

Bread in the House of Bread

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Bethlehem — House of Bread

*...not sure how name “Bethlehem” originated, but confident it was due to quality and or quantity of bread; also called, **Ephratah** or **Ephrathah**, translated **Fertile-***

- **Rachel’s Tomb**

Genesis 35:19

So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).

- **David**

1 Samuel 17:12

Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Jesse, and who had eight sons.

- (tended sheep, verse 15 — wanted water from, 2 Samuel 23:14-17)

- **Jesus born**

Matthew 2:1

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea...

***Another Bethlehem story** — about 1100 years BC, is a **highly symbolic** and **prophetic foreshadowing** of what would be **fulfilled in Bethlehem** by the **birth of Jesus**.*

Ruth

...end of Judges, social and spiritual climate was characterized in...

- **Judges 21:25**

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

***Application** — everyone really doing their own thing while being associated with God’s thing!*

- we see this in the name of the patriarch of the story...
- Elimelech — “My God is King”
- although name says one thing, he lives contrary to it, **lacks trust in God as King**, produces **disobedience**, leads to **death**, spiritual and physical in his case
- **Ruth 1:1-2**
Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there.
- **famine** — food shortage, rather than staying in House of Bread, trusting God to be his King and Provider — he went to Moab.

- **Moab** — was firstborn son of incestuous relationship between Lot and his oldest daughter, (*Genesis 19:30-38*)

- **forbidden relationships**

- **Deuteronomy 23:3-4**

An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever, because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.

*Application — Elimelech journeys to a forbidden land, **looking for bread** in a place that **historically has denied bread for God's people...** story doesn't feel like it's going to end well...*

- **Ruth 1:3-5**

Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

- Elimelech dies, sons die, after marrying forbidden Moabite women, (*Deuteronomy 7:3*)

Interesting — what starts off as a brief journey looking for bread and life in a forbidden place — turns into a 10-year ordeal of disobedience and death

*Seen it many times — something happens, quit trusting God, start looking in the forbidden for life and satisfaction, just a little at first, before you know it, in over your head, disobedient and dying... **your story doesn't have to end that way!***

- **Ruth 1:6-7**

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 that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

- when the story couldn't get worse — it got a lot better — BUT GOD!
- God visited His people by giving them bread! **Bread in the House of Bread!**
- **Naomi** sees this as an opportunity for her devastated, backslidden, disobedient self to return home, and eat God's bread
- **Ruth** sees this as an opportunity for her devastated, unbelieving, disobedient self to be converted, to find a new home, to eat God's bread

*Summary — they return to Bethlehem; Ruth gets redeemed by Boaz, her dead husband's relative; gets married; she and Naomi go from rags to riches; has son named **Obed**, who has a son named **Jesse**, who has a son named **David**... 14 generations later... Jesus Christ, the Son of God is born through Ruth's lineage*

Amazing — a pagan widow — to a redeemed, believing wife — ancestor of Jesus!

Question— How many of you know, *when there's bread in the House of Bread, you better drop everything, leave everything else behind, and go get you some God-bread in the House of Bread... it'll change you and your family for generations!*

Question— *What happened to Naomi's other daughter-in-law, Orpha; she started on the journey to get bread in the House of Bread... she quit, stopped her journey, went back to her old ways... died in her old ways...we don't hear about her — don't make that choice.*

That wasn't the last time there was bread in the House of Bread...

- **Micah 5:2**

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.

- Bethlehem Ephrathah — **Fertile House of Bread births Bread of Life!**

There's Bread in the House of Bread again!

- **John 6:35, 51**

And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

- **Jesus is the Bread of Life, He's the Bread in the House of Bread**

- this isn't your ordinary bread — you eat, never hunger, never thirst again
- you eat, won't die, live forever
- partake of His sacrifice, partake of His life

There's a great opportunity that exists today, that was foreshadowed in Ruth...

- **today** there is an opportunity to bring your devastated, **backslidden**, disobedient self **back home**, eat the Bread of Life, find satisfaction on earth and eternal life in heaven!
 - I don't know why you quit trusting God, started looking for life in forbidden places, now in over your head, dying a slow death — come home, eat!
- **today** there is an opportunity to bring your devastated, **disbelieving**, disobedient self to be **converted**, eat the Bread of Life, find satisfaction on earth and eternal life in heaven
 - I don't know what's happened in your life, why you haven't received Jesus' love, forgiveness and eternal life, but there's an opportunity for you to do that this morning

No matter who you are, you can be forgiven, satisfied, by the Bread of Life

Question— *What happened to Naomi's other daughter-in-law? She started on the journey to get bread in the House of Bread... she quit, stopped her journey, went back to her old ways... died in her old ways. **Don't make that choice.***

Discussion Questions

- 1.** Read Judges 21:25. Relate that to today's life in America.
- 2.** Might that be because we are looking for "bread" (life and satisfaction) in places other than in the House of Bread?
- 3.** When God offers the opportunity to return to Him, why do some see it as an opportunity for redemption, and others choose to return back to their original home?
- 4.** Explain what Jesus means in John 6:35, 51, when he speaks of Himself as the bread of life.
- 5.** Do you need to eat the Bread of Life, and find satisfaction on earth, and eternal life in heaven today?