

Ruth 1

Day 1 Background

1. Read Judges 2:7-23 concerning “*the days when judges ruled*” (Ruth 1:1):
 - How well did the Israelites follow the Lord when they entered the land of Canaan under Joshua? 2:7
 - What happened with the next generation? 2:10
 - In what kind of practices did the people engage? 2:11-13 (See also Judges 3:5-7)
 - How did the Lord react? 2:14,15 (*See Deuteronomy 4:25-26 for God’s earlier warnings before they entered the land of Israel.*)
2. How did God show mercy to the people at this time? 2:16 Why? 2:18 (See also Deuteronomy 4:29)
3. Describe the cyclical pattern of behavior the people had under the judges? 2:17-19
4. List the phrases that describe the people’s behavior in 2:17 and 2:19.
 - “*Did not listen*”
 - “*played the harlot*”
5. What did the Lord cease to do and why? 2:21-23
 - What picture does this give you of the life of the people of Israel at this time?

FYI: “The period of the judges, extending from about 1375 B.C. to 1050 B.B., was mainly one of apostasy, unrest, wars, and judgments. But there were at least temporary periods of deliverance and peace from the harassments of the enemies. The book of Ruth relates one story of the brighter years, and reminds us, among other things, that there were also good people living and happy events occurring during those years.” - Irving Jensen (77)

6. Where did this lead? Judges 21:25 (Do you see any similarities to today?)
7. What does Scripture say about man's reasoning?
- Proverbs 14:12
 - Proverbs 21:30
 - 1 Corinthians 3:19-20

Applying the Word: *Think of the evils that we face in our society and the different "reasonings" being tossed about? In the midst of such chaos, how can you discern God's will and keep your focus on Him?*

Day 2

Naomi's Losses. Read Ruth 1:1-5

8. List what you learn about Elimelech's family in 1:1,2.
9. What does a "*famine in the land*" probably indicate? See Deuteronomy 28 (especially vv. 4, 15-18)
10. What kind of a relationship did Israel have with Moab? Deut. 23:3-4 (See the background to this in Numbers 23:2-6.)

Digging Deeper
For the beginning of the nation of Moab see Genesis 19:30-37.

- What command were the Israelites given concerning Moab? Deuteronomy 23:6

FYI: "While the Law of Moses did not prohibit Israelite men from marrying Moabite women, it did exclude Moabites from the congregation of Israel for ten generations."
- The Nelson Study Bible (443)

11. What do the following verses indicate about Moabite religious practices?

- Numbers 25:1-3
- 2 Kings 3:26-27

FYI: "Moabites worshiped their cruel god, Chemosh, in such horrible ways. Their fertility rites amounted to sex orgies. These certainly constituted a temptation to the young men of Israel. And Elimelech and Naomi had two young sons growing up. The Moabites also sought to keep evil away with human sacrifice. They sought to bring good luck by sacrificing their own children to their god."
- Margaret Hess (11)

12. List the words describe their move/residence in Moab:

- 1:1 "*went to sojourn/live for a while*"
- 1:2
- 1:4

13. What additional losses did Naomi experience in Moab? 1:3-5 (List what happened and how you see that affecting Naomi emotionally, financially, socially, etc...)

What happened	Possible effect on Naomi

14. How much of a challenge do you think Naomi had in her relationships with her daughters-in-law? What challenges would have been added to these relationships after her sons' deaths?

15. From what you've learned about the setting and circumstances of this story, how wise or unwise do you think this family was in "*sojourning*" to Moab?

Applying the Word: *Have you ever made a major move from one city, state or country to another? What did you find most challenging about moving? How did you grow from that experience?*

What spiritual, intellectual or emotional famines are you facing? What move or changes are you tempted to make? How can you determine if this is a godly choice?

Day 3

Deciding to Return. Read Ruth 1:6-15

16. What reason was given for Naomi's return to Israel? 1:6 Rather than putting her trust in her daughters-in-law, to whom was she turning? What other reasons might she have had for leaving?
17. From 2 Chronicles 7:13-15, what does an end to the famine indicate?
18. What did Naomi tell her "daughters" to do? 1:8a
 - What did she wish for them? 1:8b,9a
 - What reasons can you see for why she would or wouldn't want them to go back with her?

FYI: Rest Strong's OT:4496 *menuchah*; repose or (adverbially) peacefully; figuratively, consolation (specifically, matrimony); hence (concretely) an abode

"*Menuchah* is used throughout the Book of Ruth for marriage. It implies deep peace, protection, harmony, person in right relation to each other...It is also used in Scripture to mean the rest God offered His people in the Promised Land (Deut. 12:9; 1 Kings 8:56). Jehovah Himself is the *menuchah* of His people (Isa. 32:17-18)."
- Margaret Hess (25,26)

19. What does Christ offer?
 - Matthew 11:28-30
 - Philippians 1:2; 4:7

20. From the reactions of Ruth and Orpah, what kind of relationship would you say they had with Naomi? 1:9b,10 (What does this say about Naomi's character? About the kind of mother-in-law she was to them?)
21. What problems did Naomi give as reasons for why the girls should not go back?
- 1:11
 - 1:12a
 - 1:12b,13a
 - 1:13b
 - 1:13c
22. Read Deuteronomy 25:5,6 on the Old Testament law concerning remarriage.
- Who was to marry the widow? 25:5
 - What would happen with the son of such a marriage? 25:6 Why? (How does this explain why Naomi talked about having more sons?)
23. What other concern would she have had for her daughter-in-laws? Deuteronomy 23:3,4
- In going back to Israel, what other struggles was Naomi facing?
24. How many times did Naomi tell her daughters-in-law to "return"? 1:8-15 How do you think she felt about them leaving her?
25. How did Orpah and Ruth respond to Naomi's objections? 1:14
- To what did Orpah return? 1:15

Applying the Word: When have you chosen the unfamiliar over the familiar in order to follow the Lord? How did it challenge you?

Day 4

Ruth Returns with Naomi. Read Ruth 1:16-22

26. List the things Ruth said she was going to do? 1:16,17a (How do you picture her face and hear her tone of voice as she says these words?)

FYI: "Naomi was such a faithful witness and godly mother-in-law that both Moabite daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, loved her dearly even after their husbands were dead. However, when Orpah had to choose, she returned to her pagan nature-gods (centered in Chemosh, "the subduer"). Ruth, evidenced true conversion to the God of creation, not only by taking God as her own Savior but by going with the people of God and entering the family of God's people."
- Henry Morris

27. What kind of a vow did Ruth take? 1:17b (What stopped Naomi from saying anything more?)

- What would this deep commitment have done for their relationship?

FYI: "Ruth's use of the divine name *Yahweh* translated as **the LORD** in an oath indicates her commitment to the living God. She was choosing to cling not only to Naomi, her land, and her people, but also to her God. In effect, Ruth was forsaking all that she had ever known to follow the one true God. She was following in the footsteps of Abraham, who had forsaken his family and his homeland in response to God's command (Genesis 12:1,4)."
- The Nelson Study Bible (4430)

28. How dangerous do you think the 50 mile trip back to Bethlehem may have been for Ruth and Naomi? Compare Ezra 8:22,31 (How much do you think they were able to take with them?)

FYI: "They climbed the desolate trail through the Judean wilderness. They faced dangers of robbers and wild animals along the way. The limestone caves in the lonely hills often sheltered brigands who preyed on travelers. Yet alone and unprotected, Naomi and Ruth persisted."
- Margaret Hess (38)

29. How much stress had Ruth already faced in her life? What kinds of stresses does moving present, especially for a foreigner?

30. How were Naomi and Ruth received when they arrived in Bethlehem? 1:19

FYI: *stirred* Strong's OT:1949 *huwm*; to make an uproar, or agitate greatly

31. What did Naomi say that the Lord had done to her in 1:20,21? (Note the titles that she used of God.)
- 1:20
 - 1:21a
 - 1:21b
 - 1:21c
32. Do you see any difference in this attitude compared to when she spoke to her daughters-in-law? 1:8-9
- How do you think Ruth was feeling when she heard Naomi's words to the women? How do you see her responding?
 - How do you think that God felt about Naomi's reply? Did He understand? Do you find any fault in what she said? (See Psalm 34:18; compare Job 1:20-22)
33. Can you think of people in scripture who poured out their complaints to the Lord and were honored for their integrity and faith? (What assurance can we have in the midst of voicing our hurts, complaints and anger?)
34. What does scripture say about sharing our troubles with the Lord?
- Psalm 55:22 Cast your burden on the Lord, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved. NKJV
 - Psalm 62:8 Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.
 - Psalm 142:1,2 With my voice I cry out to the Lord; with my voice I plead for mercy to the LORD. I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him.ESV
 - Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
35. What glimmer of hope is given in the timing of Naomi and Ruth's arrival? 1:22

FYI: "Barley was the first crop to ripen, and this period would be the beginning of the harvest season."
- The Nelson Study Bible (444)

"Through this story God was preparing sleepy Bethlehem, hometown to Naomi...as the site of His miraculous interruption at a later point in history (see Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1)."
- The Tony Evans Study Bible (298)

36. Underline the reasons given in the following verses for why we can have hope and confidence in God in spite of circumstances?

- Psalm 34:18 The LORD is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit.
- Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.
- Romans 5:3-5 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.
- 2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
- Hebrews 13:5-6 ...He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

Applying the Word: Have you ever been faced with a difficult situation and then found hope in an unexpected source? How did the Lord speak to you and sustain you during those times?