

**Context**

- 1] God has freed the Israelites from Egypt and brought them to the promised land, Canaan.
- 2] Their leaders Moses + Joshua have died + they're ruled by 'judges' who they ignore (Ju 2:16f)
- 3] The constant refrain was 'there was no King in Israel everyone did what was right in his own eyes' (17:6; 21:25)
- 4] The story of Ruth was set in this time – of disobedience, selfishness, and idolatry.

**The setting (1-5)**

- 1] A famine in the land (1a)

*Nb God warned of curses in the promised land because of disobedience (Dt 28:15,22)*

*Submit yourselves to God (James 4:7)*

*\*Be very careful not to try and avoid the Lord's call\**

- 2] went to sojourn in Moab with his wife and two sons (1b)

*Nb distance of 50-100 miles*

*left promised land that God had given*

*Cf everyone did as they saw fit in their own eyes (Ju 21:25)*

*\*God expects more than nominal obedience and then do your own thing. \**

- 3] Names (2a)
 

Elimelech	- God is King
Naomi	- pleasant, delightful
Mahlon	- cf root - weak or sickly
Chilion	- failing (?)

- 4] they were natives of Bethlehem (2b)

*Cf you Bethlehem Ephrathah (Mic 5:2)*

*Joseph and Mary ---Jesus born (Lk 2:4)*

*\*JESUS, the King, God Himself, came TO Bethlehem! \**

- 5] Went to Moab and remained there – 10 yrs (2c)

*Nb Moab descendants of Moab, son of Lot, Abraham's nephew (related but not people of the Promise)*

- 6] Tragedy (3-5)

- a) Elimelech died and Naomi was left with her two sons (3)
- b) Sons took Moabite wives (!) – Orpah and Ruth lived there ten years (4)

*i.e. 'emigrated'?*

- c) Sons died (5a)
- d) Naomi left without husband and sons - any support (5b)

*I.e. all her plans had come to nothing*

**The decisions of the women (6-18)**

- 1] Naomi's decision to return home (6,7)

*Cf the prodigal when he came to his senses (Lk 15:17,18)*

- a) with her daughters-in-law (6a)
- b) as she heard the Lord had visited His people and had given them food (6b)

*?? after 10 years – some famine!*

*\*be prepared to return to the Lord\**

- c) she set out with her daughters-in-law (x 2!) to return to Judah (7)

*\*The Lord receives any who give themselves wholeheartedly to Him. \**

- 2] Naomi's rethink (8,9a)

- 1) go return to your mother's house
- 2) each of you should 'find rest in the house of her husband'

3] The girls' reaction - (9b-13)

a) 'they (the girls) lifted up their voices and wept' and protested – 'no we will return with you'. (9b)

b) listened to Naomi's protest (11-13)

a) the text –

1) turn back

2) I have no other sons nor am I likely to

*Cf Levirate marriage – marry brother's widow and your first son will be an heir for him (Dt 25:5)*

3) it is bitter to me for your sake, the hand of the Lord has gone out against me

b) the sub text

a) I am without any hope or prospects

b) poor me – lightened my burden, remove my obligations, and go away

*nb How seemingly reasonable and thoughtful. In fact - How misguided. How sinful!*

*\*Beware the 'reasonable' voices that would stop you from following the Lord \**

4] The girls' decision (14)

a) 'they (the girls) lifted up their voices and wept'

1) Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and left for Moab

2) Ruth clung to her

5] Ruth's commitment (15-17)

a) ignored 'reasonable' voice 'to return to her people and to her gods'

*cf 'everyone did as they saw fit in their own eyes?' (Ju 21:25)*

*\*Never go back to other gods however bleak your prospects. \**

b) Committed herself

1) to God – where you go, I will go... your people shall be my people and your God my God

*GRACE God will accept people from anywhere who come to Him*

2) wholeheartedly – 'till death parts me from you.'

*Cf Crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me (Gal 2:20)*

*\*Commit yourself to the Lord and His people wholeheartedly\**

6] Naomi capitulates – 'she said no more'. (18)

## **The return (19-22)**

1] They came to Bethlehem – whole town stirred – 'Is this Naomi' (19)

*? smarting having rejected her people 10 years ago and here she comes back?*

2] Call me 'Mara' – bitter (20,21) the Lord has dealt with me bitterly.... brought me back empty...the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me.

*? empty – Oh there is Ruth, but she doesn't count'*

*(Unlike Naomi) - Count your blessings name them one by one*

3] Naomi returned with Ruth the Moabitess, ...from Moab! (22a)

4] They came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest (22b)

*Cf at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly (Rmns 5:6)*

*God's timing is perfect*

**MP** *Commitment to God means also commitment to His people*

**KV** *Your people shall be my people and your God, my God. (16c)*