

Ruth Chapter 1 Commentary

1 ¶ "Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. 2 And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there."

Both Abraham and Isaac left the land of promise, because of famine in the land, without commandment of God. Yet, we shall see in this book, as we have in the past, God allows people to make decisions, and even though they are bad decisions, made without the commandment of God, God will providentially work out the ending, to bring about the fulfillment of his will and purpose.

With self-examination of our own lives, how many times have we left our rightful place, and wandered off into another land; living to satisfy our own hungering lust and not seeking the will of God? Thank you, Lord! for making all things work together for good, for the fulfillment of your will and purpose in our lives.

3 "And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. 4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years."

Again, we see: Israelites out of their proper place, doing that which is against the commandment of God. Here we see, these Israelite men marrying women of another nationality, which God has commanded against. We have a similar commandment in the New Testament, seen in: **2Co 6:14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"**

There is a reason we are to stay in the place that God has placed us in, here in time. If you have been given a place in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, lay aside your own will and lust, and continue in the church fellowship.

Though there may seem to be a famine at the present time, seek from God the reason there is a famine, and if it is sin, do what is necessary to make things right with God, and with your church family. The famine may just be to test our faith in God. God knows our every need and has promised to provide those needs.

5 "And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband. 6 ¶ Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread. 7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah."

Her husband and her sons having died, Naomi has only her daughters-in-law left. Hearing of the bounty of God returning to Israel, Naomi prepares to return to her rightful place in Israel. Her daughters-in-law begin the journey with her.

8 "And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. 9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept."

Naomi, knowing that there will be no husbands for her daughters in law in Israel, blesses them and sends them back to their homes, where they can marry and have children, of their own people.

10 "And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. 11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? 12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; 13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me."

Naomi explains to her daughters in law the situation, and again she tells them to go home. She has nothing to offer them but widowhood if they go with her. Naomi does not even have any hope for herself when she gets back to her place in Israel.

14 "And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her. 15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law. 16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: 17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. 18 When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her."

Orpah, understanding what Naomi is telling them, returns to her home. Ruth, however, clings to her mother-in-law, and she implores Naomi to not force her to go back to Moab. We understand, from this scene, that Ruth has already been touched by the finger of God. God has done a work of grace in her heart, and she wishes to be in the place where her new God is known to be. Naomi, who realizes that God has touched Ruth, allows her to return to Israel with her. Oh! what a wonderful blessing, to want to be where God is working his miracles and blessing his people.

19 ¶ "So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? 20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? 22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest."

Naomi and Ruth continue their journey and come to Bethlehem. The people hear of Naomi's return, and they are deeply affected when they hear the story of Naomi since her departure. The story, of Naomi's and Ruth's lives, is spread throughout the region among God's people. This is the hand of God working, in the lives of all who will be involved, in the fulfillment of God's will for Ruth. Ruth will be found in the lineage that leads to the birth of Jesus.

I believe we can see some judicial judgment from God has taken place in Naomi's life, with her desire to change her name. Elimelech should have never taken his family from Israel, and we see the damaging results in his own death, and the death of his two sons. Naomi has seen the judgment of God in their life. Her husband and sons have died in a strange land. She has returned home empty, except for Ruth, her daughter-in-law.

It is interesting that they happen to get to Bethlehem at the time of harvest, which demonstrates to us the providence of God, in making his will and purpose come to fruition.

The name Ruth means *friend*. We shall see: Ruth has been befriended by God, as we continue our study of this book of Ruth.