

# When God's Providence Seems Very Bitter

## *Ruth 1*

- A. In *Ruth 1* we read of events that took place 3,000+ years ago during the time of the judges of Israel.
1. The time of the judges was a 400-year period (1400 BC-1000 BC) after Israel entered the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua and before there were any kings in Israel.
  2. It was a dark time in Israel's history (*Judg 21:25*) wherein a terrible cycle was repeated again and again (*Judg 2:16-20*).
  3. From all outward appearances, God's plan for Israel was failing. But what the book of Ruth provides is a glimpse into the behind-the-scenes work of God, even in the worst of times.
- B. The book revolves around three main characters:
1. \_\_\_\_\_ - an Israelite from Bethlehem who loses her husband and two sons.
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ - a young Moabite woman who was married to one of Naomi's sons.
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ - a relative of Naomi, but also a descendant of Rahab, the converted prostitute who lived more than 300 years before when Israel first came into the Promised Land (*Matt 1:5*).
- C. Something remarkable was going on, even when times and circumstances seemed very bitter.

### I. Trying times in the life of Naomi (1:1-5)

- A. A \_\_\_\_\_ in the land of Israel (*1:1a; Lev 26:3-4; Psa 105:16-17*).
- B. Relocation to \_\_\_\_\_, a pagan country with foreign gods (*1:1b-2,15; Judg 10:6; Deut 7:3-6*).
- C. The passing of Elimelech, her \_\_\_\_\_ (*1:3*).
- D. Her two sons \_\_\_\_\_ Moabite women (*1:4*).
- E. The passing of Mahlon and Chilion, her two \_\_\_\_\_ (*1:5*).

### II. Naomi's belief that "the hand of the LORD has gone out against me" (1:6-15)

- A. "Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?" (*1:6-11*)
- B. Preparing us for a custom in Israel that would eventually turn everything around for Naomi. When an Israelite husband died, his brother or near relative was to marry the widow and preserve the brother's name (*Deut 25:5-10*).

### III. The extraordinary promises of Ruth (1:16-22)

- A. Though she was still young (*2:5; 4:12*), she leaves her own family and land to stay with Naomi, in spite of an apparent future of widowhood and childlessness (*1:16-18*).
- B. The chapter ends with Naomi full of sorrow (*1:19-21*), but with hope on the horizon (*1:22*).

### Vital concluding takeaways:

- Embittered \_\_\_\_\_ can easily become \_\_\_\_\_ (*Gen 50:20; Ruth 1:22; 4:13-17; Matt 1:1*).
- God has not promised that believers are immune to \_\_\_\_\_ (*Psa 34:19; Acts 14:22; 1 Pet 4:19*).
- People with *Micah 6:8*-type-\_\_\_\_\_ can be used by God in profound and beautiful ways.