

Free - Take One



Shaqah

Shaqah

*“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”
Colossians 2:8*

Issue #135

www.livingspringsinstitute.org

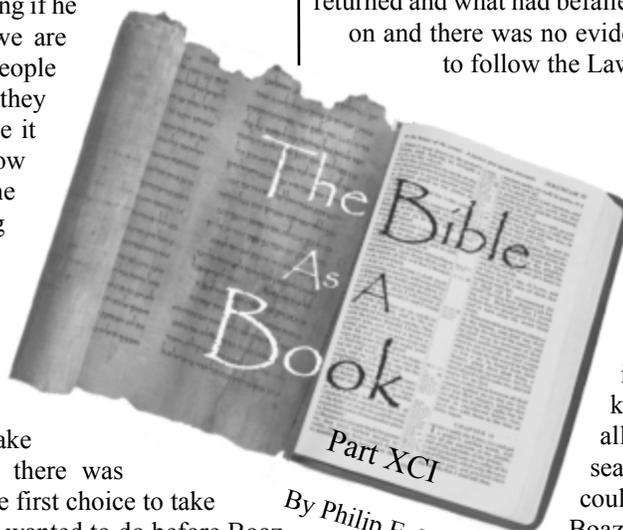
November & December 2024

Last time we continued our overview of the Book of Ruth, and in that segment we made it through the details Naomi had given to Ruth for how to offer herself to be Boaz's servant but hopefully his wife. Naomi knew Boaz was a man in line to take a woman of her husband's family should she lose her husband and that's what happened to Ruth. However, as we talked about last time it's important we remember since Ruth was not of the nation and Naomi's family had left Israel before her son married Ruth, they had already given up their place in the chosen nation in a way. Thus, Boaz was under no real obligation to take Ruth as his wife, nor was Ruth obligated to follow the Law in accepting if he wanted to. This means everything we are seeing in this story has to do with people wanting to follow God's law because they had faith in God and not just because it was the Law. We see Ruth follow Naomi's instructions in going to the threshing floor of Boaz in the evening and once he had fallen asleep she laid at his feet as a servant would do in that time. We also see Ruth was cleaned up as if she was offering herself as more than a servant which gave Boaz the choice to do as he thought best. Boaz would wake and find her there but inform her there was another in the family line who had the first choice to take her and he'd have to ask him what he wanted to do before Boaz could do more concerning Ruth. Ruth returned to Naomi and with anticipation for what God might work out, her and Naomi waited for the outcome. Boaz went to the gate to make contact with the man he spoke of and begin what needed to be done. This brought us through Ruth chapter 4 verse 3, and we are ready to pick up there again this time.

We truly ended last time talking about how official the setting of Boaz going to the gate of the city was to take care of this matter. Anything that came out of this would be as officially documented by the elders as anything of those days. This is why we see Boaz gather ten elders to sit directly with him and the other relative he had business with. To Boaz this was very important and he wanted anything the man agreed to, to be on record. This is why Boaz starts by asking about the land which

had belonged to Naomi's husband. Boaz asks if the man would take over the land in the family's name before it was taken more generally by their tribe or worse, sold to someone not of the chosen nation. Boaz makes it clear that he brought this up because it had not as yet been redeemed in spite of the fact Naomi had returned some time ago making the circumstances of her husband and sons' deaths apparent. Boaz goes on to point out the responsibility to do such a thing fell to this man first and then Boaz. This had to be a bit of an embarrassment for the man. While he may or may not have thought about it, what Boaz said was very true. Everyone knew by this time that Naomi had returned and what had befallen her family. The months had drag on and there was no evidence this man had made any move to follow the Law's stipulations.

This was another reason Boaz wanted this to be very official in being done in front of the town elders. If the man had at any time declared his intentions to take over Elimelech's land in spite of not doing anything visible to act upon it, the elders would be the ones to know. The subject of why he was allowing planting and thus harvest season(s) pass without acting on it could also be discussed. In either case Boaz was making sure the man either upon it or didn't. If the man had declared this would now be on record that Boaz had asked about it, he being the next in line to take on the responsibility. He couldn't be blamed for any shortcoming because he made a specific effort to know. If the man had not made a deceleration on the matter but wanted to now, Boaz would be cleared of not acting at a later time because it would be on the record he knew full well this man had the priority. That might seem like a lot of technical details to worry about, but it's good to stop and think about all the impact this might have on Boaz's witness in this world as to if he was or was not a man who cared about the Law God had commanded the nation. Starting this conversation by bringing up the land was not just some clever scheme on the part of Boaz to throw off the man when he finally mentioned that the land came with a wife to take care



By Philip E. Busby

acted and not acted this would now be on record that Boaz had asked about it, he being the next in line to take on the responsibility. He couldn't be blamed for any shortcoming because he made a specific effort to know. If the man had not made a deceleration on the matter but wanted to now, Boaz would be cleared of not acting at a later time because it would be on the record he knew full well this man had the priority. That might seem like a lot of technical details to worry about, but it's good to stop and think about all the impact this might have on Boaz's witness in this world as to if he was or was not a man who cared about the Law God had commanded the nation. Starting this conversation by bringing up the land was not just some clever scheme on the part of Boaz to throw off the man when he finally mentioned that the land came with a wife to take care

P.O. Box 271, Loveland, CO 80539

(970) 593-9468



of as well.

No matter if the man was or was not embarrassed by the fact he had not made any move to take care of this matter, he without any hesitation declares he would redeem the land. Now, in a situation where a widow was not involved the man's motives for desiring to redeem the land would be irrelevant. If he was the one in line to redeem the land and wanted to purely for profits sake, he could do that. We can't say for certain if that was the case for the man or not but it does show us he was eager to redeem the land he had not moved on until Boaz brought it up in front of the elders. The elders understood the point I just made about his intentions being irrelevant, but the important part, or should have been an important part to them, was that the Law would be satisfied. This is why it's tempting to believe bringing up the land was just a clever way of going about this for Boaz. The man was locked into being a man who would fulfill the Law of Moses by this point before any mention is made of Ruth. It is with this understanding established that Boaz then tells the man, the day he buys the land from Naomi, he will also have to buy it from Ruth in order to keep the family name going among Israel.

Boaz, and more specifically the King James translation, uses the word "buy" here and that might seem a bit confusing to some. This is again that weakness of the English language. The word "redeem" had been used up to this point in talking about the land and that's pretty understandable. Someone needed to save the land from being sold to someone outside the chosen nation and if one of these two men didn't do it, the tribe would have to take on the burden of assuring that didn't happen. In either case, it needed to be done with more haste than had been put into it thus far. Losing land to outside people was a very bad thing and even allowing land to sell outside one's tribe was not suppose to happen. This all goes back to maintaining what had been established at the time of Joshua in dividing the land, and such things are underlying causes of the nation failing to be the solid owners of the promised land for as long as this world turns. Thus, just as we speak of our soul or life needing to be redeemed or saved from the doom it will inevitably face without God's intervention, this land needed to be redeemed in order to remain a piece of the possessions God wanted only the chosen nation to possess.

When it comes to actually acting on any declaration to redeem the land Boaz speaks of going to Naomi to complete the transaction and there we see the word "buy." It's used twice in the KJV here in verse 5. Once we see the very King James English word "buyest," and the second time in reference to Ruth we see just "buy." This difference is just a linguistic tense and there is no real difference in meaning between "buyest" and "buy." However, more than just the archaic way of saying buy in the first incidence these are the kind of verses modern "translators" wish to "clean up," and in doing so do us all a disservice. I know this is suppose to be an overview but I can't help in this case but to discuss this wording some, and to a great degree maybe that's because many would argue the KJV makes it sound like the man is literally obligated to buy Ruth herself. Most readers get the point this whole thing comes up because Boaz wanted to marry Ruth and so it's rare for people to believe the words purely mean the man would be buying the land as much from Ruth as from Naomi, which is the other way to

interpret the words.

So first off let's make it clear the buying from Ruth part is in reference to buying Ruth. To be blunt, she comes with the land because taking over the land has to do with keeping Elimelech's family name going among the children of Israel. The land alone does not do that but having children in his name would. Such children would be the inheritors of the land and bear the name of Elimelech so their children would also have the land and that name in the future. If all goes well, it would be as if Elimelech's son never failed to have children who could carry on his name. That was the hope and the point but, of course, the Law does not require the relative to buy the deceased's wife like we would a car or something of that sort today. If we apply this simple logical thinking to the words, even this far removed from the days of regular use of the King James' English, one should be able to see neither use of the word "buy" is exactly as we exclusively use the word for today. In an attempt to keep us from having to think that much, later "translations" often change the second "buy" to the word, "acquire."

At first glance this does seem to make the verse make more sense. You're saying when the man goes to purchase the land from Naomi he will acquire Ruth and all the responsibilities that come with that in doing so. Good right? Not really because did you see what I just did there in the sentence. I changed the first buy to purchase which if that is really what the "buyest" in the KJV meant the translators should have just put it that way. Some would say the word "buy" is still fine, but the point is in most people's mind that could still be translated to "purchase" and no one would think anything of it. You might think most of the "translators" didn't change to use purchase because it's a bigger word and we're trying to keep it simple, but I'll tell you the underlying truth as to why most didn't want to. They knew/know very good and well the original word doesn't mean purchase but there is no English word that in a compact way holds the same meaning as the original word. Thus, they simply left the word almost like the KJV translated it to begin with. They are admitting to you, the reader, they don't have an easy English word to say what the verse is really trying to say so they just ran back to the KJV and moved on.

The reason I believe this robs the reader is because without all their so called translations one would read the KJV and might not understand it. This would lead to further investigation or seeking of the meaning. The end result for those willing to put in the kind of effort it takes to truly know the Bible's words indepth would eventually grasp the meaning in spite of the words and have a richness of connectivity to the entire Bible they didn't have before. I can just feel the eyes rolling at me right now and those laughing because they can't believe I can get that or make that big a deal out of a couple words in a single verse. Well, it's not about a couple words in a single verse. It's about an understanding students gain while going through every verse. As those who speak and read English we just have to accept we don't have the strongest language, but understanding the Bible isn't just about language and the understanding that can be conveyed by it! Understanding is about allowing The Holy Ghost to bring the knowledge into your mind. To expand it in ways human interaction might have once had the ability to but no longer does. It's the difference between

Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip E. Busby

In our last segment we continued our look at the time Isaac goes to Gerar among the Philistines to look for food during a famine in Canaan. Of course, the important part of that story is the fact God takes the opportunity to speak to Isaac about how he needed to keep doing what his father Abraham before him had done in following God. We talked a lot about faith or the dynamics of why faith is important and how it works. We also talked about the very important understanding we all need to have about works not saving us, even if those works are ordered by God Himself. The rebellion of not following God's voice might be the reason we don't make it to heaven but doing the works still is not what saves us. Only our direct relationship with God can save us and the only way we truly do the works God wants us to is by having that real faith that seeks to hear God's voice in the first place. This is why God used men like Abraham and Isaac to begin the chosen nation. It was/is not possible for God to specifically build a nation of people who would all live the kind of faith needed to do God's work on this earth; at least not without forcing people, which God will not do. Thus, God used faithful men to establish traditions, if you will, which are very important to humans, and these traditions God established through Abraham and Isaac would be followed by later generations and individuals even if they did not have true faith because it was the ways of their fathers. Discussing all that brought us through Genesis chapter 26 verse 5, and we are ready to begin verse 6 this time.

Verse 6 begins what feels like a very familiar story because in so many ways the events are almost identical to what had happened to Abraham when he lived among the Philistines for a time. Isaac also remained among the Philistines in Gerar, and some could argue this happened because God had told Isaac not to go on down into Egypt. However, that's not relevant. Gerar was in the land God told Isaac to stay, so staying among the Philistines was his choice. Like his father, Isaac feared the Philistines would desire his wife so greatly that they would kill him to have her. Thus, Isaac told the Philistines that Rebekah was his sister. This is almost an exact replay of what Abraham had done when he went among the Philistines. However, there are contrasting differences between the two stories. In a very overall way one should note Isaac's story does not escalate to the point Abraham's did. When Abraham had done this, the king actually took Sarah and then was warned by God in a dream to give her back or God would take his life. (Gen. 20:1-7) The king did as God told him, but he had also been told he needed Abraham to pray for him to be totally healed from the incident. Abraham would do so and God would allow the Philistine king to have children once again. The king would also give Abraham gifts as repayment for even taking Sarah at all, this in spite of the fact he never touched her during the incident.

All that being true, the king was very upset with Abraham as one can imagine. He wanted to know why Abraham had told them Sarah was his sister instead of his wife,

and this is where the stories differ in a small but somewhat important way which tells us a couple things. Abraham's response to that question was the explanation about how technically she was his sister if her relationship to him was looked at from one side of the family tree. This is a technicality I won't go into here as we did when covering the story but the point is, Sarah, especially in the culture of the day, could rightly be called Abraham's sister. This is the way we can say Abraham didn't lie in saying she was his sister but he definitely omitted the more important fact she was also his wife! This of course, is what the king was asking about and what he was upset about. That being what it is, the point I want to emphasize here is that in that story Abraham says he and Sarah had basically made an agreement that as they traveled through this strange land they would not reveal she was his wife but lead with the fact she was his sister. This they felt gave them some cover. They had not had children which made this an easier story to tell but that fact is part of the bigger fear someone might want to take Sarah from him.

If the couple had children some might hesitate to kill both Abraham and his children in order to have Sarah. That might not make much sense to some because you're thinking about the aspect that if people were brutal enough to kill Abraham just to take his wife, surely they wouldn't care about taking the life of his children, and you might be right. However, that was not really the fear. Individuals who wanted Sarah bad enough to do such a thing would probably just take her by force whether they killed Abraham or not; they just wouldn't care. In such a situation Abraham would have to defend himself and his family as best he could. While that may have been a fear, it was what it was. The point of telling people Sarah was his sister had to do with the more deviant plots that could arise. If Sarah was a sister, maybe a man could court her as we might say and get Abraham to give her to them. This would buy Abraham and Sarah time to move on to another place or do something that might leave the matter behind them. However, if they knew Sarah was Abraham's wife it would be clear she could not be asked for and gotten under any circumstances other than if Abraham was dead. What Abraham feared is that this would bring about his death without them having any warning signs.

Someone who wanted Sarah wouldn't necessarily show outward signs to indicate they were determined to have her. They may not care what Abraham thought about them making advances at Sarah, but later it would be more obvious they had something to do with Abraham's death should it come about and they take her as their wife. Thus, the feared scenario was that Abraham would be killed without ever seeing it coming. In an agricultural society men did very hard work out in the fields and they'd be vulnerable to many dangers on a regular basis that could take one's life. It would be easy to kill Abraham and make it look like a total accident in one form or another. Then the person could swoop in and save the day, not

P.O. Box 271, Loveland, CO 80539

(970) 593-9468

leaving the grieving widow unprotected and alone by taking her as their wife. Instead of being the horrible murderer of her husband they'd get to play the hero. Whether this would really have worked on Sarah or not is not the point, it would be easy for anyone with such desires to believe such a plan would work and it would play well among others in their society. Abraham wanted to avoid this if they could and make any threat of Sarah being desired a more head-on problem they could deal with. The great weakness of this plan was that someone such as a king didn't have any cultural pressures to ask for Sarah if they wanted her. This is why the Philistine king simply took her and what of any plans Abraham may or may not have had to get her back are something we will never know.

The bottom line is that Abraham and Sarah had made this their normal mode of operation as they traveled through the land. After all, a lot of the journeying of their lives was a survey of sorts of this land God had promised Abraham's descendants. Toward the end Abraham would settle down a bit more, but at least he by himself still did quite a lot of traveling up and down the promised land until he was too old to do so. This means Isaac was more established in the land than his father had been, plus Isaac had been born in this land and wasn't looking at it from the standpoint of being brought to it. All that being very true and part of the point of what we covered last time about establishing this family on this land, Isaac was still left a stranger much in the same way his father had been. It was understood that Abraham had bought no possession in this land other than the cave and field he purchased for the sake of burying Sarah and which he would later be buried in as well. This meant for all the wealth Abraham left Isaac with, Isaac still had no real place in the land to proclaim home. This is why it was easy for disputes to rise even over wells his servants had dug just like Abraham dealt with. Such things were just out in the grazing land no one owned but might be looked at as being a certain people's territory such as the Philistines.

Keeping such facts in mind helps to color in the story for us. It just didn't matter where in the land Isaac, or his father before him, stayed for any time, the land was their home but no specific place on the land was theirs as yet. This is why Isaac, like his father, would live largely as a nomadic herdsman who, unlike other herdsman who traveled this land, did not belong to any established people, family, clan, etc. which did have roots in the land. This meant the only defenses Isaac had against a threat were the men of his own house. Judging by what Abraham accomplished in his time when outside forces invaded Canaan this was formidable but it's one thing to attack a clear enemy from the outside, it's another thing to deal continually with one you live among. (Gen. 14) Thus, as Isaac uses this, "she's my sister" thing as a way to accomplish much the same thing his father hoped to, the difference is twofold. First, Isaac's father and mother had used this story since they entered the land from Mesopotamia. Isaac, on the other hand, was known by many to be the son of Abraham and they might have known he didn't really have sisters (with the exception Abraham might have had daughters through Keturah we are not aware of) or they simply knew Rebekah was his wife. This made it a bit more difficult for Isaac and Rebekah to use this story just anywhere or as a standard mode of operation. This means when Isaac used it here among the Philistines it was something Isaac

chose to do for that moment in time.

The second difference is that Isaac had his father's experience with the Philistines to look at. He also had the time to know these people in more depth as he had to have dealt with them himself at times as he cared for his father's house even before Abraham's death. All that's simply to point out Isaac had a lot more to go on when choosing to tell them Rebekah was his sister. Abraham at the time didn't know much of anything about the Philistines, and that's exactly why he makes the statement to the king about not knowing if anyone feared God in this place. (Gen. 20:11) Such differences might not seem important but as one covers the story that begins here in verse 6, we see the situation this time did not get as "out of hand" as it had with Abraham and Sarah. Why is that true? The answer to that is also twofold. First, the king of the Philistines had the same kind of experience to lean on as Isaac had. This was more than likely the son of the king who had taken Sarah, and that story was either something this king was old enough to remember happening for himself or the story was something that came up at a later time when his father was passing on knowledge of how to be a king in this land. Surely information about this gigantic household of Abraham would have been included in those conversations.

Second, no matter if the first point is true or not, this king also had the time experience Isaac had. Abraham was totally new to the land when he and Sarah were first traveling up and down this land and just as they didn't know who the people were, the people didn't know anything about them. All that was different by the time of Isaac. Abraham spent a great deal of time living in this southern area of the promised land. The older he got the more that was true. By the time of Isaac we are covering here, he and the Philistines had lived side by side for quite awhile. This is so true it's somewhat amazing the Philistines didn't already know Rebekah was Isaac's wife. In any case, what the king of the Philistines knew was that Isaac's family had not grown to be something large, as in a people. His house was large but that was not the development of a nation as yet; at least not as outside people would see it. How much these facts had to do with him not taking Rebekah as the king in the past had taken Sarah we don't know. Maybe the king didn't desire another wife, but considering the way kings collected wives in those days as political tokens and/or because they were used to just taking what they wanted, it's hard to believe there wasn't something that caused the king not to take Rebekah right off.

That something was most likely enough knowledge to be leery at best about touching Abraham's family, and it caused him to react the minute he saw what proved to him Rebekah was in fact Isaac's wife. With that we've pretty much covered the details of verse 7, and as we go on into verse 8 we find Isaac and Rebekah had stayed among the Philistines for sometime. A note here that goes back to what we discussed about God telling Isaac not to go down to Egypt is that we see evidence in this that Isaac was in no hurry to get back to any kind of home base. He seemed perfectly fine with staying here among the Philistines for as long as he desired to do so, and that speaks to what we talked about concerning the possibility of going to Egypt and getting so comfortable he never bothered to come back to the

What About God's Chosen People?

Part LXV

From Living Springs' Questions and Answers

"Is it true that the Jews are God's chosen people? I have a Christian friend who says the Jews were not God's chosen people."

As we continue our look at the history that shows us how the Roman Empire came to be looked at as a Christian empire, last time we discussed how the Roman Empire was falling apart internally due largely to the fact sustaining a vast centralized government system is too taxing to accomplish. We discussed the very important point about how in spite of man's dream to build a utopia in doing such a thing there will always be people needed to do the hard and dirty work. This creates a second class of citizens and those citizens eventually wish to be elevated to the higher class. This means you have to find a new pool of lower class citizens to take their place and this struggle can only lead to long-term failure. This is what was happening to the Roman Empire and as we discussed last time, it led more and more to the who of who was Roman becoming more and more people once considered on the barbarian side of the equation.

Since we didn't really cover specific history last time we have to reach back to our segment before that to get back on track with the fact we had made it to the year 276 A.D., and in the middle part of that year a man named Probus had taken the throne from Florianus. Probus was the man who started our conversation about the barbarians becoming more heavily used to essentially replace the diminishing populations within the Roman provinces. The empire had long ago began to take in various barbarians allowing them to settle within Roman territories after fighting or in some cases winning battles against Rome, but Probus took this stance to heart. It was his goal to see the empire restored to the glory it had once had or at least had before the crisis of the third century as it's called. This was going to take a lot of work as the empire had fallen into some very long-term disrepair. One of the things Probus believed in was maintaining the discipline in the military, though he was not as prone to cruelty as Aurelian had been. That said, he believed that allowing the military men to be idle was a bad thing so he made it a point to keep their hands to work in some project if they were not at the time fighting an enemy.

One very positive way he used the men was in replanting vineyards in districts where war had destroyed such resource and that was very helpful to the economy in those areas. Being aware that Egypt was the vital grain provider for the empire he had also taken the opportunity to have his men repair bridges and canals along the Nile. These types of projects were very needed by this time in the empire as war had kept the focus off the needed maintenance of the empire's infrastructures. At the same time, Probus had plenty of fighting to do as he would face the barbarians and in particular the Vandals, in 279 through 281 A.D. Around that same time Probus would also have to fight to put down three distinct usurpers. How much damage these

men did is not really clear to history but it speaks to the unrest that still existed in the empire. At this point it had become so common for the throne to change hands by revolt of some sort, there seemed to always be someone waiting to give it a try. Probus would also have to contend with a rebellion in Britain. This was not a threat to his throne as emperor but it shows again how much desire there still was for certain areas to break away and be separate from the empire. Needless to say, things were far from stable.

Due to these challenges Probus was forced to put off his plans to march east. It was almost as if emperors saw it as their duty to expand the empire if they could, and that led to aspirations of their next conquest even long before they had things settled at home. This in and of itself is such a great example of how human government fails. If it has a purpose, government is there to coordinate humans living together and the distribution of resources. This encompasses the enforcement of the rules, or what we simply call laws, to make sure all that can be accomplished. Instead, government often acts as if its primary concern is the sustaining of itself and the expansion of its power. With as big a mess as the empire was when Probus came to power, and the years of work it would have taken to repair, much less revitalize the empire, Probus still had aspirations of expanding the empire in a direction it had at best limited success in gaining and even lower success is sustaining. However, there is always the truth that as an empire one of your main points is to keep expanding in the hope of taking in the entire world one day, all with the noble goal of bringing peace and stability to us all. How it was not evident by this time that Rome had enough to deal with without attempting expansion is a mystery to me, but then the Bible is very clear on the fact man just will never give up on the one world government idea hoped for at the Tower of Babel.

Having to put down rivals had delayed Probus, but finally in 282 A.D. he was on the march eastward. It might have felt good to him to be on his way to what he no doubt hoped would be a glorious victory of expansion which would bring him the kind of glory past emperors had gained but as it played out over and over for so many Roman emperors, it wouldn't last long. History disputes just how Probus came to his end though. One account says the Praetorian Prefect was declared the new leader of the empire, a position he accepted reluctantly, and when Probus sent men to subdue this revolt the men changed sides and turned on Probus. This in turn caused the army that was left with him to turn on him and assassinate Probus. Another account tells us the men of Probus' army did not like being forced to work when they were not at war and being disgruntled by this fact they took the opportunity of being on this march to assassinate the emperor. In either case, Probus was assassinated by his own men and the Praetorian Prefect was elevated to the position of emperor in the fall of 282 A.D.

This was a man named Marcus Aurelius Carus and while some historians hold to the idea he was directly involved in the assassination of Probus, Carus continued the campaign Probus had started. The largest point in this is the fact Carus did not return to Rome to present himself to the Senate and be confirmed as emperor. Emperors of the past had done this same thing but usually it was more because of the heat of the moment. They would stay in the field of battle commanding the troops before making any attempt to return to the Senate. The Senate would sometimes confirm the man's appointment as emperor once informed of the change and sometimes this was out of desperation and other times the man or men ascending the throne were those expected to. Other times the Senate, whether out of spite for having been looked over in these incidences and/or because they had someone else they wanted to put in power, would name another person emperor. This would force the man who was out in the field to return most of the time to defend his appointment. Sometimes such men made it and other times they never did. Carus simply didn't seem to care about any of these politics and formalities of the law. The men of the army were on his side and the senate would get nothing more than a notice of his being named emperor.

Acting in full as if he was the undisputed emperor and harboring no ill toward the former emperor, Carus sought to have Probus deified. He would also elevate his two sons, Carinus and Numerian, to Caesar making them clear descendants to the throne. At the beginning of 283 A.D. he would elevate Carinus to Augustus and leave him to care for the western portion of the empire, specifically some disturbances in Gaul, while Carus took Numerian with him to march against the Persians in the East which had been Probus' original quest. His first engagements in this march would be with those along the Danube, and for his victory over those barbarians he would be given the title Germanicus Maximus meaning, "great victor in Germania." From there he marched across Asia Minor and annexed Mesopotamia seeing success that eventually took he and his army beyond the Tigris River. The Sasanian King was unprepared to handle this assault as he had troops engaged in conflict in what today is Afghanistan. He also had internal conflict to deal with much like what delayed Probus from beginning this campaign earlier than he did. Due to all this it is said that Carus actually took their capital city of Ctesiphon which is along the east banks of the Tigris River about 22 miles southeast of Baghdad. In doing this Carus was looked at as having avenged all the defeats Rome had suffered against the Sasanian Empire and for this was given the title, Persicus Maximus, meaning "great victor in Persia."

Carus may or may not have been a reluctant emperor to begin with but he had, on so many levels, accomplished what others had failed many times before to do. He had all but collapsed the eastern power that had plagued Rome for so long and stood as the eastern wall against Roman expansion in that direction. However, once again, Rome's ambitions would be cut short with the death of an emperor as Carus died rather suddenly. Some believe he fell ill and died. Some believe a man who would later sit on the throne of the empire had something to do with his death, but the most widely accepted belief as to how he died is that he was struck by lightning, of all things! His two sons would ascend the throne as co-emperors. However, before that had happened the son he left in the West, Carinus, had

disappointed Carus greatly. While Carinus had handled affairs in Gaul quite well at first, he left further matters of dealing with the barbarians to his army commanders and returned to Rome. In no way did he do this to present himself to the Senate and solidify his position. In truth, he despised the Senate and they, at the very least, came to not like him as well. Carinus is said to have engaged in what the Bible would call riotous living to the extreme, making himself a blight on Roman dignity.

This was about the last thing the empire needed at this time. Roman civilization was hanging by a thread in many ways. The people of the empire did not need a leader such as this at its head. Carus was so upset with his son's behavior that he threatened to replace him with another man and very likely would have if he had, had the chance. Carus would die before he gave such an order and Carinus would become the man in charge at the heart of the empire. As his brother lived it up in Rome, Numerian would face a very different problem, and that problem seems to confirm something unusual had indeed happened to Carus. The men of the army were very superstitious and it helps to keep in mind that Romans saw their emperors as only one step away from the gods. Carus death coming so suddenly and inexplicably right on the heels of such a great victory for Rome caused the men to believe a curse had come down on Rome for doing as they had done. Instead of marching on and finishing the great takeover of the East Rome had desired to gain for so very, very long, the army refused to do anything but turn back and go home. Numerian would be forced to lead his army back to Rome while those of the Sasanian Empire stood agasp at their great fortune.

The problem was Numerian had not handled the climate well as the march from east to west is not an easy one. Because he was not strong enough to ride at the head of his army any longer Numerian was eventually forced to ride in what we would call a tented or covered wagon. The men of the army likely saw this as further evidence they were correct in turning back. Their emperor had been killed in the East and their new emperor, his son, looked not to even survive long enough for them to make it to Rome. The Praetorian Prefect, a man named Arrius Aper, would take charge in the name of Numerian. This made total sense considering how often the man in this position had been the one to ascend to the throne either by being named emperor by the army and/or becoming emperor almost by default due to an emperor's death for a variety of reasons. However, Aper had quite the temper and ruled with an iron fist which rose suspicion among the men that he was not ruling in Numerian's name as much as he had simply taken over. Just after passing over from Asia Minor they would break in to see their emperor for themselves and they would find him dead. This prompted Aper to make the official announcement about Numerian's death which he had attempted to conceal.

Now left without a real leader and no doubt having little respect, if any, for Numerian's brother Carinus or Aper, they ended up choosing the commander of the cavalry branch of the imperial bodyguards to be the next emperor. This was a man named Diocletian, and directly after accepting the appointment he told the army Aper had actually killed Numerian. Upon this announcement Diocletian turned and killed Aper before he could escape. Hearing of all this Carinus would head out to meet Diocletian and defend his title and position. On his way Carinus

would have to put down a rebellion led by a man of his own army showing us the unrest in the empire was still boiling under every surface. Carinus would clash with Diocletian in what history calls "The Battle of the Margus" in Moesia, just south of the Danube River. Carinus led the larger force but he had done much to undermine the loyalty of his men. In living his wild lifestyle Carinus was known for disrespecting the Senate and dishonoring their wives. Along with this, he had seduced, or attempted to seduce, the wives of many of his officers. Loyalties would inevitably shift during the battle and Carinus was eventually killed leaving very little question the deed was done by one of his own men. Many historians believe it was his own Praetorian Prefect who killed him because after the dust of this battle settled Diocletian was left sole emperor and soon after he would name Carinus' former Praetorian Prefect as his own Prefect, obviously trusting him.

All this brings us to mid summer of 285 A.D., Diocletian would waste no time administering the oath of loyalty to Carinus' men and they would follow him as he immediately turned to fight the barbarians that had been conducting raids across the very Danube frontier where they currently were. By and large Diocletian is credited with bringing an end to what history calls the Crisis of the third Century, as his reign would bring the stability to the empire it had lacked for so very long by this point. In fact, he is credited with doing so well one might look at this time as being a great resurgence of the Roman Empire and set at naught all we have been discussing about the internal decay of Rome and its people. However, that is why we talked about what we covered last time concerning centralized government. Diocletian begins us down the road of what would eventually lead to a more official split between the east and the west of the empire. This split is very important to seeing how Europe came to be, and this split would even come to be defined within what calls itself the church of Jesus Christ. Rome dividing into eastern and western divisions is what in time made it so easy or logical to end up with what we today call, Catholics and Eastern Orthodox.

While the empire had been ruled in a divided way before this point, those times had truly been things such as an emperor appointing a capable son to lead the West while he took the East or vice versa. It was done as a way to divide and conquer the problems the empire was facing which one leader by himself could not handle. It was never a true administration split of the empire or meant to be one. Only at the times things such as the full break away of the Gallic Empire was there true administration separation. Bear in mind what we are talking about when it comes to Diocletian's actions is not a full break of the empire. However, what he did to bring the resurgence we see at this time was very much due to a division in administration. He would begin by splitting the empire into the logical east and west divisions and appoint what had been a fellow officer, a man named Maximian, as Augustus and co-emperor in 286 A.D. Diocletian would reign over the eastern part of the empire and Maximian, while still considered technically Diocletian's subordinate, would literally reign over the western part of the empire. Because these two men worked well together and did not truly desire to break the great empire in two, this worked to the benefit of the empire as a whole.

This division of administrative power worked so well

that by 293 A.D. Diocletian decided to take it a step further. Diocletian would appoint two men to be what is called "junior colleagues" and grant them both the title of Caesar. These were men by the name of Galerius Valerius Maximianus and Flavius Valerius Constantius, and they would rule "under" Diocletian and Maximian respectively. Though these men were under the two men who ruled as co-emperors the empire was further split into four administrative divisions establishing a Tetrarchy which means, "rule of four." Because the two new divisions would be a north/south split of the already established east/west divisions this would mean one of each of these men would reign over a fourth of the empire! I find it interesting that this worked so well considering the empire was always suppose to be split into provinces, each with their own governor who answered to Rome. However, the way in which this was different is that Diocletian in this case had essentially taken the empire and broke it down into four separate nations, if you will. These "nations" were still in full cooperation with each other leaving us with the ability to speak of the empire as still one cohesive governance, but the reality was/is an example of how decentralizing government is greatly helpful.

In many ways this solved the same problems which caused the empire to earlier split into three separate entities. When that had happened it was done due to pressure Rome faced and which it could not handle to the benefit of all its people. This caused certain people to desire and successfully split off from the empire and become smaller versions of the empire all in of themselves. As we touched on in an earlier segment in more detail, history calls these divisions empires but what they really were was nations. The Gallic Empire and the Palmyrene Empire were in many ways the earliest nations to rise out of the ashes of what had been up until then a long string of empires. Now, history would never see them that way because they were eventually re-absorbed by the Roman Empire and especially the Gallic Empire resembled Rome on so many levels one could argue there was never more than a hair's breadth of separation between them. However, that is in no way relevant in reality and certainly not to the Biblical perspective the true student of the Bible should have. People of the world have a desire to see us unite as one world but any time since the Tower of Babel that has happened to any large degree, people of the world have fought to bring it down.

The truth of the matter is that if we as people of the world really believed in peace for all people and could lay aside, not so much what's called our petty differences but our evil desires, it would be possible to live as one world. Saying what I am trying to get at here makes me think of something I'm certain more than one astronaut has pointed out in our modern time and that's the fact that when you're up in space looking down on this beautiful planet God created for us, you don't see any lines of separation like we draw on maps. It's all just one big blue ball traveling through space like it doesn't have, for lack of a better term, a care in the world! That's because we are the only ones who draw lines between us and other people. We are the only ones who cause the wars to spark and ignite into raging fires. We can sit and dream of a united world but that has nothing to do with anything but us as human beings. Nature fights its battles but when it runs like God created it to, it always finds a balance to live with. Humans just can't seem to do that and that's because we are greedy and controlling of each other. The truth of the

matter is, we don't need to dream of a united world, we already have one. In our belief that larger and larger centralized government is the way to gain a unified world we destroy the one we already have.

Does this mean all government should be shut down? Of course not because again, we are greedy and that's true even on a very localized, individual level. In so many ways it's what we are talking about all the time in this study. God has allowed or as the King James Version translates it, "ordained" human government. (Rom. 13:1-8) Since we were not created to have such a thing the question is, why would the Bible tell us that? The answer is, we as humans have a responsibility to judge ourselves. This begins on a personal level and because man refuses to allow God into their individual lives they cannot do this with perfection. Because this doesn't turn out so well and we as groups of people have rejected God, we are left with the responsibility to punish the wrong in this world which God would have punished if our will wasn't limiting Him. This is why speaking of the government Paul tells us "...he beareth not the sword in vain..." Romans 13:4 This is why God tells us to respect those in authority. This does not mean they are always correct but we are told that for the same reason we are told in what we call the Ten Commandments to honor our father and our mother. (Ex. 20:12) Evil men get things horribly wrong but in spite of that we can't stop respecting the ways God created us to live. We need to be attempting to get back to what God gave us in the beginning and that's a large reason Jesus told us to pray to The Father that His will be done here on earth like it is in heaven. (Matt. 6:10) We say we want utopia but think we can get it going in whatever direction we choose to go and it's just never going to work.

Now, I've stepped into another one of those things I could really write pages upon pages on if it was God's will I do so but the bottom line is what I just said so I'll say it again. We should be attempting to get back to what God gave us in the beginning! This in no way means we should be looking for the Tree of Life. Such quests have been foolish beyond belief because God told us once we had the knowledge of good and evil it wouldn't be good for us to live forever in this world and we can clearly see why when we do what we are doing in this study, which is looking at the useless blood shed and agony man has created in history and to this day. However, that's the point and the forest we can't see due to the trees! God was telling us it was/is up to us to take the knowledge we gained by taking of the tree He told us not to take of and be responsible for it. It was up to us to choose just as Adam and Eve chose whether we would totally go at this on our own or include Him every step of the way. It was all up to us but the premise for why Eve took of the fruit to begin with was that it was desirous to make one wise. (Gen. 3:6) That in and of itself is a thought of doing it all on our own and that mistake is why our history has been an exercise in how wrong that thought was. In spite of the evidence we continually believe we are wise when in fact we only have knowledge God knew we couldn't handle in the first place. True wisdom is looking to God for how to live every aspect of our lives. We can say with our mouths we are doing this but we show the truth in how we disrespect the very basic ways God created us to live.

When Adam and Eve were driven from the garden they stepped into a world where the choices were all theirs just as they had always been but far more than before we were going to have to call upon God, not believe He'd be there to correct any missteps we made/make. God, in His infinite mercy, removed our source of indefinite life which we could physically reach forth and take as we desired because people would go in all kinds of directions. Individuals would serve Him and listen to Him to all levels and degrees. Maybe for those who followed/follow Him to great degrees and in great ways it would be good for them as well as the world if they could take of that source of life and live on and on. However, that's not how the Tree of Life worked. All both great and small, righteous and evil, could take of the tree. Thus, God blocked our way to it. Those who are evil cannot ever reach it and those who are righteous can see what a blessing it is that it can't be reached. This world will always be imperfect but just because that is true, it only makes things worse and worse that we don't repent and seek to get back to living with God and His ways at the center of our lives. It's all so simple really. God took us away from the Tree of Life because those who still respect those ways God created us to live, even in this world of evil, deserve a chance to have it fully restored to them one day. Those who do not respect and desire the ways God created us to live deserve to be brought to an end. This is the righteousness of God and his unwavering love for His creation!

So in what we call the Ten Commandments, as well as the Law God gave to Israel we see the basics of how we respect God's ways for our creation like respecting the fact no matter how good or bad it was/is for you, we never stop respecting the truth God gave humans the free will to procreate and the structure of one man for one woman to do it in. We honor our father and mother because it honors God and His ways. We honor the structure of human government because in a world where men do not allow God to be their continual and consistent judge of all things, we have a duty to rise up and punish the evil. We may greatly desire to see the government we live under changed but we respect the authority because it can and should be used for good, not because it necessarily is being used in that way. Government simply does not work on such a large scale because at larger scales it is no longer about the individual people living under its rule. The larger the scale the more human government is about its own selfish purposes. On some level and in some way(s), Diocletian seemed to see this. Thus, at a time history looks at and sees the revitalizing of an empire like it had not seen in over a century, what we are actually seeing is a good example of how a man found success in decentralizing the empire so it could more easily serve the real purpose government exists to serve!

Until next time, may we each continually choose to be the people God wants us to be!

***Questions submitted to the Institute, answered by
Philip E. Busby.***

FBS continued from pg. 4

promised land. That said, I say again, it was perfectly fine for Isaac to remain here from the standpoint that he was still in the land God had told him to dwell in. The only problem really was the idea he might get a bit too comfortable living among the Philistines. If that had happened the danger would have been that he and his descendants would have simply disappeared among the Philistines and never been looked at as a separate people. When we consider how easy this can happen even when certain already established people have been forced to live among populations they didn't want to disappear into, the danger to the chosen nation is something God would have to act upon.

What we see happen in this story, once again took care of that fear for now as the Philistines wouldn't really welcome Isaac to stay until such a thing could happen. One more note before we move on from this subject is that what we just covered has a lot to do with why God allowed the chosen nation to eventually end up in Egypt in spite of telling Isaac not to end up there at this point in time. However, those details we'll look at more when, Lord willing, the time comes. What we see in verse 8 here is that the king takes the time to watch Isaac and Rebekah. How much this was a by chance looking out and seeing them and how much this was him specifically wanting to keep an eye on them we don't know. However, we see in this another contrast between this story and Abraham's. The king witnessed Isaac interacting with Rebekah in a way a man would not do with his sister. This is where I was headed earlier in pointing out Abraham and Sarah had made the sister story not just their go to thing when they had a reason to be afraid of the people but as a standard practice. When Abraham told the king he didn't know if there were people in the place who feared God or not he wasn't just talking about the land of the Philistines. Abraham was referring to the entire land of Canaan. That's why we have it specified that this was an agreement Abraham made with Sarah to do as a normal practice.

As it relates to the verse at hand, what happened between Isaac and Rebekah wouldn't have happened between Abraham and Sarah. What we see in verse 8 happens because Isaac and Rebekah were not as practiced, or maybe a better word is disciplined, as Abraham and Sarah had been in acting the part of brother and sister instead of husband and wife when in the public view. As they were observed by the Philistines it became obvious Rebekah was not Isaac's sister or they would not do some of the things they did. Some of these things might have been in the back of the Philistine king's mind already but what he saw on this particular day confirmed the truth! To jump ahead a bit here, I actually love that this happened. Not just because it kept the situation from getting as out of hand as it had with Abraham but it's a small glimpse into the lives of two people we can often see as just Biblical characters. It's important that we see these people as humans with the same feelings any of us have. They were not extra special humans other than their great faith in God! Isaac and Rebekah were in love with one another or this would not have so easily been on display for the Philistines to discover the full truth that Rebekah was more than just a sister to Isaac.

Now, since I said that, I'll add here that Isaac was just

as justified culturally as his father was in calling Rebekah his sister. We would say she was his cousin once removed but as we have discussed at other times and places, the men of the family were responsible for the women of their family according to tradition. This responsibility is where we get the tradition of asking a father for permission to marry their daughter. To us this makes sense in that her father is the man of the house and his daughter has lived under his auspices a great deal of her life in most cases. In an example of how tradition trumps reality, today we by and large hold to this even if the father was not a large part of her life growing up, as well as those times she has been away from home for a very long time. Of course, in what is looked at as western culture this has faded some but the gut instinct to do such a thing remains in a lot of people's minds. That's no surprise since it was God who made Eve for Adam not Adam for Eve. (I Cor. 11:9) Within our creation is the instinct and knowledge of who is primarily responsible to protect who. People of our day can kick against it all they want but all they'll find is that it's not a good thing in the long run.

Of course, in ancient cultures it wouldn't matter if the woman's father was alive or not. In older cultures if the father was gone or just older, a brother would take on the responsibility. If there was no brother(s) to take up this task, males we would think of as further out on the branches of the family tree would take on the responsibility. This made it easy for a male cousin to sit in much the same position as a woman's brother and so it took some doing for a male family member to be far enough removed not to be rightfully seen as a "brother" within the family structure and thinking of the age we are talking about here with Isaac and Rebekah. That aside, it was not uncommon for cousins, especially those removed by a generation or two, to marry one another. In many cultures marrying "inside" the family like this was considered almost a requirement for maintaining the family bloodline. This type of thought pattern is why it was so easy for humans to become very tight knit as in, us against the world structures that eventually became what we see as states and nations. Families turn into clans, clans turn into nations of people, and anywhere along the way disputes between such groups arise. From there prejudices can build that last for generations and wars of many shapes and sizes can drag on literally for centuries. The simple point here is Rebekah was given to Isaac as a wife, not just because he was a good man but he was very appropriately one of the men of the family who should take her and care for her in life. Along with all the truths we covered when going over why Abraham sent his servant to get a wife for Isaac from the family back in Mesopotamia, there is also this fact.

When we look at this through the cultural eyes of the day we can see just how small the line really was between the idea of brother and who became a woman's husband. If the word brother doesn't directly and exclusively mean a man who is born of the same mother and father as the woman, it was anywhere from common to expected a woman would marry a "brother." Of course, the problem in the story we are looking at here is just like Abraham and Sarah's in that it was not that Isaac said Rebekah was his sister, it's that he does not declare her his wife. In spite of all the cultural ways he had a right to say she was his sister, it would be expected he introduce her as his wife

if that's what she was, and the fact he did not do that is what causes Abimelech to be upset when he figured it out on his own. As we go into verse 9 we see Abimelech wastes no time calling for Isaac to explain himself. He starts off by making it clear Isaac had no reason to dispute the fact Rebekah was his wife because the king already knew the truth. What he wanted was an explanation as to why Isaac had omitted the fact she was his wife! To this Isaac gives the same response his father did at the core of it all, and that's the fact he believed it possible they would kill him in order to take Rebekah.

Verse 10 is where we see the king's response and, of course, it has to be different on the surface from the king's response to Abraham when this happened before because the king had in fact taken Sarah in that case before he knew the truth. However, that's the foundation of the king's concern this time as well. While it had not happened he poses the "what if?" to Isaac. He says, what if one of the Philistines had inappropriately taken Rebekah but you can almost see in his words the fact he was really asking what if he had taken her! As we already covered, tradition would dictate anyone else ask Isaac if they could take Rebekah. This again doesn't speak to a man forcing her, but if anyone had done that there would be more guilt than just the fact they had relations with another man's wife. The king knew the worst case scenario was him taking her the way the past king had taken Sarah. In his words we might have a hint that this king was familiar with the earlier story if nothing else in that as a king, he seemed to be more fearful than just cultural wrongs and rights would make him. He speaks as a man fearful of a higher power that could enforce the punishment for the wrong if he or any of them had tried to be with Rebekah. That idea is further enforced by what Abimelech says in verse 11 where he lays down a decree that no one was to touch Rebekah or Isaac because doing so would come with the punishment of death!

Now, this incidence is not just the obvious repeating of something very similar happening to Isaac that happened to Abraham. This happened among the same exact people that it had happened with in Abraham's time. Thus, all the residual good that came out of this for Abraham happened to Isaac as well. One might ask what possible good could come out of such a thing, and by no means am I suggesting Isaac should have went about this as he did. However, what this shows is that the Philistines still had the fear of God in them when it came to dealing with the founders of the chosen nation. This was a good thing for the same reason it is today. If God is for the chosen nation, and believe me He is, being against them is a detriment. In spite of the truth we see in these stories of Abraham and Isaac's dealings with the Philistines, there are people in our modern time used in a political attempt to keep the nation of Israel from existing by claiming those people are the descendants of the Philistines. The idea is to argue the promised land actually belonged to the Philistines of the past (which was never true) and thus it belongs to the people we call Palestinians today. Those who hate God's chosen nation and their existence on this earth have and do wish to use the Palestinians as a tool to hurt Israel in every way they can, and in so many ways this has worked because propaganda is such a formidable weapon.

While the Palestinian people suffer, those who wish to use them and falsely label them as the Philistines of the Bible do so because the Philistines were about the most obvious natural enemies of the chosen nation from day one. To repeat a fact I've covered many times but is worth often repeating because it just doesn't get emphasized or talked about, it was this southern area of the promised land that God wanted to bring the children of Israel into after leaving Egypt. The entire story of the chosen nation existing as a nation of people on a land of their own was meant to begin right here in the same area we are talking about at the time of Isaac. This didn't happen because the children of Israel were too afraid of the people who lived in this southern region to go up against them and so they were doomed to wander the wilderness until that generation of unbelief died out. (Num. 14:26-35) However, if they had done what God wanted them to do the children of Israel would have come right into the promised land with the Philistines there in the first area to be cleared of Canaanites. As it happened, Israel entered much further to the north, and while the records of the conquest in the Book of Joshua tell of places Israel took from the Philistines it's clear from later times they were still around to be a thorn in Israel's side.

After all the shake up the Assyrians and Babylonians did in the land much further down the line of Israel's history, there is no evidence the Philistines survived as a distinct people. However, the fact they were so well known from history (mostly from the Hebrew Bible telling the stories such as these which students of the Bible should be familiar with today) as people who once lived on the land long into Israel's existence their name became the Romans' choice for their propaganda of renaming the promised land. The Romans knew the Jews would not be happy with their land being labeled as "The land of the Philistines," and through the wars they fought with Rome there were small points in time the Jews threw off the Roman control over the southern part of the land around Jerusalem. In time the chosen nation would cease to be a people in possession of any particular national land but they would not cease to be a nation of people, and they would always desire to return to the promised land. The problem is that as the world developed into what we know today, the propaganda of the Roman's stuck. This is no real surprise considering they were the last empire and the writers of the records later generations generally used, but those who know the truth of God's Word should easily be able to see the promised land belongs to Israel. Maybe the best way to put it as it relates to our story is, if the mighty Philistines couldn't keep Israel from rising as a nation on the promised land to begin with, their memory certainly isn't strong enough to prevent Israel from existing today!

Until next time, Shalom!

The Bible As A Book continued from pg. 2

being a believer who can quote every verse word for word and a believer who understands and walks in faith in spite of never having words.

If you don't know what I mean by that last statement then you probably won't get the overall point, but to be clear I'm referring, once again, to men like Noah, Job, Abraham, etc. People who had faith deeper than most of us will ever experience and who had it before the written Word of God was ever a single mark on any writing material. You'll have to forgive me but this has just been in my heart the writing of this entire Shaqah. I actually wrote about three whole pages for another segment this time that I didn't use because it seems like some times I get so preachy about these seemingly little things we're not accomplishing the point of the study. However, going where God leads us is the point of the study. As health and life's circumstances have caused us to fall further and further behind which is why you're reading this issue so late from when it was suppose to be out, I can't stop thinking about how vital it is we all have what it takes to stand on our own in faith. It doesn't matter what happens to me or this ministry, you as an individual will need the faith to see your lives through to the end no matter what you're faced with. I defend the better translation not because I'm old fashioned but because we each should be doing more than desperately trying to find the easiest translation of the Bible to read. The example of trying to understand this verse makes that point!

The KJV translates this as buying the land from both Naomi and Ruth because they are both the same in reality. One is not a purchase and the other an acceptance or acquisition. They are both part of the very same thing. That thing is the following of the Law when it comes to not seeing a family in Israel disappear from among the nation, and we see the importance of this in the kind of arguments true believers face about the chosen nation. People will tell you the children of Israel were the chosen nation and there is no mention of Jews. This is the concept that because those left of the nation after the Assyrian Empire's actions and the Babylonian captivity came to be collectively called Jews they no longer qualify as the chosen nation. Because of the way history brought "Judah" (which is a name we clearly find in the Bible and as part of the chosen nation) to be the name used for all the chosen nation who survived the assault of this world, they must not be the chosen nation. Because of the way linguistics brought the name "Judah" to the simpler derivative word "Jew" we use modernly the people known as such just can't be the same as the children of Israel. There's even the argument that because Judah is not the whole of the nation that once was twelve tribes, the Jewish people shouldn't be looked at as the chosen nation. Can you see how valuable it would have been for the nation to remain on their land and for them to maintain all twelve tribes just as God started them off to have? How many arguments against the Bible's later words and prophecies of the things that man would bring about in this world would never have existed if Israel was still the functioning nation of people on the promised land with the temple Solomon built at its core?

There are answers to all the arguments people bring to the table who just want to find a way to make being a believer in the God Who created us something more like the religions of

men; something man can control with his own blood stained hands. We just need to study to show ourselves approved to know the answers! (II Tim 2:15) Those who have been reading my writings for some time I would hope understand the basic details of why the chosen nation is known today as the Jewish people, as well as why they are such a diverse people in so many ways from those who came out of Egypt. However, the "Jews" issue is an example of how easy it is for people to use a single word in an attempt to push their own doctrine; even when their doctrine is contrary to the Word of God! The words "buyest" and "buy" are an example of why we don't keep messing with the words of the Bible. All we do in English is water things down and lose the value we need in order to show ourselves approved! The bottom line is, in English we simply do not have a word for what it would mean to take on the responsibility this man Boaz was talking to, needed to take on. We do not speak a language that appeared to need such a word because English was not the language of the chosen nation as they followed the Law of Moses. This is why I talk about having a Biblical perspective in order to understand things not just the attempt to have all the words we might want.

English never had an accepted way to make words for specific things there were not words for before. We don't even understand what it would mean to have such words, especially if we've never allowed ourselves to think outside just the understanding English has us boxed up in! Thus, it doesn't matter what the original word was so much. What matters is that we get the point the word was meant to bring. The land of Elimelech's family needed to be redeemed, but for that to have the full meaning the Law was attempting to accomplish one had to deal with not just the fact Naomi was the current holder of the land, you needed to understand Ruth came along with the land. This was going to be a burden to whoever took it on. It was no light thing to raise up children in your brother's name. Some might like the idea of having more land, but especially for anyone who was already married, taking on what is nothing short of a second family could come with a high price. Thus, there was a price to pay and that's why we see the word "buy" in the KJV. The irony of people changing the word in relationship to Ruth is that there was a far higher price to be paid and commitment to be made in taking her as your wife than there was just taking the land!

In saying he would redeem the land this man was making a commitment to Elimelech's memory no matter how he was looking at it. We see exactly how much what I just said about the high price of Ruth being true in the very next thing that happened in this conversation. The man's response shows clear understanding of what Boaz meant in talking about buying the land from Ruth as much as Naomi and it caused him to change his mind. Here we go with word technicality again because his words are specifically, "I cannot redeem it for myself..." Ruth 4:6. Take the English words as you want today but the reason the KJV uses "cannot" here is because in English if you say "can not," it means something like probably not or I don't believe I can. It could mean, I could but I'm too busy to do what you want at the moment. When we say "cannot" as one word, it means it's not possible! In this case we only need to know proper English to know whatever word the man used in the original language as it was being spoken that day before the ten elders, he was saying it was not possible for him to do it! Now, stop and think again

about how quick he seemed to respond to the idea he would redeem the land but once he found out it required the taking of Ruth he was out!

This speaks nothing to who Ruth was. He likely didn't even know her other than the good things that had been said about her around town. He had no reason to not want Ruth because of who she was, so we're looking at a man who went from yes to no in answering the redeeming question just on the basis of his own life circumstances. Interestingly what he says shows us how very different this man was from Ruth and Boaz. I just keep mentioning how their actions cared so much for the Law of God because we need to see the contrast between them and what we see in people like this man. The man says specifically he cannot redeem Elimelech's house when it includes Ruth because it would spoil his own inheritance. The Law gives credit to the fact the man in line to redeem his brother's house might not be able to. However, the reasons are really more like the fact he might be dead or close to it himself! That's a real reason to say the man cannot. The person in line to do the redeeming might be in such financial trouble himself he's barely holding on to his own inheritance or has already lost it and is trying to get it back. The Law deals with such things happening and speaks to the need to redeem your own inheritance, and I think in such a case it's fair for a man to say he cannot redeem his brother's house.

Other issues qualify for the "cannot" word. A man who is physically disabled might not be able to work the land or care for it in any way even by hiring it out to be worked by someone else. There could be a problem with not being able to have children that even with the technology of the day is known to clearly be the man ailment. Such a man might not be able to have children in his own name much less his brother's name. These are the types of things the Law was giving credit to when it deals with there even being a line for who is first, second, etc. in being the one who should redeem his brother's inheritance. However, this man specifically says he cannot do it without messing up his own inheritance. What do you suppose he was referring to? First, I'm sure Boaz would have been aware of most of the problems we just covered and if this man had any of those blockades to handling the redeeming. Maybe this doesn't cause Boaz not to put it on record that the man confirms he cannot and so Boaz will do the redeeming, but one would think he'd have gone about it a bit differently if that had been the case. Second, I just keep going back to how the man said yes when he thought it was just about land and then no when it included Ruth. Shall we go on into the possible whys for why he answered this way?

No, I don't believe there is any need to. This man simply had personal reasons it was going to complicate his life, most likely his marriage, if he took on the responsibility the Law asked him to take on. This has some to do with the subject of stipulations Paul lays out in the New Testament for men seeking an office of responsibility within the church. (I Tim. 3, Titus 1:5-11) In those stipulations Paul talks about needing men who are the husband of one wife. As Christians we take this as being because it was the absolute only thing God would allow when there is plenty of evidence God allowed it and why? Because in

so many ways we are too arrogant to admit today, taking on and maintaining the responsibility for the woman you have physical relationships with and any children that might bring about is better than all the divorce and remarriage we so easily accept in our modern world. That by no means, means taking more than one wife is what God intended and therefore something we do on purpose, but I'll leave that at that because I've covered a lot of the reasons for what I said about this subject in other places. The point is, the earthly responsibility of having a family is an earthly responsibility. Yes, I know that sounds redundant but we just don't get that when reading Paul's words. Being the husband of one wife is a requirement because having more than that means you have too many worldly responsibilities to do the kind of work for God Paul was speaking about.

Another thing Paul talks about in those stipulations applies even more directly to our subject here of this man not being willing to redeem Elimelech's house, and that's the part where Paul says such men should rule their house well. In our modern thinking we can take this all over the place as to what it means or could mean, but where most modern thinkers are going to land in at least a large way is the idea a man should have his wife under control. We look at the past as such an unenlightened time which we have outgrown, all we can see is clear blue sky above our noses most of the time. I don't say that to anyone personally but to the society we've built and the attitude it instills into our generation. What Paul was talking about had far more to do with being a man who knows how to organize his life and family affairs than it does anything about his wife specifically. The simplicity of it is that, again, a man who's struggling to keep things at home together for whatever reason such difficulties might exist just doesn't have the time and energy to do the ministry work Paul was talking about, and to be clear he was not really talking about the fulltime called into the ministry individuals we have been taught to believe he was talking about. More so Paul was talking about individuals who could do the work we see the apostles dealing with when they said, "...it is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." Acts 6:2

This was the issue at hand and why I emphasized so much the words of the KJV about there being a price to pay in redeeming Elimelech's house. Life is a lot of hard work and dedication and that was/is true for no people in this world like it was/is for those who were called to the specific ministry work of being the chosen nation and living under the Law God gave them. While we all know life doesn't always turn out the way you want it to, anyone who was part of the chosen nation needed to be aware of the whole Law even if they didn't believe parts of it would ever affect their lives directly. This man, for reasons we can't judge, was not prepared to follow the Law and so he tells Boaz it would be up to him to take on the burden.

Let's stay in God's Word!