a crown, is a symbol of kingship and its accompanying authority and power. In this text we are told that the authority and power of the Melchizedek Priesthood centers in the principles of "righteousness and truth." The word righteousness literally means "to move in a straight line," it is to be "up right," and "virtuous." Truth, as used here, carries the idea of conformity to correct principles or doctrines. Thus, the authority and power of the priesthood centers in the "up right" or "virtuous" application of eternal principles or the light of heaven. This meaning is captured in the name Melchizedek, by which the priesthood is known. It naturally follows that the priesthood of God will never be found conscribing agency. All that is done in the Church and kingdom of God must represent free will and be accomplished by "persuasion, by long- suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned" (v. 41). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 957) **an unchanging scepter of ^brighteousness and truth; and thy ^cdominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever.** (Rudger Clawson: How extremely sacred is the Holy Priesthood, which is nothing more nor less than divine authority committed unto man. . . . "Whoso," (meaning any man and every man), "is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling," [Sec. 84:33] will enter into the possession of all things, for he will become a joint heir with Jesus Christ, the Lord, in such possession. Now, I ask you, what more could a faithful high priest receive than the promise of this blessing? Could he receive any more if he were an apostle? Could he receive any more if he were a counselor in the Presidency of the**

Church? Could he receive any more if he were the President of the Church, than a promise which gives to him a joint heirship in all things? No, he could not. And so it is with the faithful seventy, and so with the faithful elder in the Church. There is no need for envy. There is no need for overweening ambition. There is no need to reach out and try to grasp that to which we are not entitled. The essential thing is that every man should see to it, that he obtains the High Priesthood. If he advances no further than the office of an elder but is faithful in the magnifying of his calling, he will enter into his glory and exaltation and will receive the fulness of which the record speaks. (CR, October 1917, pp. 28-29.)

CHAPTER 3

The Lord calls Samuel—House of Eli not purged by sacrifices and offerings—Samuel recognized as a prophet by all Israel—The Lord appears to him.

1 AND the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious (scarce) in those days; *there was no open* ^avision. (The word *precious* as used here means “scarce.” The word of God was seldom heard in all the land. Elder Harold B. Lee explained why as follows: “The story commences with a significant statement. “‘And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.’ (I Samuel 3:1) . . . That means that there was no prophet upon the earth through whom the Lord could reveal his will, either by personal experience, or by revelation. And it came to pass that Eli was laid down in his place and his eyes were dim, and Samuel the boy also lay down to his sleep, and you remember through that night there came a call, ‘Samuel,’ and thinking that Eli had called him he went to Eli’s room to be told that Eli had not called him. And he lay down the second time again to be called, and yet the third time. And by this time Eli, sensing the fact that he was being spoken to by an unseen speaker, said, ‘The next time that you hear, then you shall answer, “Here I am Lord, speak to me.”’ And so the next time when the call came, Samuel answered as he had been directed. Now it says, ‘Samuel (up to this time) did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord revealed unto him.’ And after he had recognized the Lord and said, ‘Thy servant heareth,’ then he was told that the Lord was to proceed to ‘do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it, shall tingle.’ And then he explained the reason why Eli could not receive further messages from the Lord. ‘His sons make themselves vile, and he restrained them not,’ or in other words he allowed his sons to curse God and therefore were leading the people of Israel astray.” (“*But Arise and Stand upon Thy Feet*”—and I Will Speak with Thee, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year, Provo, 7 Feb. 1956, p. 2.)

2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli *was* laid down in his place, and his ^aeyes began to wax dim, *that* he could not see;

3 And ere the ^alamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God *was*, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*;

4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here *am* I.

5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6 And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And the LORD came, and ^astood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy ^bservant heareth. (Why didn’t Samuel get his instructions from the Lord

through Eli? The Lord immediately explained the symbolism of Samuel's three fruitless visits to Eli. The chain of authority had been circumvented and changed. Because of the iniquity of Eli's sons, his house was destined for destruction. And just as the house of Eli was to decrease, Samuel was to increase. A new prophet had been called, and Samuel became the direct recipient and dispenser of the word of the Lord to Israel. David R. Seely, *Studies in Scriptures*, 3:273)

11 ¶ And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall ^atingle.

12 In that day I will perform ^aagainst Eli all *things* which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13 For I have told him that I will ^ajudge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his ^bsons made themselves vile, and he ^crestrained them not. (Lack of parental discipline)

14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

15 ¶ And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel ^afeared to shew Eli the vision.

16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here *am* I.

17 And he said, What *is* the thing that *the* LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide *it* not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide *any* thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee. (Eli asked for it.)

18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It *is* the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.

19 ¶ And Samuel ^agrew, and the ^bLORD was ^cwith him, and did let none of his words ^dfall to the ground. ("You need have no fear that when one of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ delivers a prophecy in the name of Jesus Christ, because he is inspired to do that, that it will fall by the wayside. I know of more than one prophecy, which, looking at it naturally, seemed as though it would fall to the ground as year after year passed. But lo and behold, in the providences of the Lord, that prophecy was fulfilled." (Grant, *Gospel Standards*, p. 68.))

20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel *was* ^aestablished *to be* a prophet of the LORD.

21 And the LORD ^aappeared again in ^bShiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the ^cword of the LORD. (It was still night, though the dawn was near.* The holy oil in the seven-branched candlestick in the holy place was burning low, but its light had not yet gone out, when a voice calling Samuel by his name wakened him from sleep. As Eli's eyes had begun to "wax dim," so that he would require the aid of the young Levite on ministry, it was natural to infer that it was the voice of the aged high-priest that had called him.** But it was not so, and Samuel again laid him down to rest. A second time the same voice called him, and a second time he repaired in vain to Eli for his commands. But when yet a third time the call was repeated, the high-priest understood that it was not some vivid dream which had startled the youth from his sleep, but that a voice from heaven commanded his attention. There is such simplicity and child-like faith, such utter absence of all intrusive curiosity, and such entire self-forgetfulness on the part of Eli, and on that of Samuel such complete want of all self-consciousness, as to render the surroundings worthy of the scene about to be enacted. Samuel no longer seeks sleep; but when next the call is heard, he answers, as directed by his fatherly teacher:

"Speak,*** for Thy servant heareth." Then it was that not, as before, merely a voice, but a vision was granted him, |* when Jehovah repeated in express terms, this time not in warning prediction, but as the announcement of an almost immediate event, the terrible judgment impending upon Eli and his sons. * The expression, "ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord," seems intended to mark the time, as indicated by us in the text. ** This seems to be the reason why the fact is mentioned, that Eli's eyes had begun to wax dim. *** It is remarkable, as indicative of Samuel's reverential fear, that his reply differs from that taught him by Eli in the omission of the word "Jehovah." |* This is implied in the

words, "Jehovah came and stood" (1 Samuel 3:10). The "voice" had come from out of the most holy place, where the Lord dwelt between the Cherubim; the "vision" or appearance, in whatever form it may have been, was close before Samuel. In the one case Samuel had been asleep, in the other he was fully awake. With the burden of this communication upon him, Samuel lay still till the gray morning light; nor, whatever thoughts might crowd upon him, did the aged high-priest seek to intrude into what might pass between that Levite youth and the Lord, before Whom he had stood for so many years in the highest function of the priestly office, and into Whose immediate Presence in the innermost sanctuary he had so often entered. Suffice it, the vision and the word of Jehovah had passed from himself - passed not to his sons and successors in the priesthood, but to one scarce grown to manhood, and whose whole history, associated as it was with that very tabernacle, stood out so vividly before him. This itself was judgment. But what further judgment had the voice of the Lord announced to His youthful servant? And now it was morning, and Samuel's duty was to open the gates of the sanctuary. What was he to do with the burden which had been laid upon him? In his reverence for his teacher and guide, and in his modesty, he could not bring himself unbidden to speak of that vision; he trembled to repeat to him whom most it concerned the words which he had heard. But the sound of the opening gates conveyed to Eli, that whatever might have been the commission to the young prophet, it had been given, and there could be no further hesitation in asking its import. Feeling that he and his family had been its subject, and that, however heavy the burden, it behooved him to know it, he successively asked, entreated, and even conjured Samuel to tell it in all its details. So challenged, Samuel dared not keep back anything. And the aged priest, however weak and unfaithful, yet in heart a servant of the Lord, received it with humiliation and resignation, though apparently without that resolve of change which alone could have constituted true repentance (1 Samuel 3:17, 18). By the faithful discharge of a commission so painful, and involving such self-denial and courage, Samuel had stood the first test of his fitness for the prophetic office. Henceforth "the word of the Lord" was permanently with him. Not merely by isolated commissions, but in the discharge of a regular office, Samuel acted as prophet in Israel. A new period in the history of the kingdom of God had commenced; and all Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, knew that there was now a new link between them and their Heavenly King, a living center of guidance and fellowship, and a bond of union for all who were truly the Israel of God. Edersheim, Vol 4, Ch 2)

(These chapters deal with Israel's loss of the ark of God to the Philistines. (See the accompanying map to locate most of the places mentioned in these chapters.) The Israelites viewed the ark as the visible symbol of the presence of God, but bringing the ark from Shiloh on this occasion was a demonstration of Israel's state of spiritual wickedness rather than a demonstration of their faith. "They vainly supposed that the ark could save them, when the God of it had departed from them because of their wickedness. They knew that in former times their fathers had been beaten by their enemies, when they took not the ark with them to battle; as in the case of their wars with the Canaanites, [see Numbers 14:44-45]; and that they had *conquered* when they took this with them, as in the case of the destruction of Jericho, [see Joshua 6:4]. From the latter clause they took confidence; but the cause of their miscarriage in the former they laid not to heart." (Clarke, *Bible Commentary*, 2:219.) Great disaster followed the appearance of the ark among the troops because of Israel's wickedness. Israel suffered a resounding defeat, Hophni and Phinehas were slain, and the ark was captured. News of the capture of the ark and of the death of his sons caused Eli such consternation that he lost his balance on his seat (see Reading 24-4), fell over backwards, and died, thus fulfilling the prophecy that his house would come to a tragic end (see 1 Samuel 2:27-36). Institute Manual, 269-70)

CHAPTER 4

Israelites smitten and defeated by Philistines, who also capture the ark of God—Eli's sons slain; he dies in an accident; and his daughter-in-law dies in childbirth.

1 AND the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside ^aEben-ezer: and the Philistines pitched in ^bAphek.

2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

3 ¶ And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ^aark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

4 So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth *between* the ^acherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What *meaneth* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. (Such an event as the removal of the ark from the sanctuary, and its presence in the camp, had never happened since the settlement of Israel in Canaan. Its arrival, betokening to their minds the certain renewal of miraculous deliverances such as their fathers had experienced, excited unbounded enthusiasm in Israel, and caused equal depression among the Philistines. But soon another mood prevailed. Edersheim, Vol 4, Ch 3)

7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.

8 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these ^amighty Gods? these *are* the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

9 Be strong, and ^aquit yourselves (or be men) like ^bmen, O ye Philistines, that ye be not ^cservants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

10 ¶ And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were ^aslain.

12 ¶ And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes ^arent, and with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told *it*, all the city cried out.

14 And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his ^aeyes were dim, that he could not see.

16 And the man said unto Eli, I *am* he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son?

17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the ^aseat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years. (Whether we regard ver. 9 as the language of the leaders of the Philistines, addressed to their desponding followers, or as the desperate resolve of men who felt that all was at stake, this time they waited not to be attacked by the Israelites. In the battle which ensued, and the flight of Israel which followed, no less than thirty thousand dead strewed the ground. In the number of the slain were Hophni and Phinehas, and among the booty the very ark of God was taken! Thus fearfully did judgment commence in the house of Eli; thus terribly did God teach the lesson that even the

most sacred symbol connected with His immediate Presence was in itself but wood and gold, and so far from being capable of doing wonders, might even be taken and carried away. Tidings of this crashing defeat were not long in reaching Shiloh. Just outside the gate of the sanctuary, by the way which a messenger from the battlefield must come, sat the aged high-priest. His eyes were "stiffened" by age, but his hearing was keen as he waited with anxious heart for the expected news. The judgment foretold, the presence of his two sons with the army in the field, the removal of the ark, without any Divine authority, at the bidding of a superstitious people, must have filled him with sad misgivings. Had he been right in being a consenting party to all this? Had he been a faithful father, a faithful priest, a faithful guardian of the sanctuary? And now a confused noise as of a tumult reached him. Up the slopes which led to Shiloh, "with clothes rent and earth upon his head," in token of deepest meaning, ran a Benjamite, a fugitive from the army. Past the high-priest he sped, without stopping to speak to him whose office had become empty, and whose family was destroyed. Now he has reached the market-place; and up and down those steep, narrow streets fly the tidings. They gather around him; they weep, they cry out in the wildness of their grief, and "the noise of the crying" is heard where the old man sits alone still waiting for tidings. The messenger is brought to him. Stroke upon stroke falls upon him the fourfold disaster: "Israel is fled!" "a great slaughter among the people!" "thy two sons are dead!" "the ark of God is taken!" It is this last most terrible blow, rather than anything else, which lays low the aged priest. As he hears of the ark of God, he falls backward unconscious, and is killed in the fall by "the side of the gate" of the sanctuary. Thus ends a judgeship of forty years! Edersheim, Vol 4, Ch 3)

19 ¶ And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *near* to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

20 And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard *it*.

21 And she named the child ^aI-chabod, (ie where is the glory?) (no glory) saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.

22 And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.

CHAPTER 5

Philistines place the ark in house of Dagon their god—Philistines in Ashdod, then Gath, and then Ekron are plagued and slain because the ark is lodged with them.

1 AND the Philistines took the ^aark of God, and brought it from ^bEben-ezer unto Ashdod.

2 When the Philistines took the ^aark of God, they brought it into the house of ^bDagon, and set it by Dagon. (Dagon was one of the gods of the Philistines. Since the Philistines believed that Dagon had given them victory over Israel, the ark was brought into Dagon's temple and deposited at his feet as a war trophy. Institute Manual, 270)

3 ¶ And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.

4 And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *were* cut off upon the threshold; only *the stump of* Dagon was left to him.

5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.

6 But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with ^aemerods, (or tumors, boils) *even* Ashdod and the coasts thereof. (Because the word translated *emerod* means "an inflamed tumor," many have assumed that the Philistines were smitten with hemorrhoids and thus were motivated to send the ark back to Israel. The description of the effects of the

emerods on the Philistines suggests something far more serious than hemorrhoids, however, although that ailment can be very painful. Many died, and those who did not seem to have endured great suffering (see 1 Samuel 5:10–12). Josephus indicated that it was “a very destructive disease” involving dysentery, bleeding, and severe vomiting (see *Antiquities of the Jews*, bk. 6, chap. 1, par. 1). Josephus also mentioned a great plague of mice that accompanied the disease. Although no direct mention is made of the plague of rodents, when the Philistines sought to placate Jehovah’s wrath upon them by returning the ark, they sent five golden emerods and five golden mice as well (see 1 Samuel 6:4). The severity of the disease and the fact that rodents were involved lead many scholars to conclude that what smote the Philistines was bubonic plague. Bubonic plague gets its name from the buboes, or tumorous swellings, in the lymph glands. These tumors settle particularly in the area of the groin. This fact would explain the “secret parts” mentioned in 1 Samuel 5:9. It is well known that rats and mice are the main carriers of this disease, for the fleas that transmit the disease to man live on rodents. The disease is accompanied by great suffering and pain, and the fatality rate may run as high as 70 percent in a week’s time. (See Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v., “medicine,” p. 598; Douglas, *New Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “emerods,” p. 368.) Small wonder that the Philistines were anxious to return the ark to Israel. The ancient Philistines were very superstitious. They, like many others during the world’s history, believed that an image made to represent an actual object might be used to ward off evil powers. Such appears to have been their thinking in making golden images of the emerods and the mice and sending them as a “trespass offering” (v. 8) with the ark back to Israelite territory. Institute Manual, 270)

7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that *it was* so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.

8 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto ^aGath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about *thither*.

9 And it was *so*, that, after they had carried it about, the ^ahand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts.

10 ¶ Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.

11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

12 And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

CHAPTER 6

Philistines send back the ark with an offering—The Lord smites and slays Israelites in Beth-shemesh who look into the ark.

1 AND the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the ^adiviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.

3 And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a ^atrespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.

4 Then said they, What *shall be* the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague *was* on you all, and on your lords.

5 Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give ^aglory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.

6 Wherefore then do ye ^aharden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh ^bhardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?

7 Now therefore make a new cart, and take two ^amilch kine, (or milk cows) on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:

8 And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a ^acoffer (or basket, chest, trunk especially for valuables) by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go.

9 And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Beth-shemesh, *then* he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that *it is* not his hand *that* smote us; *it was* a chance *that* happened to us.

10 ¶ And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home:

11 And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their ^aemerods.

12 And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, *and* went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh.

13 And *they of* Beth-shemesh *were* reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it*.

14 And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where *there was* a great stone: and they ^aclave (or split, cut up) the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD.

15 And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that *was* with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put *them* on the great stone: and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD.

16 And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day.

17 And these *are* the golden emerods which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;

18 And the golden mice, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging to* the five lords, *both of* ^afenced cities, (or fortified) and of country villages, even unto the great *stone of* Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: *which stone remaineth* unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite.

19 ¶ And he ^asmote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had ^blooked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten *many* of the people with a great slaughter. (“Concerning the men of Beth-shemesh who were smitten for sacrilege, the Hebrew account says, ‘And he smote among the people seventy men, fifty thousand men. . . .’ It is not a proper Hebrew expression for 50,070. The ‘fifty thousand men’ appears to be an added phrase, or gloss. The septuagint and Josephus both have merely ‘seventy men.’” (Rasmussen, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1:163.) Exactly what they did to bring the curse upon them is not clear. If it was merely looking upon the ark, then one wonders why all were not smitten. Bible scholars have indicated that the Hebrew word translated *looked* actually means “to look upon or at a thing with lust or malicious pleasure” (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 2:2:69). Remembering that the lid of the ark with the cherubim on it was solid gold and the ark itself was covered with gold plating (see Exodus 25:10–18), it is possible that these residents of Beth-shemesh looked upon the ark with covetous eyes, or at least upon the golden emerods and mice that were sent with it. But whatever the specific reason for the deaths, the lesson was clear. The ark of the covenant was a physical symbol of the

living presence of Jehovah. Any unholiness, whether Philistine or Israelite, was not to be tolerated. Institute Manual, 270. The Authorised Version translates in ver. 19, "they had looked into the ark," following in this the Rabbis. But this view is scarcely tenable. Nor is the rendering of other interpreters satisfactory: "They looked (in the sense of curious gazing) at the ark," although this assuredly comes within the range of the warning, Numbers 4:20. But the whole text here seems corrupted. Thus in the statement that "He smote threescore and ten men," the addition "of the people, 50,000," has - judging it both on linguistic and rational grounds - unquestionably crept into the text by the mistake of a copyist. But Thenius points out other linguistic anomalies, which lead to the inference that there may be here some farther corruption of the text. Accordingly, he adopts the reading from which the LXX. translated: "And the sons of Jechonias rejoiced not among the men of Beth-shemesh, that they saw the ark of the Lord." Edersheim, Vol 4, Ch 3)

20 And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?

21 ¶ And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ^aark of the LORD; come ye down, *and* fetch it up to you.

CHAPTER 7

Samuel exhorts Israel to forsake Ashtaroth and Baalim and serve the Lord—Israel fasts and seeks the Lord—Philistines are subdued—Samuel judges Israel.

1 AND the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ^aark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

2 And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD. (The sanctuary, destitute of the ark, and tended by a decrepit priesthood, over which the doom had been pronounced, had apparently fallen into utter disregard. The ark, carried captive into Philistia, but having proved a conqueror there, had indeed been restored to Israel, but was rather a witness of the past than the symbol of present help. The only living hope of Israel centered in the person of Samuel. Although, since the death of Eli, no longer attached to the sanctuary, which indeed his mission to a certain extent set aside, his spiritual activity had not been interrupted. Known and owned as prophet, he closely watched, and at the proper time decisively directed the religious movement in Israel. That decisive hour had now come. Twenty years had passed since the return of the ark - a period, as we gather from the subsequent history, outwardly of political subjection to the Philistine, and spiritually of religious depression, caused by the desolateness of their sanctuary, and the manifest absence of the Lord from among His people. It was no doubt due to the influence of Samuel that these feelings led them towards the Lord. In the language of Scripture, they "lamented after Jehovah." But this was only preparatory. It was Samuel's work to direct to a happy issue the change which had already begun. His earnest message to all Israel now was: "If with all your hearts you are returning to Jehovah," - implying in the expression that repentance was primarily of the heart, and by the form of the Hebrew verb, that that return had indeed commenced and was going on - "put away the strange gods (Baalim, ver. 4), and the Ashtaroth, and make firm your hearts towards Jehovah" - in opposition to the former vacillation and indecision - "and serve Him alone." To Israel so returning with their whole heart, and repenting alike by the removal of their sin, and by exercising lively faith, Jehovah would, as of old, prove a Savior - in the present instance, from the Philistines. Edersheim, Vol 4, Ch 4)

3 ¶ And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do ^areturn unto the LORD with all your hearts, *then* ^bput away the strange ^cgods and ^dAshtaroth (ie the images of the fertility goddess) from among you, and prepare your ^ehearts unto the LORD, and ^fserve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

4 Then the children of Israel did put away ^aBaalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to ^aMizpeh, and I will ^bpray for you unto the LORD.

6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have ^asinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh. (The words of Samuel produced the marks of at least full outward repentance. The next step was to call the people to one of those solemn national gatherings, in which, as on former occasions (Joshua 23:2, etc.; 24:1, etc.), they would confess national sins and renew national obligations towards Jehovah. On its mountain height, Mizpeh, the "look out" of Benjamin, was among those ancient sanctuaries in the land, where, as in Shechem (Joshua 24:26), in Gilgal (Joshua 5:2-12, 15), and in Bethel (Judges 20:18, 23, 26; 21:2), the people were wont to assemble for solemn deliberation (Judges 11:11; 20:1). But never before, since the days of Moses, had Israel so humbled itself before the Lord in confession of sin. It was thus that Samuel would prepare for his grand act of intercession on their behalf, and it was under such circumstances that he publicly exercised, or more probably that he began his office of "judge" (1 Samuel 8:6), in its real meaning, by setting right what was wrong within Israel, and by becoming the means of their deliverance from the enemy. Edersheim)

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philistines.

8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, ^aCease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

9 ¶ And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered *it* for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel ^acried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD ^bheard him. (Heb answered)

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and ^adiscomfited them; (Heb caused them confusion.) and they were smitten before Israel.

11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until *they came* under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a ^astone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it ^bEben-ezer, (ie the stone of help) saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

13 ¶ So the Philistines were ^asubdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the ^bhand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

17 And his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD. (The assembly had met in Mizpeh, not with any thought of war, far less in preparation for it. In fact, when Israel in Mizpeh heard of the hostile approach of the Philistines, "they were afraid" (ver. 7). But as rebellion had caused their desertion, so would return bring them help from the Lord. As so generally in this history, all would happen naturally in the ordinary succession of cause and effect; and yet all would be really and directly of God in the ordering and arrangement of events. Israel must not go to war, nor must victory be clue to their own prowess. It must be all of God, and the Philistines must rush on their own fate. Yet it was quite natural that when the Philistines heard of this grand national gathering at Mizpeh, after twenty years of unattempted resistance to their rule, they should wish to anticipate their movements; and that, whether they regarded the assembly as a revival of distinctively national religion or as preparatory for war. Similarly, it was natural that they would go on this expedition not without serious misgivings as to the power of the God of Israel which they had

experienced during the stay of the ark in their land; and that in this state of mind they would be prepared to regard any terrible phenomenon in nature as His interposition, and be affected accordingly. All this actually took place, but its real causes lay deeper than appeared on the surface. While Israel trembled at the approach of the Philistines, Samuel prayed, and "Jehovah answered him." The great thunder-storm on that day, which filled the Philistines with panic, was really the Lord's thundering. It was a wild mass of fugitives against which Israel went out from Mizpeh, and whom they pursued and smote until under the broad meadows of Beth-car, "the house of the lamb." And it was to mark not only the victory, but its cause and meaning, that Samuel placed the memorial-stone on the scene of this rout, between "the look out" and Shen, "the tooth," probably a rocky crag on the heights down which the Philistines were hurled in their flight. That stone he named "Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us." Edersheim.)