

# Ruth 1

10-9-05

## *“There’s Bread in Bethlehem!”*

### 1. **Announcements:**

- 1.1. **Katrina Update** – Eccl.7:2. Attitudes(Taking it to heart, priorities)
  - 1.1.1. Explain trip(Chaplains). Devastation enormous(miles & miles). Magnitude massive(records/evidence).
  - 1.1.2. NOPD officer Greg in French Quarter - (His perspective in driving down the vacant streets rt before it hit. It’s about community)
  - 1.1.3. God’s Judgment? – Then he missed!
  - 1.1.4. **Teams: have been fixing roofs.** (Larry’s team this week)

### 2. **Book Intro:**

- 2.1. **Setting:** The time period of the Judges. (1100 bc)
  - 2.1.1. **Read** the last verse of Judges.
  - 2.1.2. It spans the period of 12 years.
  - 2.1.3. It seems incredible that this **Love Story** could occur during the dark days of the Judges...**But such is the Grace of God!**
    - 2.1.3.1. Ruth’s story stands out like an **oasis** of integrity & righteousness, in a period of rebellion & immorality.
    - 2.1.3.2. It would be like sitting in a dark dingy bar, when lightly in the background you hear a Love Ballad of Ruth softly playing.
- 2.2. **Trivia: What 3 books in the bible are named after women?**
  - 2.2.1. Ruth, Esther, & 2<sup>nd</sup> John.
- 2.3. **Main Themes:**
  - 2.3.1. We’ll see the Providence of God in action, in the lives of Naomi, Ruth, & Boaz.
    - 2.3.1.1. They are like a shaft of sunlight through a steel-gray sky.<sup>1</sup>
  - 2.3.2. **It’s a story of Love, Devotion, & Redemption.**
  - 2.3.3. You’ll witness Tears, Toil, Trust, & Triumph.
  - 2.3.4. You’ll see the hand of God guiding the faithful in the details of everyday life!
    - 2.3.4.1. Common people in common settings, yet being guided by the mysterious hand of God!
    - 2.3.4.2. Thus, no event in the life of God’s people is insignificant, because he is constantly involved.
- 2.4. **The Books Uniqueness:**
  - 2.4.1. The literary structure is crafted with care.
  - 2.4.2. Its narrative is symmetrical, wonderfully laid out.
  - 2.4.3. The book **begins** with a **Funeral** & **ends** with a **Wedding!**

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<sup>1</sup> Chuck Swindoll; pg.70

- 2.4.4. The name of God is used 23 x's in the 85 vs.
  - 2.4.5. **Naomi** moves from **Bitterness** to **Blessedness!**
  - 2.4.6. **Ruth** moves from **Loneliness** to **Love**.
- 2.5. It's a **human** story but much more! It is a story of God's unfailing love for His covenant people & how he brought a foreigner into that covenant! – A Moabite named Ruth.

### 3. **THERE'S BREAD IN BETHLEHEM!**

- 3.1. **ELIMELECH!** (1-3)
- 3.2. (1) The land of Milk & Honey has become parched & empty.
  - 3.2.1. **How can this be?** – Because their agricultural & societal abundance depended on their spiritual obedience.
    - 3.2.1.1. Since they had **ignored** God's law & **degenerated** into spiritual famine, a physical famine followed – just as God predicted.
  - 3.2.2. Their response should have been to run **to** Him, **not** run **from** him!
  - 3.2.3. The house of bread, was now the house w/o bread!
- 3.3. **There is a high cost to backsliding.**
  - 3.3.1. It seems that Elimelech sinned in bringing his family down to enemy country.
    - 3.3.1.1. When in severe despair, flight seems the only way out.
  - 3.3.2. "Its better to be **hungry** in the will of God, than to have a **full stomach & be out of His will!**" (WWW)
  - 3.3.3. **Read** Deut.23:3-6.
    - 3.3.3.1. Since the Law legislated against Moab, we will see that this whole story illustrates Gods sovereign grace upon this alien, outcast, lost Gentile...named Ruth!
  - 3.3.4. God's promises always seemed to be "*in the land*". Step outside of that & you were either backslidden or at the least heading for trouble.
    - 3.3.4.1. **Moab** in particular was a divine no no
    - 3.3.4.2. **Whose kid was Moab?** Oh yah, "*Lots & his daughters!*"
    - 3.3.4.3. They worshiped **Chemosh** the destroyer, subduer, or fish-god.
  - 3.3.5. **Land lay out:** **Bethlehem** is at the top West side of the Dead Sea. **Moab** is in the middle, East side of it. [35 S/E]
- 3.4. (3) You can run from famine, but you cannot escape death!
  - 3.4.1. Again, "Its better to be **hungry** in the will of God, than to have a **full stomach & be out of His will!**"
    - 3.4.1.1. God provides for those who trust Him in hard times.

- 3.4.2. Elimelech had the right name “*my God is King*”, but for all practical purposes he seems to have denied His Kingship over his life. And he soon paid for it:
- 3.4.2.1. 1<sup>st</sup> the **Move** to Moab, then the **Marriages** in Moab, then the **Misery** in Moab...how sad!
- 3.5. Let’s be reminded though there is still a big difference between a **backslider** & an **apostate**.
- 3.5.1. A **backslider** rationalizes his wrong moves & find excuses for them (i.e. basing his move on the famine)
- 3.5.2. An **apostate** repudiates the faith he once professed to hold.
- 3.5.3. **Peter** was a backslider; **Judas** was an apostate.<sup>2</sup>
- 3.6. **Husbands/Fathers note this** – the ultimate responsibility for the **disastrous family move** to Moab comes to rest upon the shoulders of Elimelech, the father & head of the home.
- 3.7. **Remember, there will always be the temptation to walk “another way!”**
- 3.8. **MAHLON & CHILION!** (4,5)
- 3.9. Mahlon = *Sick, sickly*; Chilion = *Pining or wasting away*.
- 3.10. **ORPAH!** (6-14) [Orpah = fawn]
- 3.11. (6) Wow, go figure...the “*house of bread*” has bread!
- 3.11.1. Invite others to come to **Jesus**. Because the Bread of life...has bread!
- 3.11.2. Invite others to come to **His Word**. Because the Daily Bread...is bread!
- 3.11.3. Invite others to come to **Church**. Because the House of Bread...has bread!
- 3.11.4. Now Naomi’s **soul** was as empty as her **stomach** had been when her family 1<sup>st</sup> arrived in Moab.
- 3.12. (8) **Go return** – Is this good advice for them to return to their pagan gods? (see 15)
- 3.12.1. Was she embarrassed to bring them back with her & reveal the family’s disobedience to God?
- 3.13. (7,10) **A Kiss is cheap!**
- 3.13.1. Both **set out** with her (7).
- 3.13.2. Both had an **affection** for Naomi (8).
- 3.13.3. Both declared “**surely we will return with you to your people**” (10).
- 3.14. **But the hour of test came:** Naomi set before them the trials & costs!
- 3.14.1. It is one thing to **love** the ways of the Lord when all is fair, & quite another to **cleave** to them under all discouragements & difficulties.

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<sup>2</sup> Vance Havner; 100 Sermon Outlines; #40.

- 3.14.2. (Spurg) “The **kiss of outward profession** is very cheap & easy, but the **practical cleaving** to the Lord, which must show itself in holy decision for truth & holiness, is not so small a matter.”
- 3.14.3. Jesus said, “**If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.**” Lk.9:23  
 3.14.3.1. **And read** Lk.14:26,27,33.
- 3.15. **Q: How is your heart with God?**  
 3.15.1. Is it fixed on Jesus? Is it bound with cords to the horns of the altar? Have we counted the cost? Are we solemnly ready to suffer all worldly loss for the Masters sake?
- 3.16. **Orpah is not heard of again! She seeps back into her pagan culture, her people, her gods. Slipping off the pages of Scripture, history, eternity!**  
 3.16.1. **But Ruth lives on in history, in Scripture, in heaven. For grace has placed her in the noble line in which sprang up Israel’s greatest King, David, & ultimately the King of Kings.**
- 3.17. **RUTH!** (15-18)
- 3.18. Ruth had come to trust in the God of Israel & so she refused to go back. - **What a model of faith & trust in God.**  
 3.18.1. **Ruth made the hard choice...but the right choice!**
- 3.19. **Kiss or cling the choice is yours!**  
 3.19.1. **Q: Are you dating God or are you married to him(i.e. committed)?**  
 3.19.2. **Q: Are you a kisser or clinger to Christ?**
- 3.20. **Burning your Moabite bridge!**  
 3.20.1. **Winston Churchill said, “A fanatic is someone who can’t change his mind & won’t change the subject!” – Ruth was determined!**  
 3.20.2. **Q: Have you burnt your Moabite bridge?**
- 3.21. **NAOMI!** (19-22)
- 3.22. She seems to blame God for her plight. (13,20,21)  
 3.22.1. **But it was her decision to go to Moab, why blame God?**  
 3.22.2. **Although God does not prevent the painful consequences of our sins, he does overrule so that His purposes are fulfilled.**  
 3.22.3. **By the Grace of God, Naomi’s emptiness will become fullness, & her sorrow will turn to joy.**
- 3.23. **Men have affliction, but none like Job. Women have tribulations but not like Naomi:**  
 3.23.1. **She was a woman; an old woman; an old widowed woman; an old widowed poor woman; an old widowed poor woman which lost both**

her sons; an old widowed poor woman who lost both her sons whose plight was pitiful.

3.23.2. But all of that was about to change!

3.23.2.1. God welcomes her honest prayer, but that hand that seems to be against her was already working for her! [A few more months & her sorrow would be turned to joy!]

3.24. (20) Her **going away name**(pre-backsliding) “**Pleasant**”. Her **coming home name** “**Bitter**”.

3.24.1. Her years in Moab were nothing but **unhappy**.

3.24.2. There she **lost her husband**, seen both her **sons marry pagans**, & **lost both her sons** as well.

3.24.3. She also started giving bad counsel!

3.24.3.1. “I think you better stay down there. You’ll have a much better chance of getting married.”

3.24.3.2. In Orpah’s case the advice was all too successful! 😞

3.24.3.3. I wonder in later years if Naomi was haunted by her counsel to her? (not only back to her people but back to her gods!!!)

3.24.4. Yet, God blessed her & gave her back much more when she made up her mind to get back into fellowship w/His people.

3.24.4.1. See, He leaves the **Apostates** (“God gave them up” Rom.1).

3.24.4.2. But he pursues the **backslidden** & never gives up on them!

3.24.5. When Naomi heard the news that God had visited his people, a great longing sprang up in her heart to get back to the place of blessing.

3.24.6. **Personal App: It’s the same with you this morning!** Turn from your backsliding & get back into fellowship with God & his people!

3.25. (22) From Bitterness to Blessedness!

3.26. Back to Bethlehem!

3.26.1. The chapter started with **hunger** & ends in “the house of **bread**”.

3.26.2. The writer gives us a hint that God will honor Ruth’s choice.

3.27. Like **Ruth** we were **foreigners**.

3.28. Like **Naomi** we’ve been **empty spiritually**.

3.28.1. The **Babe** of Bethlehem wants to fill you with the Bread of Life & satisfy your soul from life’s hunger pains!

3.29. **Prayer:** May the H.S. work in us a **cleaving of our whole heart** to our Lord Jesus!