



=THE BOOK OF RUTH=
Lesson 1

INTRODUCTION: Perhaps no little book in all the Bible better pictures salvation than does the book of Ruth. It is a beautiful story of God's love and His salvation. Let us notice its teachings. First, however, let us get the general summary. A man and woman with two boys who lived in Beth-lehem-judah became so needy because of a famine that they left Beth-lehem-judah and went to Moab. They went just to get some food and stay a while. They stayed, however, for ten years. While there, the man died, the sons married, the sons died, and the mother decided after ten years to return to Beth-lehem. One of her daughters-in-law stayed in Moab, but the other came to her and returned to Beth-lehem. While there, she fell in love with a man who typifies Jesus Christ; she married the man. Now let us notice the lesson for today, as found in Ruth 1:1-5.

- I. **IN VERSE 1 NOTICE THE WORD "FAMINE."** A famine in the Bible symbolizes the judgment of God. It is a punishment because of sin. The people of God had lived in sin. God punished them with a famine.
- II. **IN VERSE 1 NOTICE THE WORD "BETH-LEHEM."** The word "Beth-lehem" means "house of bread." This man and his family are now leaving Beth-lehem. They're leaving the house of bread. Why are they leaving? They are going to Moab to get bread. This is sad, but true, in the lives of many. We do not realize how full we are. We leave to go somewhere else to get what we already have in the will of God. We should constantly pause to think what we have where we are, how good God is to us, and what there really is for us in the will of God for our lives.
- III. **IN VERSE 1 NOTICE THE WORD "SOJOURN."** They went to Moab to sojourn. The word "sojourn" means to "pass through." They did not go to stay. No one goes into sin to stay. We go for a while. How tragic that they stayed so long! In fact, notice the last sentence of verse 2: "And they...continued there." They did not intend to continue there. Just one drink is all the young man intends to take. He intends to smoke only one cigarette or have only one night of sin. This is always the case, but so often we continue there. In fact, the last part of verse 4 says, "They dwelled there about ten years." They did not intend to do this. They intended just to pass through, or sojourn, but they stayed for ten years.
- IV. **IN VERSE 1 NOTICE THE WORDS, "THE COUNTRY OF MOAB."** Moab was settled by the Moabites, who were descendants of Lot. After Sodom and Gomorrah had been destroyed, Lot and his two daughters were in a little city called Zoar. His daughters enticed him; he committed incest, and each daughter had a son by her father. One of these sons was named Moab and the other was named Ammon. These sons fathered two nations—the Moabites and the Ammonites. These nations have played havoc with God's people ever since. Moab was always a symbol of backsliding. When a Jew went to Moab, he went out of God's will. (Teacher, explain to the pupils the importance of each one staying in the will of God. There is no other safe place that he can be, no other happy place that he can be, and no other useful place he can be than in the will of God.)
- V. **IN VERSE 1 NOTICE THE WORDS, "HE, AND HIS WIFE, AND HIS TWO SONS."** No one ever goes to Moab alone. You always take someone with you. The influence of each of us is so vital. It would have been bad enough if the man had gone to Moab alone, but he took others with him—his sons and his wife. Be careful about your influence. Someone will do what you do.
- VI. **IN VERSE 2 NOTICE THE WORD "ELIMELECH."** This name means, "My God is king." Get the hypocrisy here. Here's a man carrying the name, "My God is king," into Moab. God was not his king. Elimelech was a hypocrite. Hypocrisy is one of the most abominable things in the sight of God.

- VII. **IN VERSE 2 NOTICE THE WORD “NAOMI.”** Elimelech’s wife’s name was Naomi, which means “pleasant.” It is a very interesting thing, however, that when she went into sin and stayed ten years, she was no longer pleasant. In verse 20, when she gets back from Moab, she asks them to call her “Mara,” which means “bitter.” This is what sin always does. It changes us from pleasant to bitter.
- VIII. **IN VERSE 2 NOTICE THE WORDS, “MAHLON AND CHILION.”** “Mahlon” means “sick,” and “Chilion” means “tiny” or a “weakling.” The boys are not well. They are sickly boys. This is caused from the backsliding of their parents.
- IX. **IN VERSE 3 NOTICE THE WORDS, “NAOMI’S HUSBAND DIED.”** They are paying for their sin. Elimelech paid for his hypocrisy by giving his own life. Naomi paid for her backsliding by losing her husband.
- X. **IN VERSE 4 NOTICE THE WORDS, “AND THEY TOOK THEM WIVES OF THE WOMEN OF MOAB.”** How sad this is! When one goes to Moab, he can expect his children to marry Moabite girls. They got outside the will of God, so they married outside the will of God. They married people whom God never intended for them to marry. How important this is for parents to realize! Children can marry only those whom they know. Let us be careful that their circle of friends is godly. Young people should take extra care concerning the crowds in which they run. From that crowd will someday come their future husbands and wives.
- XI. **IN VERSE 5 NOTICE THE WORDS, “AND MAHLON AND CHILION DIED.”** Now Naomi has paid full price for her backsliding. She intended to go away from the will of God for a little while, but she stayed for ten years. She lost her husband; her sons married heathen girls; now her sons have died. See her away from home, all alone, and you get the picture of what sin and backsliding do to the child of God.

CONCLUSION: Of course, we will continue this amazing story in our future lessons from the book of Ruth. Let us teach well the main characters of this lesson—Elimelech, Naomi, Mahlon and Chilion—so we can build upon this lesson next week.