

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON TWENTY: RUTH 1:19a

"So they two went until they came to Bethlehem."

Our two intrepid widows complete the journey, arriving at their goal: Bethlehem. Naomi and Ruth were real people. They actually lived about 1,100 - 1,200 years before Christ. But they are also prophetic types of God's two chosen groups of people: the Nation Israel and the Body of Christ, the Church.

Naomi's little family lived in Israel during the time of the Judges, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 21:25b). The nation's foolish disobedience and disregard for God's commandments brought upon them God's judgment many times during this period in Jewish history. Judgment in the form of a famine drove Elimelech, Naomi, and their two sons to flee Israel and settle in a Gentile country.

Before God led the Hebrews into the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua, He warned them that continued occupation of the land was conditional. If the people obeyed God they would flourish in their homeland. But if they disobeyed they would be driven out of the land and scattered among the Gentile nations (Dt. 28:63-64).

Judgment fell upon Israel because, as a nation, they rejected their Messiah. In 70 AD, the Roman General Titus led his army into Jerusalem. The city was destroyed and the people scattered throughout the Gentile nations. The Jewish people lost their homeland. In their dispersion they faced persecution and tragedy on a grand scale.

In the late 1800's Jewish people began to return to the land God had given them. On May 14, 1948 a miracle occurred when the nation of Israel was reborn. We are witnesses of the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy of the dry bones (Ezekiel 37). The scattered remnants of Israel are returning to the land.

The little Jewish family of four, driven out of Israel and into Gentile territory suffered great loss while in exile. Only one-fourth of the family survived to return to Israel. Naomi represents that determined Jewish remnant that survived in exile and returned to the land.

Ruth, our Gentile bride, represents the other group: the Church. Ruth came out of a nation steeped in idolatry. She was introduced to the true and living God by the Jewish family she married into. In Ruth, then, we see Gentiles and Jews united into one body. Her destiny is to be the bride of the Kinsman-Redeemer Boaz (who is a type of Jesus).

It was because Naomi's family fled Israel and settled in Moab that Ruth had an opportunity to know the one true God. And it was because nationally Israel rejected Jesus that salvation was extended to the Gentiles. God can bring good things out of "bad" circumstances.

One thing that encouraged me is that, as part of the Bride of Christ, I will never be a widow. My Bridegroom is alive in heaven. Once united with Him I will never be separated. As an added bonus, my earthly husband will be there, too. And we will never be separated again.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." I Thessalonians 4:16-18

