

# Let's Worship God

2nd-7th October 2023

Ruth

A photograph of a golden wheat field at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow across the sky and the field. The wheat stalks are in sharp focus in the foreground, with some showing their grain. The word "Ruth" is written in a large, white, elegant cursive script across the center of the image, partially overlapping the wheat stalks.

*Ruth*

# Ruth

## **Monday - Judges 21:25; Ruth 1:1 - A Famine in the Land**

*We are going to be studying the book of Ruth using notes written by Rev. Stephen McCollum.*

At the conclusion of the Book of Judges the writer says there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. That's very much like the days that we live in - there is anarchy all around us, moral anarchy. People do what's right in their own eyes. They do what pleases them with very little concern for what God has commanded. When it comes to the morals of our world around us, people do what brings them the most pleasure, what satisfies them according to the dictates of their own heart. But there is little concern for God. They act as if there is no king when in fact the Lord Jesus Christ rules over the nations. There is even chaos in the worship of God within the church of Christ.

In these days when the judges ruled, in days of wickedness, in days when fathers gave their sons and daughters up to be married to pagans, in days in which people, instead of following God's commandments in worship, united themselves to idols and engaged in various forms of wickedness - those were the days in which Elimelech lived. And it tells us here in the first verse that in those days there was a famine in the land.

The last verse of Judges and the first verse of Ruth are connected. It's not a coincidence. There was moral anarchy and there was a famine. This famine was directly a consequence of the sin of God's people. Just because we don't have a famine in the land around us today does not mean that as a nation we have not sinned grievously against the Lord. And there are and will be consequences for that.

### **Question**

1. How does the author of Judges describe what the people did?
2. Why was there a famine in the land?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that God would show mercy upon our nation.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge." Ruth 1:16a

**Praise: Psalm 23 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Ruth

## **Tuesday - Ruth 1:1-2 - A Bad Decision**

Elimelech and his family are brought into a famine, and they have a difficult decision to make. They decide to go to Moab. Was it a wise decision? In many ways, we could say it's an understandable decision. 1 Timothy 5 reminds us that if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Elimelech no doubt wants to provide for his family. But it was an unwise decision. Indeed, it was a morally wrong decision.

Why was that? Well, in these days, they do not have the same liberties that the Gospel affords to us today. The Church is not tied to one country. The Church is international, it's spiritual, it's spread throughout the world. But in their days, the Church was tied to the physical land of Israel. That was the place where the Tabernacle was. That was the place that God dwelt among his people, and that was the promised land, their hope of inheritance. And yet we see that Elimelech takes the decision to leave that all behind, to leave the promised land, to leave his inheritance, to leave the tabernacle, to leave the worship, to leave his God, and to go to the land of Moab, to the land of the foreign god.

It's a very surprising decision. The Moabites were enemies of God's people. These were ones who had deceived them, who had refused them hospitality, who had even overcome them and subjected them.

The famine, which is on the land of Judah, which is a discipline from God, should have led them to repentance and to faith. It should have led them to cry out to God for mercy and grace. But Elimelech takes the decision not to humble himself, to seek that the famine would be removed from the land, but instead to escape God's discipline. He makes a bad decision, and he suffers the consequences.

### **Questions**

1. Why was Elimelech's decision wrong?
2. What should he have done instead?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that you would make Godly decisions.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge." Ruth 1:16a

**Praise: Psalm 24 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Ruth

## **Wednesday - Ruth 1:1-5 - Actions Have Consequences**

Elimelech dies in Moab. Mahlon and Chilion marry women of Moab, Orpah and Ruth. That, of course, was something forbidden. They were women who were still in an idolatrous religion. They were not people who had united themselves by faith to the Lord God of Israel. Another bad decision and another set of consequences. We see that Mahlon and Chilion die. Now Naomi is bereft. No husband, no sons. She is in a distant land far removed from all family, relatives, neighbours, and friends.

Decisions do have consequences. It's not karma that we see in some Eastern religions. But the Holy God, who is in control of all things, rewards, and chastens, and punishes. It should have brought Naomi and her sons to repentance when Elimelech died. When they stood at his grave they should have cried out to the Lord for mercy and grace. But they did not. And then the sons died. We're better to repent earnestly when the Lord begins to deal with us lest the consequences get worse. But we must be very careful here not to see this affliction as a punishment meant to crush this family. God does not do that to his people. He strikes in order to heal and he afflicts in order to bless.

For those of you that are Christians, no doubt you've made bad decisions in the past - we all have. Sometimes we suffer because of these sins, and there's nothing, in a sense, we can do about it. But we should repent of those sins and return to the Lord our God if we haven't done that already. Those consequences are designed to draw us back, to find hope and grace. Sins can be fully, completely, totally forgiven, and the Lord can bring great blessing.

But perhaps some of you have not trusted in Christ. Know also that God can deal with your sins, that God can afflict you, that God can follow behind you as an angel of destruction. Often he does these things to humble, to bring conviction of sin, so that you would return to the Lord, that you would cry out to Him for mercy, that you would entrust your soul to the redeemer of souls.

### **Question**

1. Why was it wrong for Mahlon and Chilion to marry Moabite women?
2. Why does God give us consequences for our decisions?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Give thanks that your sins are forgiven in Christ.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge." Ruth 1:16a

**Praise: Psalm 25 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



# Ruth

## Thursday - Ruth 1:6-7 - Repentance

Naomi takes the decision to return and to go back to Judah. "Return" in verse six is one of the key words in this passage. It's an important word in the whole of the Old Testament. It's a metaphor for repentance. How often, when we're trying to explain what repentance is, we talk about a 180 degree turn. You're facing one direction, and you turn right around to go the opposite direction. There's a turning away from something and a turning towards something else. You can't simply leave your sin. You must leave your sin and turn towards God and towards righteousness. Turn your back on sin, so that you no longer look at it, that you no longer desire it, that you no longer delight in it, and turn towards your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.

Naomi has heard that the Lord has visited the land. It's that reason that compels her to return. Notice, in verse six, the word "visited". That's another word that's quite common in the Scriptures but also quite important. When the Lord visits, he comes down from heaven. He comes down to deal with his people and with his enemies. And this word visit, as it's used throughout the Scriptures, is used in two senses. He either comes to visit with judgment or he comes to visit with mercy. The Lord has visited the barren land of Judah and made it fruitful yet again. And so we see here that the reason Naomi repents, the reason she turns her back upon Moab to go back to the Lord her God, is because of God's mercy in visiting his people.

Repentance is when we sense not only the danger that our sins bring upon us, but also the evil of our sins. The filthiness of it in the sight of God, the guilt of it before the holy nature and law of God. And despite these things, we cling to the mercy of God in Christ. Repentance is not simply turning away from sin. It's clinging to grace and mercy. And this is what Naomi does as she begins her journey back to Judah.

### Questions

1. What is repentance?
2. What had Naomi heard about Judah?

### Prayer Points

1. Pray that you would live a life of repentance.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge." Ruth 1:16a

**Praise: Psalm 26 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Ruth

## Friday - Ruth 1:8-18 - Ruth's Profession

Orpah and Ruth go with Naomi at first. This is their mother-in-law, and they are, in some sense, to help provide for her and care for her in her old age. But Naomi gives them permission to go home. And after some urging, Orpah leaves. Ruth, on the other hand, refuses to go, and makes a beautiful profession of faith (v. 16-17)

In our way of expressing ourselves, we're quite used to the climax coming at the end of what we say. When you make a speech, you tend to build up towards something, and that's the high point. But in Hebrew poetry, the climax is often found elsewhere. It's found in the middle. If you imagine it like a rainbow. It begins from the two sides down low, and it rises to come to a point, the top of the arc of the rainbow. And that's exactly what we have here. The first part corresponds with the last part, and the second part corresponds with the second last part. And the most important part is the middle. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.

First of all, she's saying, stop imploring me, stop begging me, stop weeping and urging me to go back to Moab. I will not go. She's saying, wherever you go in life, I will go with you. Wherever you go in death, I will go with you. What about when we come to the climax? Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Now, you might think, surely the second part of that should be the climax and not the whole thing. But it's not. It's both. Ruth here recognizes something that not many in the Church recognize today. It's the importance of the Church. Your people will be my people. She is leaving behind her people. She's leaving behind her gods. Your people, the covenant people, the people who I have no right to be a part of, I am joining with them. Ruth is professing her saving faith. I believe in your God. I believe in Jehovah.

### Question

1. What is the most important part of Ruth's profession?
2. Why is it important to be part of the church?

### Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for your church family.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge." Ruth 1:16a

**Praise: Psalm 27 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# Ruth

## **Saturday - Ruth 1:15-18 - Ruth & Orpah**

Ruth observes Naomi returning in repentance and faith. Ruth observes a backslider coming back to her God, clinging to him for mercy because he has visited the land of Judah. And what does she do? She makes this beautiful profession of faith. Orpah sees the same things, does she not? Orpah is someone who begins well and yet does not finish. Orpah is someone who has a temporary faith, a faith that is no faith at all. She can't cope with the difficulties that will come in the Christian life. Naomi warns her about these. She's saying to her: count the cost of discipleship. Orpah can't live with these difficulties. She can't do without the life that she's had in Moab. And most of all, she can't do without her people. She can't do without her gods. How many are there amongst the Church of Christ who begin and yet don't finish? Who start off on the road to heaven, who say they want to get to heaven, who say they want to believe, who act like the people of God to an extent, and perhaps who weep at the things that are said in the Scriptures. And yet when it comes to the bit, they turn back to the old ways.

Ruth, on the other hand, shows to us a persevering and a steadfast faith, a true faith. Ruth hasn't come to the border between Judah and Moab simply because she loves Naomi. She has come to the border because she loves Naomi's God. And most of all, she needs Naomi's Saviour. Is your faith more like Orpah's faith or like Ruth's faith? Which direction will you go? Where will you stay? In which camp will you die? Where will you spend eternity? Will you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Will you repent of your sin and turn to him? Will you profess your faith before men and join the church of Christ as we're commanded to do? Will you come in amongst God's people, casting your lot amongst them and saying, I am one of the people of God.

### **Question**

1. Why does Orpah not go with Naomi?
2. What is the ultimate reason that Ruth goes with Naomi?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge." Ruth 1:16a

**Praise: Psalm 28 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

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