

## NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

### LESSON TWENTY-FIVE: RUTH 1:22a

**"So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab."**

The last verse in this chapter sums it up nicely. Naomi returned. She changed direction and came back to the starting point. She went out with a husband and two sons. She came back with a Gentile daughter-in-law. She went out a pleasant wife and mother. She came back a bitter widow.

Naomi, a type of Israel, was driven out of the Promised Land by God's judgment in the form of a famine. She took refuge among idol worshippers, Gentiles who knew nothing of her God. While in exile she suffered tragedy and loss. Eventually, the Lord brought her back into the Promised Land, a remnant of the family that left 10 years earlier.

And Ruth was with her. Gentile Ruth, who was raised an idol worshipper. A Moabite girl who took a chance on a sickly Jewish boy and married him. Ruth learned to love His Jewish family and their God. Even when she lost her husband, Ruth clung to her mother-in-law and her God. Brave, loyal Ruth accompanied Naomi when she returned.

Ruth, a type of the Church, came out of idolatry. Because of the actions of one Israeli family, Gentile Ruth found salvation. She was ignorant of the laws of God. She knew nothing of the sacrificial system God had established in Jerusalem. But she willingly followed Naomi to a place where people gathered to worship the true God together. Through Naomi, God had brought Ruth to the place where she would meet her Bridegroom Boaz, who was a type of Jesus, the Kinsman-Redeemer.

Chapter one covers a 10 year period that ends where it began: in Bethlehem. God was active through everything. He was with Naomi and her family through their sojourn in Moab. He was with Orpah and Ruth when they aligned themselves to the family from Israel. In His wisdom, God brought Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion home to paradise. And, He brought Naomi and Ruth home to Bethlehem, where they would play a part in the Story of the Redeemer. He even honored Orpah's free will choice to return to her family and idolatry. God is so amazing He can maintain control while still allowing mankind to make their own free will choices.

God is just as active in our lives. He is still in control. He is still bringing His purposes for the nation Israel and the church to fruition. And we are still free to make choices to follow Him or to turn back to the sin we left behind.

Grief, sorrow, pain, and suffering can be overwhelming. But, at some point we need to return to the beginning. We need to get back to "normal" (or find that new normal!). Like Naomi, we will not be the same as we were before tragedy struck. What we are depends on how we responded to our loss. Did it make us bitter? Did it make us appreciate God's words of comfort?

Take stock. Where are you now? Joy is a choice. Peace is a by-product of trusting God. The Holy Spirit is our guide and comforter. God gives us the tools we need to get through whatever circumstances we encounter in life. He's with us all the way, from beginning to end. Be assured He has a purpose for it all.

*"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." Jeremiah 29:11*