



THE GOSPEL IN

RUTH

RETURN AND REDEMPTION

BETHLEHEM RUTH 1:19-22

“The language of Naomi at the home-coming shows that she looked upon the sorrows that had come to her as God’s testimony against her and His affliction of her. There was, however, no touch of rebellion in what she said but rather a gracious recognition of chastisement, showing that she had learned the lessons it was intended to teach.” —G. Campbell Morgan

I. ALLOWANCE AND ALLIANCE (RUTH 1:18)

- A. Naomi’s realization.
- B. Ruth’s determination.
 1. At this point, the greater spiritual choice and challenge.

II. RETURN AND REUNION (1:19)

- A. Shock in Bethlehem.
- B. Reaction of the town women.
 1. Naomi, a physically changed and broken woman.

“God sometimes washes the eyes of his children with tears in order that they may read aright his providence and his commandments.”

—Theodore Ledyard Cuyler (1822-1909)

III. OLD SHAME, NEW NAME (1:20)

- A. A change of disposition.
- B. A change of outlook.
- C. Assent to the will of God.
 1. Names and character.
 2. The name of God, “the Almighty” (Hebrew, *El Shaddai*)

IV. AFFLICTION ACKNOWLEDGED (1:21)

- A. The hard lessons of spiritual emptiness.
- B. Acceptance of the Lord’s testing.
 1. Note Naomi’s acknowledgement of God as judge and deliverer
 2. “LORD”, Jehovah, the loving Father;

V. HARVEST IN THE HOUSE OF BREAD (1:22)

- A. A painful homecoming.
- B. A promise of harvest.
 1. The Jewish month, Nisan, March/April.

“The world has more winnable people than ever before ... but it is possible to come out of a ripe field empty-handed.”

— Donald McGavran



Bethlehem



FOR THOUGHT, DISCUSSION, AND APPLICATION...

1. With all things considered, how would you assess Naomi’s and Ruth’s attitudes regarding the return to Bethlehem? What seemed to be the motivations of each of the women? Why did they really want to go there?
2. In that emotional scene in Bethlehem (v. 19), it is stated that “the whole town was stirred”. Why do you think that it was mainly *the women* who reacted so strongly? What possibilities for prejudice might have greeted them in the home city? Visualize possible responses to the expatriate and her foreign daughter-in-law.
3. What are some of the lessons to be seen in Naomi’s laments of a bitter life in verses 20 and 21? In spite of her demands for a name-change, what positives do we hear in her words?
4. As recorded, this was the time of the barley harvest. This was in the season of the Jewish *Feast of First Fruits*. Check and discuss the pictures to be drawn from Exodus 23:16 and I Corinthians 15:20. How is Jesus Christ seen clearly in both the prophecies and the fulfillment?
5. It’s possible to assume that all of the hard knocks in life are punishments from God. In the light of Scripture, what’s wrong with that statement? Can we find grace in Naomi’s sufferings?