BIBLE STUDY

2/14/13

Isaiah 6:9-10

YAHWEH SAID, “GO AND TELL THIS PEOPLE: ‘KEEP ON HEARING BUT DO NOT PERCEIVE; KEEP ON SEEING, BUT DO NOT UNDERSTAND. RENDER THE HEARTS OF THIS PEOPLE INSENSITIVE

THEIR EARS DULL, AND THEIR EYES DIM, OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEARTS, AND RETURN AND BE HEALED.”

Jeremiah 5:21

NOW HEAR THIS, O FOOLISH AND SNSELESS PEOPLE, WHO HAVE EYES BUT DO NOT SEE; WHO HAVE EARS BUT DO NOT HEAR.

Ezekiel 12:2

[YAHWEH SAYS TO EZEKIEL], YOU LIVE IN THE MIDST OF THE REBELLIOUS HOUSE, WHO HAVE EYES TO SEE BUT DO NOT SEE, EARS TO HEAR BUT DO NOT HEAR; FOR THEY ARE A REBELLIOUS HOUSE.

Mark 4:2 And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teaching, 3 “Hear! Behold, the sower went out to sow; 4 as he was sowing, some seed fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Other seed fell on the rocky ground where it did not have much soil; and straightway it sprang up because it had no depth of soil. 6 And after the sun had risen, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. 7 Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it yielded no crop. 8 Others fell into the good soil, and as they grew up and increased, they yielded a crop and produced thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.” 9 And He was saying, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

…11 And He was saying to His followers, “To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables,

12 so that *while seeing, they may see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they might return and be forgiven.”*

Mark 15:29 Those passing by were blaspheming abuse at Him, wagging their heads, and saying, “Ha! You who are going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, 30 save Yourself, and come down from the cross!” 31 In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes, were mocking Him among themselves saying, “He saved others; He cannot save Himself. 32 Let this Messiah, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, so that we may see and believe!” Those who were crucified with Him were also insulting Him. 33 When the sixth hour came, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”* translated, “*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”*35 When some who were standing by heard it, they said, “Behold, He is calling for Elijah.” 36 Someone ran and filled a sponge with vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, “Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down.” 37 And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. 38 And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39 When the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, “Truly this man was the son of God!”

Israel stayed in Shittim, and the people began to whore with the women of Moab. The Moabites called the Israelites for sacrifice to their gods; the Israelites ate and prostrated themselves to their gods. Now Israel yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor, so the anger of Yahweh flared up against Israel.

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[**Deuteronomy 23:5**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+23:5&version=ESV)

But Yahweh your God would not listen to **Balaam**; instead Yahweh your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because Yahweh your God loved you.

Duet. 23:2-4 No one born of a forbidden union may enter the assembly of Yahweh. Even to the tenth generation, none of his descendants may enter the assembly of Yahweh. **3**“No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the Lord. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the Lord forever, **4**because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.

[**2 Peter 2:15**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Peter+2:15&version=ESV) Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of **Balaam**, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing,

[**Jude 1:11**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jude+1:11&version=ESV) Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to **Balaam**'s error and perished in Korah's rebellion.

[**Revelation 2:14**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+2:14&version=ESV) But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of **Balaam**, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.

NUMBERS 31:1, 7-8, 13-16

Ruth

**Narrator**: In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

**Narrator**: Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that YAHWEH had visited his people and given them bread (lehem). So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

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**Naomi** (to her two daughters-in-law): Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May YAHWEH deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. YAHWEH grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband! **Narrator**: Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. **Ruth and Orpah**: No, we will return with you to your people. **Naomi**: Return, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Return, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of YAHWEH has gone out against me.

\*\*\* **Narrator**: Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. **Naomi**: See, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law. **Ruth**: Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May YAHWEH do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you. **Narrator**: And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more. So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. **The women of Bethlehem**: Is this Naomi? **Naomi**: Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and YAHWEH has returned me empty. Why call me Naomi, when YAHWEH has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?” **Narrator**: So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Deuteronomy 30:1-10

“So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you cause them to return to your mind in all nations where Yahweh your God has banished you, **2**and you return to Yahweh your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, **3**then Yahweh your God will return you from your captivity, and have compassion on you, and will return and gather you again from all the peoples where Yahweh your God has scattered you. **4**If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there Yahweh your God will gather you, and from there He willbring you back. **5**Yahweh your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

**6**“Moreover Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. **7**Yahweh your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. **8**And you shall return to obey Yahweh, and observe all His commandments which I command you today. **9**Then Yahweh your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for Yahweh will return to rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; **10**if you obey Yahweh your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you return to Yahweh your God with all your heart and soul.

Hesed in Ruth

Hesed is the most important word in the book of Ruth.

There is no one word in English that can correctly translate Hesed.

Hesed is a relational word:

* Covenantal loyalty
* Faithfulness
* Lovingkindness
* Goodness
* Mercy
* Love
* Compassion

Two thirds of the times hesed is used are of God’s hesed toward humans, thus it is a characteristic of God rather than humans; it is rooted in the divine nature.

The book of Ruth employs hesed on both the divine and human levels:

* Ruth 1:8 (a blessing by Naomi to Orpah and Ruth) “May Yahweh deal with hesed toward you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.”
* Ruth 2:20 (after a blessing by Naomi toward Boaz she says) “He (Yahweh) has not stopped showing his hesed to the living and the dead.”
* Ruth 3:10 (a blessing by Boaz to Ruth is followed by these words by Boaz) “This hesed is greater than that which you showed earlier. You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor.”

BETHLEHEM AND PROPHECY

**Genesis 35:19** So Rachel (after giving birth to a son she called “Son of my Sorrow) died and she was buried on the way to Ephratha, that is, **Bethlehem**.

**Judges 17:7-9** Now there was a young man from **Bethlehem** in Judah, of the family of Judah, who was a Levite; and he was staying there. Then the man departed from the city, from **Bethlehem** in Judah, to stay wherever the might find a place; and as he made his journey, he came to the hill country of Ephraim to the house of Micah. [what follow is the story of the Levite becoming a priest for an idol]

**Judges 19:1-2** Now it came about in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite…who took a concubine for himself from **Bethlehem** in Judah. [What follows is the story of the Levite leaving Bethlehem after retrieving his concubine, and staying in a town where Benjaminites act like Sodomites.]

**Ruth 1:1** Now it came about in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of **Bethlehem** in Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab…

**1 Samuel 16** Now the LORD said to Samuel, “…Fill your horn with oil and gg; I will send you to Jesse the **Bethlehem**ite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons.”

**1 Samuel 17:12** Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of **Bethlehem** in Judah, whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons.

**Jeremiah 31:15** Thus says the LORD, “A voice is heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.”

**Micah 5:2** But as for you, **Bethlehem** Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.

**Matthew 2:1, 5, 6** Now after Jesus was born in **Bethlehem** of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem…

[Herod asks the Jewish scribes where the Messiah was to be born and they replied,] “In **Bethlehem** of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: ‘And you **Bethlehem**, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of ou shall come forth a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

**2:8** And Herod sent them to **Bethlehem** and said, “Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him.”

**2:16-18** Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in **Bethlehem** and all its vicinity from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined fro the magi. Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be comforted, because they were no more.”

**Luke 2:4** Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called **Bethlehem**, because he was of the house and family of David…

**Luke 2:15** When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let us go straight to **Bethlehem** then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made know to us.”

**John 7:42 [**The people around Jesus said], “Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from **Bethlehem**, the village where David was?”

What do we learn?

1. Rachel, dying on the way to Bethlehem, becomes a picture/foreshadow of the sorrow that the Jewish nation experiences in the Babylonian captivity and the sorrow of mothers in Bethlehem at the time of Jesus’ birth.
2. Bethlehem was the necessary place of the birth of Jesus because it was prophesied.
3. Bethlehem was the necessary place for the birth of Jesus, since it was the city of David (ancestor of Jesus).
4. The Old Testament has prepared us for the birth of Christ, son of David, in the city of David—Bethlehem.