

BOOK OF RUTH
STEPPING OUT OF GOD'S WILL
PT 3-DEADLY CONSEQUENCES AND DELIBERATE CHANGES
RUTH 1:1-7

IT WAS A TIME OF DESPERATE CIRCUMSTANCES. (Vs. 1a)

There was a two-fold famine in the land.

- I. There Was A Material Famine In The Land!*
- II. There Was A Moral Famine In The Land!*

IT WAS A TIME OF DANGEROUS CHOICES. (VS. 1b-2)

- I. They Chose To Leave The Promised Land.*
- II. They Chose To Live In A Polluted Land.*
- III. They Chose To Linger In A Prodigal Land.*

IT WAS A TIME OF DEADLY CONSEQUENCES AND DELIBERATE CHANGES. (Vs. 3-5)

SIN always carries with it some **HARSH CONSEQUENCES**. This was the case in the life of **ELIMELECH** and his family as well.

I. IT WAS A TIME OF DEADLY CONSEQUENCES.

A. We See That DISCIPLINE Came. (Vs. 2)

Before **ELIMELECH** loaded up his family to move to **MOAB**, it is likely that he had already gradually moved away from **GOD** in his **HEART** a step at a time.

Folks don't normally just wake up one morning and decide to leave **GOD** behind! It is a slow subtle process that builds until the **BELIEVER** has moved farther away from the **LORD** than he ever could have anticipated.

The reason I say **DISCIPLINE** came lies in the names of **ELIMELECH'S** sons. Their names were **MAHLON** which means "*Sick*" and **CHILION** which means "*Pining, or Wasting Away.*" It may be that these two boys were just the victims of circumstance. But, if you believe that, then you don't believe in a **GOD OF PROVIDENCE!** I think maybe **GOD** was trying to get **ELIMELECH'S** attention long before he ever left for **MOAB**. Friend, **GOD** will do the same in our lives as well.

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When a **BACKSLIDDEN SPIRIT** begins to manifest itself in our life, **GOD** will begin the process of **SPEAKING** to our **HEART**. **HE** may do it in a *still small voice (Elijah)*.

Or, **HE** may do with the *thundering voice of a prophet* as **HE** did with **DAVID**. **HE** may use **SUBTLE MEANS**, or **HE** may use **DIRECT MEANS**, but if we are **HIS**, **HE** will reach out to us to bring us home again.

(Revelation 3:19; Hebrews 12:6-11)

We See That DISCIPLINE Came.

B. We See That DEATH Came. (Vs. 3-5)

In spite of his **RELATIONSHIP** to the **LORD**, in spite of the **BLESSINGS OF GOD**, in spite of the **INTERVENTION OF THE LORD** in his family, **ELIMELECH** moved to **MOAB**.

What was a **REALITY IN HIS HEART** became a **REALITY IN HIS LIFE!** After he was there for some time, he **DIED**. After a while, his sons were also taken in **DEATH**.

It is my opinion that **GOD** used the **ULTIMATE FORM OF DISCIPLINE** in the life of **ELIMELECH** and his sons in order to bring the remainder of the family back to **GOD!**

I believe the **FAMINE** in **BETHLEHEM** was a **CALL TO REPENT**. Those sick sons were a **CALL TO REPENT**. The **DEATH** of **ELIMELECH** was a **CALL TO REPENT** to the rest of the family. **GOD** gave the rest of this family about ten years to **RETURN TO HIM**, but time finally ran out and they paid the ultimate price for their disobedience.

It is sad, but it is also true, **GOD** will use whatever means that **HE** deems necessary to bring us home again!

If we are **HIS**, we can't **RUN FROM HIM** forever. **HE** will **DISCIPLINE** our lives and if we do not **REPENT**, **HE** may

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take us home!

1 John 5:16—“If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.”

We See That Discipline Came...Death Came...

- C. **We See That DEFEAT Came. (Vs 5)**
NAOMI and her two daughters-in-law were left **DESOLATE**. In that society, the poorest of the poor were widows with no children to care for them.

These women were left with nothing but **DESOLATION**, **DISCOURAGEMENT** and **DEFEAT**. It didn't have to be that way, but because of **SIN** and **WRONG CHOICES**, they were forced to pay a horrible price.

All **NAOMI** had to show for her husband's **DISOBEDIENCE** and **BACKSLIDING** were three tombstones in the land of **MOAB**. All she had left were her **daughters-in-law** and she couldn't even provide for them. These women were in a **DESPERATE CONDITION!**

Such is the **NATURE OF SIN!** It never brings anything **GOOD** into our lives except the **LESSONS** we **LEARN**.
(If we LEARN the LESSONS!)

While **SIN** may give those who wander off into it some temporary **PLEASURE IN THE FLESH** in the short term, *(Hebrews 11:25)*, all it can produce in the long term is **DEATH, DEFEAT, and DISCOURAGEMENT**.

If we want to **DESTROY OUR FAMILY, DEVASTATE OUR LIFE and DOOM THOSE WE LOVE**, wandering off

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to our **MOAB** and staying there will accomplish that! There is a price to pay! The words of **KING SOLOMON: Proverbs 13:15—“...the way of transgressors is hard.”**

When **DISCIPLINE, DEFEAT, DISILLUSIONMENT and DISCOURAGEMENT** come our way because of our **WANDERING** from **GOD'S WILL**, too late we will come to understand that we are **REAPING THE HARVEST** we sowed, *(Galatians 6:7-8)*.

IT WAS A TIME OF DEADLY CONSEQUENCES.

- II. **IT WAS A TIME OF DELIBERATE CHANGES. (Vs 6-7)**

These two verses of our text may help us to leave this message with a little hope. Out of **DISCIPLINE, DEATH, and DEFEAT** we can catch a glimpse of **REPENTANCE** and **RENEWAL** in the **ACTIONS** of **NAOMI**.

- A. **We See There Was A Time Of REALIZATION! (Vs 6)**
Somehow or another **NAOMI HEARD** that **THE LORD** was again **BLESSING HIS PEOPLE!** In **REALITY, HE HAD NEVER STOPPED BLESSING THEM!**

THE LORD'S CHASTISEMENT is also **HIS BLESSING?** If **THE LORD** didn't **LOVE** us then **HE WOULDN'T CHASTISE US** when we fail Him.

Anyway, it appears that someone came into **MOAB** with the **GOOD NEWS** that **GOD WAS BLESSING ISRAEL** again! This sparked a **DESIRE** in her **HEART** to **RETURN to ISRAEL!** Whatever the thoughts were that went through her head, she finally woke up in **MOAB** and **WANTED TO GO HOME!**

That's the same thing that happened to the **PRODIGAL SON, Luke 15:17, "And when he came to himself..."**

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(Ill. Someone said one time that being in a backslidden condition is a form of insanity.) When the **PRODIGAL** saw where he was and **REMEMBERED** what it was like in the **FATHER'S HOUSE**, he wanted to go home. So it was with **NAOMI**.

When that **TIME OF REALIZATION** comes to those who **HAVE WANDERED** from the **FATHER'S HOUSE**, the **FOG** and **HAZE OF SIN** will **CLEAR AWAY** and a **MOMENT OF CLARITY** will replace it! In that **MOMENT OF CLARITY**, the backslider can see just where he is and how far he has fallen. He will hear the tender voice of the **LORD** in his heart saying, *"There's bread in my house. Come home!"*

That **MOMENT OF CLARITY** can be a defining moment in the life of the person who is **AWAY FROM THE LORD!** If they, like **NAOMI**, will **REMEMBER** and **REPENT** (i.e. **ARISE** and **HEAD BACK** to what they left), they can **REENTER THE REALM OF BLESSING AND HOPE**.

But if they **CHOOSE TO CONTINUE** on in the same path of **SIN** and **WANDERING**, then the **HAND OF THE LORD** will **REMAIN AGAINST THEM!**

- B.** There Was A Time Of **REALIZATION!**
There Was A Time Of REPENTANCE! (*Vs 6-7*)
The **BIBLE** says that she *"Arose...that she might return from the country of Moab"*, (*Vs. 6*); and *"Wherefore she went out of the place where she was..."* (*Vs 7*)

NAOMI rose up from where she was and left **MOAB** behind! She experienced a **CHANGE OF HEART** that resulted in a **CHANGE OF ACTION!** That is what **REPENTANCE** is!

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There Was A Time Of REALIZATION... REPENTANCE...

- C.** **There Was A Time Of RETURNING!** (*Vs 7*)
NAOMI rose up and went on her way to **RETURN** to the land of **JUDAH**. She was headed back to the land of *"Praise"*. She was going back to where her family should never have left! She was going home!

The **LORD** didn't **SAVE** us so that we could **WANDER OFF** from **HIM** and **HIS WAYS!**

HE SAVED us so that we might **WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH**, be **USED OF HIM FOR HIS GLORY**, and **LIVE A LIFE FILLED WITH JOY, PEACE, and THE GLORY OF GOD!**

But, those things cannot happen if we **WANDER** off from the **PLACE GOD HAS FOR US** and we **CHOOSE** to **DWELL** in some place like **MOAB...far away from GOD'S PLACE OF BLESSING**.

Conclusion

When **NAOMI** went out of **ISRAEL** and into **MOAB**, by her own testimony, she says that she went out full, *Ruth 1:21*. When she came out of **MOAB** and went back home to **ISRAEL**, she returned **EMPTY!**

All of her hopes, all of her dreams and all of her tomorrows were reduced to three tombstones in a washpot called **MOAB...leaving her EMPTY!**