

Ruth the Moabitess

by Anton Bosch

God's unfailing grace accepts those who genuinely turn to Him, regardless of their past, and incorporates them into His plan.

Scripture: Numbers 25:9, Matthew 1:5

Topics: "Gods Grace", "Salvation History"

Description

Anton Bosch delves into the history of the Moabites, known for immorality, seduction, and leading Israel astray through incestuous relationships, idol worship, and schemes to draw them away from God. Despite the Moabites' repeated attempts to infiltrate and corrupt God's people, Ruth the Moabitess stands out as a remarkable example of God's grace, as she forsakes her past and idols to wholeheartedly follow the Lord, becoming an ancestor of King David and Jesus. This serves as a powerful illustration of God's unfailing grace and acceptance of those who turn to Him, wiping away their past and incorporating them fully into His work and plan.

Transcript

The history of the Moabites is filled with immorality, seduction, lust and incest.

The nation was born out of the incestuous relationship between Lot's oldest daughter and himself after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). Lot's descendants would not be known by his name, but as the Moabites and the Ammonites. These two nations had a similar birth and history and are often mentioned together as the cause of Israel's unfaithfulness to the Lord.

It was Balak, king of Moab, who hired Balaam to curse the people of God. And when that did not work, Balaam instructed the Moabite women to seduce the men of Israel, lead them to worship their idols and so bring God's judgment on the people of Israel (Revelation 2:14). Because of this, twenty-four thousand Israelites were killed by the plague (Numbers 25:9) and the Moabites were forever banned from the assembly of the Lord's people.

A few hundred years later Solomon would marry, amongst others, Moabite women (1Kings 11:2). Once again, these women would seduce Solomon to worship their false gods and to erect high places for them (1Kings 11:7). Solomon's relationship with the descendants of Lot and his subsequent worship of their idols would lead directly to the division of the Kingdom into the northern (Israel) and the southern (Judah) tribes (1Kings 11:32-34).

Once again a liaison with the descendants of Lot would prove to be the downfall of Israel. And once again Moab would use the same seduction of Lot's daughters and Balaam to lead Israel to worship idols and to incur the wrath of God. No wonder the Lord banned them from the congregation for ever.

In the book of Nehemiah we come across Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite (Nehemiah 2:10). A Horonite is a native of Horoniam, a city of Moab (Jeremiah 48:3-4). Yet again, the Moabites and the Ammonites would seek the downfall of the people of Israel. Sanballat used every trick in the book to discourage Nehemiah in his work and when mocking, attacks and blackmail did not work they resorted to their old and proven trickery.

Sanballat tried to lure Nehemiah into an unholy alliance, just as Moab had done on previous occasions (Nehemiah 6:2). Fortunately, Nehemiah saw through his scheme and would not even meet with the enemy. When this did not work the Moabites tried to tempt Nehemiah to sin by entering the Temple (Nehemiah 6:13), in the hope that the Lord would judge Nehemiah, as he had the people of Israel. This too did not work.

But just when it appeared that Moab would fail in his seduction, we read that quite a few Israelites had married Moabites and Ammonites (Nehemiah 13:3, 23). Once again this mixed multitude would degrade the values of the Lord's people so that many of their children could not speak the language of Judah but had adopted the language and customs of the infiltrators (Nehemiah 13:24).

Even worse, the High Priest's son married Sanballat's (the Moabite) daughter. Over and over, Moab would find every opportunity to infiltrate the people of God and to draw them away from serving Yahweh. Fortunately, Nehemiah was ever alert and dealt appropriately with each occurrence of the corruption: "So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. "Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?" (Nehemiah 13:25-27).

However, when Nehemiah turned his back, the High Priest went as far as to vacate a room in the temple for Tobiah the Ammonite. The High Priest had brought one of the leaders of Ammon and an enemy of Israel right into the temple when they were not even allowed amongst the Lord's people, let alone live in the Lord's house! (Nehemiah 13:4-9).

Can you see how the flesh and the enemy will find every opportunity to infiltrate the church and the life of the believer? We cannot allow these things the least opportunity to get a foothold in our lives - they only have one agenda - the destruction of the people of God.

The history of Moab seeking the destruction of Israel and Judah spans the entire history of Israel in the Land, from the exodus, to Israel's zenith, and finally to the return from captivity. The seduction, schemes and infiltration is unceasing.

But right in the middle of the story we find this woman "Ruth the Moabite" (Ruth 2:2). Not only does she come to live in Israel, but she marries a prominent Hebrew. And as if that is not enough, she becomes the great-grandmother of David the King and an ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1:5). Why did God allow this when He Himself banished all Moabites from the congregation? Surely Ruth posed the same danger to

the welfare of the People as every other Moabite and surely she should have been condemned with the rest of them?

No. Once again we have an illustration of God's immense and unfailing grace. Ruth had forsaken her people and her gods and had unconditionally clung to the Lord and His people (Ruth 2:16,17). Once Ruth turned to the Lord, He graciously received her, forgave her past and removed the curse that had hung over her. Not only did the Lord accept her, but He included her and used her as though she had always been an Israelite. It was as though her past and ancestry did not exist.

In the same way the Lord still receives each one who genuinely turns to him and who turns their backs on their idols and their past. He receives us unreservedly, wipes away our past and removes the curse that hung over us. Just like Ruth, He not only allows us to participate in the blessings of His people, but He even uses us and incorporates us fully in His work and His plan. He treats us as though we were always His children and as though there never was a time when we were His enemies and banished from His presence.

Oh what marvelous grace! Ruth is no longer the Moabitess, but she is the ancestor of the Lord Jesus! Likewise you need no longer be known as the sinner, addict, abuser, or whatever you were before, and you can bear His name - Christian.

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