



THE GOSPEL IN RUTH

RETURN AND REDEMPTION

MOAB RUTH 1:1-5

Steeped in infamy, the land of Moab opens the poignant drama of the life of Ruth. Named for the grandson of Lot, born out of incest, Moab stood and fell as a perpetual and rebellious enemy of God (Genesis 19:37; Psalm 108:9). Yet out of the story emerges a classic portrayal of grace, love, and redemption.

I. FORCE OF FAMINE (V. 1)

- A. Dark days of Israel's history... "when the judges ruled".
- B. Home in Bethlehem-Judah... "house of bread and praise".
- C. Tragic transference... "a famine in the land".

II. TESTED FAMILY (V. 2)

- A. Father, *Elimelech (my God is king)* and his wife, *Naomi (my pleasantness)*.
- B. The sons, *Mahlon (sickly)*, and *Kilion (weak, puny)*.
- C. Natives of Bethlehem, Judah.

III. DEATH AND DESPERATION (V. 3)

- A. Elimelech's tragic death.
- B. The widow's plight.

IV. DETERMINING DECADE (V. 4)

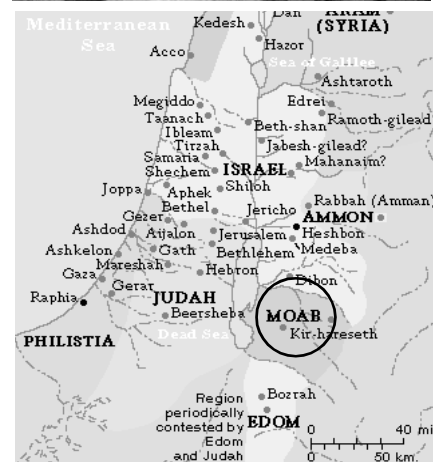
- A. Moabite wives of Naomi's sons.
- B. Orpah (*deer, or fawn*), and Ruth (*friendship, association*)

V. DESPAIR AND DESTINY (V. 5)

- A. The anguish of loss.
- B. Detachment from the homeland.
- C. The hand of God in circumstances.

"The book of Ruth stands in striking contrast to the Book of Judges and yet is closely connected with it. In Judges the national outlook has been presented and so dark has it been as to create the impression of universal pollution. The story of Ruth illustrates the truth that God has never left Himself without witness."

—G. Campbell Morgan



FOR THOUGHT, DISCUSSION, AND APPLICATION...

1. "The days of the Judges" in the Bible pose one of the great questions: Why do you think God allowed the inconsistent days of the Judges to continue for some 325 years? Who was chargeable? God, or God's people, or the surrounding enemy circumstances?
2. There is no direct statement in the book that Naomi and Elimelech sinned in leaving Canaan during the famine. But were the sad consequences a result of a willful choice? How may Christians today duplicate making costly choices outside the will of God? How can we avoid them?
3. Discuss the implications of the marriage of the two sons to the two Moabite girls. How might this have impacted the family's ten-year term in Moab?
4. What would lead us to believe that, while she agreed to the move to Moab, Naomi, as a native Israeli, might have had many mixed emotions as far as her family were concerned. What were some areas that crossed the line for the people of Jehovah and His laws for His people?
5. Some commentators have suggested parallels between the story of Naomi's family with Jesus' parable of the prodigal son. An example that is cited points to the testing that God allows to His own when they are in the wrong place spiritually. Is this a Biblical principle, or are these just unfortunate happenings?