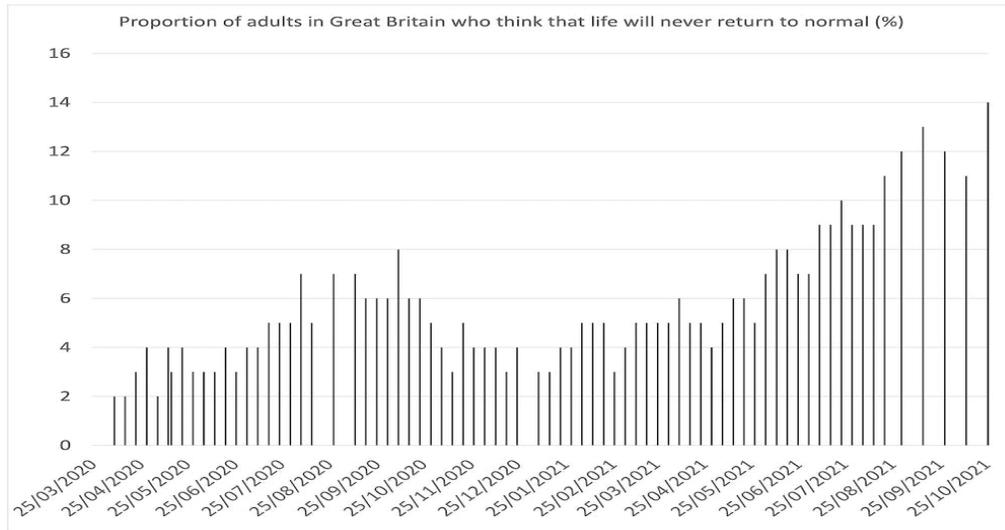


SERMON NOTES: RUTH #1 “DISORDERED DAYS”

WHEN WILL THINGS GET BACK TO NORMAL?

The Conversation recently explored some research from the UK Office of National Statistics. Since March 2020 when the first coronavirus lockdowns occurred, UK researchers asked people all over their nation “When will life return to normal?” This is what they found.

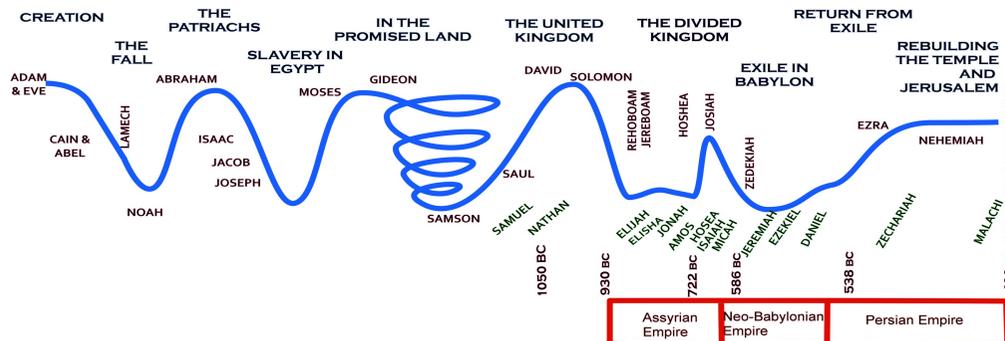


UK Office of National Statistics cited at: The Conversation Australia: <https://theconversation.com/when-will-life-return-to-normal-after-the-pandemic-172726>

We live in disordered days. Will it ever return to ‘normal? We never know when we’ll get a positive test and suddenly be banned from work! Now beautiful people we know may quickly die of a simple virus. Perhaps this is the beginning of us rich safe Australians getting to know what “normal” is like and has been like for most of humanity for much of history?

What do you think? Will things return to normal? When? Why? What will normal be?

THE BOOK OF RUTH: DISORDERED DAYS!



This diagram is by the brilliant Stuart Houghton: www.stuarthoughton.wordpress.com

On the other side is a timeline of the Old Testament. Notice the ups and downs. Ups are where things are OK. The low parts on the line are disorder, catastrophes, bad bits. Now the fun bit. Can you work out where the book of Ruth fits?

Judges 17:6 & Judges 21:25

In those days Israel had no king; people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

This was a time of danger and chaos, people did not agree even on right and wrong. This is the time of the Judges (Gideon to Samson). This is where the book of Ruth fits in.

Ruth 1:1

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.

NAOMI’S STORY: DISASTROUS DAYS!

Bethlehem. BETH: House. LEHEM: (of) Bread A place of grain, plenty, rich farming land.

Catastrophe! No rain, famine, no food. Elimelech and Naomi face a decision. Stay see their two sons starve? Or go somewhere else? Like modern refugees fleeing from Sudan or Chad. Refugees flee famine. Will the rain return? Will it ever get back to normal?

Ruth 1:2-4

They went to the country of Moab and remained. ³ But Naomi’s husband Elimelech died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴ These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years...

How does Elimelech die? Why does Naomi chose to stay in the foreign land? Food? Perhaps she stays for her sons? Life improves a little. Her sons grow up. They go local. They marry local girls (Orpah & Ruth). Now her sons are supporting her in her old age. But...

Ruth 1:5.

“and both Mahlon and Chilion died, So Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.”

In just five sentences we read disorder, disaster, and desolation. Naomi has lost everything. Her daughters in law will return to their families (as was tradition) and she will be left entirely alone and desolate in a foreign land. Would you dare to just quietly sit with that verse for a bit?

FROM DISORDER GOD CAN BRING DELIGHT!

Your pastor carefully reflected and prayed before choosing this book for our congregations. Why did he choose to explore Ruth with our local churches in Nambour and Witta? How do you feel about his reasons? (It’s OK to disagree!)

“The Book of Judges is the story of Israel at one of its lowest points in history: division, cruelty, apostasy, civil war, national disgrace and famine... It seems incredible that this beautiful love story [the book of Ruth] should take place at such a calamitous period in history. But is this not true today? Today we experience national and international troubles, moral decay, and difficulties of every kind, and yet God loves this lost world... In spite of alarms in the headlines and dangers on the streets, God still loves the world and wants to save lost sinners. When you know Jesus Christ, no matter how tough the times may be, you are part of a beautiful story of love.”

– Warren Wiersbe (*Be Committed*, 1992) [slightly edited]