

RUTH 1:1-14

- Verse 1 - Literally, "in the judging of the judges." It could be "the judgment of the judges," and be far more than a descriptive statement.
- Verse 2 –
  - When looking at Ruth as typology, Elimelech represents the generation of Jews who would flee Judah during a time of the "judging of the judges" (v. 1), such a judging bringing a **famine in the land**.
  - **Naomi** represents the Jewish nation, and her experience from the time of departure (AD 70) thru the time of the King.
  - **Mahlon** means "sickness." **Chilion** means "wasted / consumed / used up." These two sons of Naomi (the Jewish nation) represent the offspring of the Jewish nation after AD 70.
  - **Ephrathites** –
    - The word, in its strictest sense, means "of the tribe of Ephraim."
    - It can also be used of someone who was living in the vicinity of Bethlehem (see 1 Chron 2:50-51) and/or someone who was "fruitful." The latter definition is probably in mind here. Jewish tradition teaches that Elimelech was a wealthy man, leaving Bethlehem during famine to protect his own wealth.
    - David was of the tribe of Judah, not of Ephraim, but his father, Jesse, was called and **Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah**. This appears to be a term for wealth or of one of the "founding families" of the city (see Gen 35:19).
  - The word מואב [Moab] means "from my father" or even "what father?" Moab was the son of Lot by his daughter after Sodom was destroyed. The Moabites (descendants of Lot) settled east of the Dead Sea in what is now southern Jordan.
  - Compare **continued there** with the intent of the trip (v. 1) **to sojourn in the country**. While their intent was temporary, they ended up being in Moab much longer than anticipated.
- Verse 3 –
  - In typology, the first generation of the sojourners died, that is, those who fled in AD70.
  - The Jewish nation (Naomi) is left with "sick and dying."
- Verse 4 –
  - According to Deut. 23:3, no Moabite was allowed to enter the assembly of the Lord for 10 generations. Furthermore, marriage outside of Judaism was prohibited.
  - Ruth was allowed into the assembly by conversion, in which she is no longer considered a Moabite.
  - **Orpah** comes from the root meaning the "top of the head" or "back of the neck." The root is translated as **obstinate**, and **stubborn** on several occasions in the Bible.
  - Ruth means "a female companion or neighbor" but also comes from the root which means "to be satisfied" or "to drink to satisfaction."

- Ten is a number of completeness of order. The family was in Moab **about ten years**, but not a full ten years.
- Verse 5 –
  - The woman, representing Judaism, was all that remained.
    - The word **left** is the word for *remnant*.
    - The original generation of those who said "God is my King" but fled for safety is now dead, along with the *sick and dying* sons. All that remains is Judaism itself and the Moabites wives.
  - There is often an accusation that the modern Jewish people are not the physical descendants of Abraham. This ignores the typology and is only partially correct. Modern Judaism married into the Moabites. But, as we shall see, Ruth, in her conversion, is seen as just as much a Jew as Mahlon, her husband.
- Verse 6 –
  - The Scripture says virtually nothing about the time in Moab, other than the death of all that was dear to them. To surmise that life was somehow a blessing is to simply make things up.
  - **She had heard** - They came from Bethlehem--the "house of bread." And now they hear God has given bread. Could this be a reference to the fact that God had given Israel her land back again?
- Verse 7 –Note that initially both of the daughters-in-law were going.
- Verse 8 -- The official position of Judaism at the beginning of Zionism was decidedly anti-Zionist.
- Verse 9 –
  - Naomi (representing Judaism) was not asking her daughters to leave God and Judaism, but to **find rest...in the house of her husband**. That is, Judaism wanted Orpah and Ruth to remain in the house, but not return to the land.
  - **Then she kissed them...** In a sense, these words could be used to describe the Jewish existence during the 2,000-year diaspora.
- Verse 10 -- During the entire diaspora, there was a solid commitment on the part of the Jewish people to someday return, waiting for the time when Messiah would allow.
- Verses 11-12 -- Naomi here expresses her love by expressing the sad reality that there was little chance of a future in the Promised Land. When the Jews returned, only a miracle would save them.
- Verse 13 –
  - For that generation that returned, there was great risk and high cost.
  - **It grieveth me much...** this is Judaism speaking. Grieved that the Lord is gone out against me. After the Holocaust, Judaism was more secular than ever before, saying, "If this is what it is to be chosen, I want nothing of it."
- Verse 14 –
  - In typology, Orpah represents Judaism that remained in the diaspora. She loved Naomi, but took her advice and remained in "Moab."
  - There were Jews, represented by Ruth, that held tenaciously to Judaism to such an extent that they were in bonds to return to their homeland.