

**Ruth 1:1-7**  
**No Bread in the House of Bread**  
**November 18, 2007**

**I. The Context of the Covenant**

**A. Promises of the covenant**

1. seed and land (see Gen. 1:28; 13:14-15)
2. the greater promise → an inheritance (Gen. 15:1; Dt. 18:2)

**B. The prosperity of the Promised Land tied to obedience**

1. the land tied to their relationship with God (Ps. 16:5-6; 91:1-2)
2. devoted to God → security in the land  
*Deuteronomy 7:12-13* <sup>12</sup> "And because you listen to these rules and keep and do them, the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love that he swore to your fathers. <sup>13</sup> He will love you, bless you, and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock, in the land that he swore to your fathers to give you.
3. estranged from God → estranged from the land (Lev. 26:14-16, 19-20; Dt. 29:23-25)  
*Deuteronomy 28:23-24* <sup>23</sup> And the heavens over your head shall be bronze, and the earth under you shall be iron. <sup>24</sup> The LORD will make the rain of your land powder. From heaven dust shall come down on you until you are destroyed.

**II. Simply setting the stage? (vv. 1-5)**

**A. In the days when the judges ruled . . .**

1. cycle of Judges – sin, servitude, supplication, salvation
2. spirit of the age – living as if God their King doesn't exist  
*Judges 21:25* <sup>25</sup> In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

**B. . . . there was a famine in the land . . .**

1. irony – famine in the land flowing with milk and honey
2. when was the Promised Land dry? times of cursing (Lev. 26; Dt. 28)

**C. . . . and a man of Bethlehem in Judah . . .**

1. irony – no bread in the House of Bread
2. a certain man – what will he do?
  - a. what should he do? get down on knees and repent
  - b. what does he do? sojourn in the land of Moab
3. might seem like the logical decision – good stewardship
4. no faithful Israelite would go to Moab for bread  
*Deuteronomy 23:3-4* <sup>3</sup> "No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the LORD forever, <sup>4</sup> because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.
5. no faithful Israelite would go to Moab for his sons' wives (Num. 25:1-3)
6. no faithful Israelite would give up his place in the covenant

- a. forsakes his land and inheritance
- b. turns his back on the covenant and the land
- c. even reverses the steps of the Israelites into the Promised Land

**D. Their names were . . .**

Atkinson: To the Hebrew way of thinking, to know a person's name is to know his character. The name is the person. (34)

1. Elimelech → "God is King"
  - a. the height of irony – "God is King" reflects the spirit of the age of the judges – no king, no laws
  - b. he does not live up to his name
  - c. instead of heeding God's discipline, he seeks to escape it
2. Naomi → "pleasant"
3. the names of the sons – no irony at all
  - a. Mahlon → "sickly"
  - b. Chilion → "pining or wasting away"

**E. Covenant faithlessness → covenant cursing**

1. Elimelech – faithless husband leads his family straight into death
2. Mahlon and Chilion – their marriage to women of Moab leads them straight into death
3. Naomi – she goes from a pleasant place in the House of Bread to bitterness in the land of Moab
  - a. without land (4:3) or seed (1:5)
  - b. the hand of the Lord against her (1:13)
  - c. we can understand her bitterness – outside of the covenant

**III. Turning point in the story**

**A. Naomi returns to Bethlehem**

1. return → repentance (this word appears 12 times in first chapter)
2. turns from the fields of Moab and turns to the House of Bread

**B. Returns to the House of Bread**

1. Bethlehem ready for harvest (v. 6) → death to life
2. Naomi needs a faithful husband → seed
3. Naomi needs a Redeemer → land and inheritance

**C. The question: Is there a husband and a Redeemer for Naomi in Bethlehem?**

**D. Application**

1. Just like Naomi, you need . . .
  - a. bread and nourishment
  - b. seed and inheritance
  - c. to be moved from death to life
2. where do you find these blessings?
  - a. interestingly enough, in Bethlehem
  - b. in Bethlehem, a faithful husband and Redeemer was born  
*John 6:35* <sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.