

# RUTH, A TYPE OF CHRIST'S GENTILE BRIDE

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Ruth 1:8, 14-22

LESSON 199 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name" (Psalm 86:9).

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### **Ruth 1:8**

<sup>8</sup> 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.

### **Ruth 1:14-22**

<sup>14</sup> And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> 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:

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

<sup>19</sup> 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?*

<sup>20</sup> And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

<sup>21</sup> I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: *why then* call ye me

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### NOTES:

#### **Famine**

Long ago, during the time that the judges ruled Israel, a famine came upon part of the land of Judah. Crops were very poor and the people did not have enough to eat. In other countries food was plentiful, so some people moved from their homes to where they could get an abundance of the things they needed for their families.

One such family was that of Elimelech and Naomi, who with their two sons, went to the land of Moab to live. However, all did not go well with the family. First the father died; and not long after, both the sons died. The sons had married Moabite girls, and now Naomi was left alone with her daughters-in-law in this strange land outside Israel where all her people lived.

#### **Longing for Home**

Naomi was very sad. Perhaps she felt that all this trouble had come upon her because she had left the land of Israel, which God had given to His chosen people, and had gone to live among the heathen of Moab who worshiped idols. Now that her husband and sons were gone there was no one who understood her devotion to God, and she must have been very lonesome.

We can somewhat understand Naomi's lonesomeness. Perhaps some of us have stayed among sinners for a time, and we have become burdened because they did not want to talk about Jesus. During that time we may have met a Christian acquaintance on the street — it could have been one we hardly knew — and we felt as though we had met our best friend. The fellowship of God's children means much more to a Christian than does the companionship of his own relatives who are not Christians.

The Psalmist wrote: "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts" (Psalm 119:63). And the Word commands us not to forget the assembling of ourselves together for worship (Hebrews 10:25).

#### **The Decision**

Naomi decided it was time for her to return to her own people. Perhaps God would yet bless her in her declining years in her homeland. Orpah and Ruth, Naomi's daughters-in-law, went with her as far as the border of the land of Moab when she started on her journey home. They loved her very much and wept at the thought of parting. They begged Naomi to let them go back to Bethlehem-Judah with her.

Naomi wanted the girls to know what their decision would mean to them. If they went back to the home of their parents they would no doubt marry again and bring up their families in the Moabite manner, worshiping the idols of the land. If they went with Naomi, there would be hardships to go through, for Naomi was poor and had nothing to give them. And they would be among strange people with different customs. Above all, they would be

Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

<sup>22</sup> 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.

among people who worshiped the true God. Did they still want to go? If they did they might never again return to Moab.

When Orpah heard about the different life she would have to live in Judah, she decided to go back to her own people and to her own gods; and we hear no more about her. But in Ruth there was another spirit.

### **The Eternal Hope**

Ruth had seen something in the life of Naomi that had touched her heart. She could look beyond the hardships of this life, beyond the strange people and customs. She saw Naomi as a child of God who had a hope of life eternal. She must have had a touch of the faith of Abraham who knew that he was but a sojourner in this world, living in tents, but he was looking for an eternal city "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). His life centered around the hope of going to that city of God, the New Jerusalem.

### **Out of All Lands**

The Israelites, the children of Abraham, were God's chosen people. He had given them special blessings, and had committed to them the care and responsibility of the true religion. But that did not mean that only the Israelites could be saved. The Psalmist was inspired to write: "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord" (Psalm 86:9).

Ruth was a Moabitess, not an Israelite; yet when she hungered for the true religion and was willing to worship the one true God, He looked down upon her and received her as His child. Ruth's prayer to accompany her mother-in-law was: "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."

In those words Ruth was turning her back upon her old life, upon everything she had ever known. Before her was a new life, an unknown future, but she had faith in the God Naomi served that He would take care of her. She took the step that every repentant sinner must take in order to be saved. One must turn his back upon his sins, forsaking them for all time, and turn toward God with the promise to live for Him as commanded in the Word. He must give up such ambitions as are contrary to the will of God. Any person who starts to walk with God under those conditions may be sure that divine love will take care of him.

### **The Full Overcomer**

When Jesus comes back to this world to receive His Bride, He will claim for His own those who have forsaken all the things of this world to follow Him. The Bride's whole delight is to please the Bridegroom. The people who will be of the Bride of Christ are those who are freely giving to God anything He wants from them; they are consecrating their lives to His service to win others for Him. They are forgetting their father's house, their own people, to go to work in the Lord's harvest field.

God was speaking of the Bride when He said: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him" (Psalm 45:10, 11).

The Apostle Paul gives us a little idea of what that consecration means, when he said: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). Paul proved that it was

possible to do so. He said: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I **may win** Christ" (Philippians 3:8). Nothing in life mattered to him but that he please Jesus and be ready to attain unto the first resurrection.

### Turning Back

Orpah pictures for us the people who see beauties in the Gospel and who start out to follow Jesus. But when the way becomes hard and they find that there are some crosses to bear, they turn back to their old life. They cannot see beyond the trials to the prize which Jesus holds out to those who overcome.

Jesus said to His disciples: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). And when Jesus comes into our heart, we have that power to overcome also. "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

### Rewards

Ruth took a big step when she forsook her home and people to go to live with the Israelites and worship their God. She left all to follow the Lord. Jesus promised: "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matthew 19:29).

God began to provide for Ruth by giving her and Naomi food as soon as they arrived. It was not long until Ruth married Boaz, a wealthy man of Judah, which made her a member of the royal line in which Jesus was born. Rahab, another Gentile woman about whom we have studied, was the mother of Boaz, and Ruth and Boaz were the great-grandparents of King David.

Ruth and Orpah had the same opportunities placed before them. They could both have come and worshiped the true God. Orpah returned to her gods, and we hear nothing more of her. Ruth said to Naomi, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Notice the honor that came to her! A Book of the Bible is named for her; and she, a Gentile woman, received the distinction every Israelitish woman desired, of being an ancestress of the Messiah of Israel.

### QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did Elimelech and his family leave Judah?
- 2 How did they make themselves at home in the land where they went?
- 3 What happened to Elimelech and his two sons?
- 4 What did Naomi decide to do?
- 5 Describe the parting of Naomi and her daughters-in-law.
- 6 How did Naomi know that God would welcome Ruth?
- 7 Describe what Ruth's decision meant to her.