

Ruth - Commentaries by Norman W. Berry

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, Ruth 1, Verses 1-5, Day 62 -

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Last month we were reading in the Book of Judges. We mentioned that it was a very dark day for Israel. They had just come into the promised land. Because they did not drive out the people in it, they soon mixed in with them. These enemies soon overcame the Israelites. In your mind, put the Book of Ruth into the very early part of the Book of Judges, because that is when it took place. The story we're starting today is like bright sunshine suddenly bursting into a very dark and clouded day. One young woman, a stranger, acts in faith, and comes into the richest blessing an Old Testament person could have — to become the very ancestor of our Savior, the Lord Jesus!

Through man, the worst comes out of the best — the first worship led to the first murder (Gen. 4). But through Christ the best comes out of the worst, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). This book is a beautiful example of the latter.

V.1 A man an Israelite finds himself with a decision to make — to stay in Israel where a serious famine has come — or to go elsewhere. He could learn from Deuteronomy 8:7-20 that God was speaking to His people, that there was disobedience. To have stayed, and obeyed God, would have been to trust Him. He disobeys and goes to Moab. A wicked place surely. He chose the worst. He probably reasoned, "I must take care of myself, my wife, my two boys."

V.2-5 What disaster comes to this family. The father dies first. If the wife, Naomi had been sensitive to God's action in taking away her husband she would have returned to Israel at once. But no, she stays. Next, her two boys marry Moabite girls, which was absolutely forbidden (read Neh. 13:1). She doesn't stop them. One son dies. She still has forgotten God's Word. Another son dies. At last she is stirred. She hears something. In the ten years, only one of the family of four is left (Gal. 6:7).

Chapter-A-Day: Volume 2, Ruth 1, Verses 6-22, Day 63 -

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V.6 Naomi (her name means "pleasantness") decides to go back to the land of Israel.

V.7 She and her two daughters-in-law (three widows) start back — a good beginning.

V.8-9 But instead of encouraging them to keep on with her, here is what she says! This shows us that Naomi still thought it all right to stay in that wicked land. A careless believer does not see any harm in staying in worldly things. Believers lose their discernment when they get out of daily communion with the Lord.

V.11-13 What arguments she uses!

V.14 A moment of decision for two girls. Are you in a similar condition? Follow Ruth's decision! Orpah disappears into oblivion forever.

V.15-17 What a contrast.

V.18 Are we steadfastly minded (See Acts 2:42).

V.19-22 Naomi's life of disobedience has so changed her appearance that the people hardly recognize her. We have far more responsibility to obey than Naomi ever had for we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us (1 Cor. 6:20). So for the believer, we can say that chapter 1 is "deciding to follow Christ."