

## Lesson 02 – GOOD NEWS FROM HOME

## Ruth 1:1-7

**(1:1-2)** – As we saw in Lesson 1, Elimelech and his family lived in the land of promise that God had given the Israelites and where God promised to bless them. But because of their disobedience and rebellion, God sent them famine. Even with the famine in the land, they were to repent, turn to God, follow His Word, and not lean to their own understanding and ways. Rather than waiting and depending on the Lord to save them from the famine, Elimelech disobeyed God’s law and took his wife, Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, from Bethlehem-judah (the house of bread) down to the wicked and idolatrous country of Moab, **“and continued there.”** Here is a clear picture of our ruin by our fall into sin by Adam. God’s Word tells us that the reason we are all by nature spiritually dead and depraved, the reason we are all sinful and have no desire to seek the true and living God, and the reason we cannot save ourselves or make ourselves righteous by our works and efforts at obedience is because we all fell into a state of sin when Adam fell in the garden – **“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).**

This is so like sinful man seeking salvation from sin and seeking eternal life based on his works and efforts at obedience or his own natural decisions. Rather than follow God’s Word which is to seek salvation, forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life by His free and sovereign grace in and by the obedience unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of sinners, man by nature will always choose his own way which is deadly **(Rom. 3:10-20; 5:19; 1 Cor. 2:14).**

**(1:3-5)** – **“And Elimelech Naomi’s husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.”** God’s Word tells us that **“the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23a).** Elimelech died and left his wife and two sons in Moab. His two sons married Moabite women (**“Orpah”** and **“Ruth”**), **“and they dwelled there about ten years.”** Just like their father, Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion died, and Naomi **“was left of her two sons and her husband”** (without hope in a land of wickedness and idolatry). Like Naomi’s physical condition in the land of sin and idolatry, we are all by nature (as we are naturally born fallen in Adam) spiritually dead in trespasses and sin and without hope of salvation in ourselves **(Rom. 3:19-20; Eph. 2:1-3,8-9).** If left to ourselves, we would all remain in this state and die eternally in our sins.

Death is the just punishment of sin. The Lord God made this clear to Adam in the Garden of Eden. Having forbidden Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which represented God’s sovereign right to set the standard of right and wrong, He told Adam, **“for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”** (literally, “dying, thou shalt die”) **(Gen. 2:17).** The process of physical death for Adam and all of his posterity began the second Adam disobeyed God.

But Adam also died spiritually and brought the whole human race into that state of spiritual death and depravity deserving condemnation. Our only hope of salvation from sin, of righteousness, spiritual and eternal life is by God's free and sovereign grace in the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Kinsman-Redeemer (**Rom. 5:18-19**).

**(1:6)** – In God's good providence and sovereign mercy, He sent a message of good news to Naomi even as she dwelt in Moab. The message was for her to return to Bethlehem-judah, for **“the LORD had visited His people in giving them bread.”** What a great picture of our sovereign and merciful God, according to His Divine Providence and for His glory, sending the good news of His Gospel of grace in Christ to His chosen people. At His appointed time, He sends the Holy Spirit with the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation, preached by His servants, declaring the righteousness of God accomplished in the obedience unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ Who obeyed the law unto death, even the death of the cross, to redeem them by His blood. By His death, Christ satisfied the justice of God against their sins imputed to Him. As their Kinsman-Redeemer, He ransomed their souls by paying their sin-debt in full, bringing forth a perfect righteousness which God has imputed to them and from which He gives them spiritual life to hear and believe this good news savingly (**Rom. 1:16-17; 10:13-17; 1 Cor. 1:18-24**).

**(1:7)** – Upon hearing this good news, Naomi **“went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.”** Now, understand that Naomi returning to the physical land of promise could not save her, or any sinner, spiritually and eternally. Being a physical Israelite and living in the land of promise is not the equivalent of salvation from sin, but this story is a picture of the Lord God calling His elect unto spiritual and eternal salvation in the invincible and irresistible calling of the Holy Spirit which is part of the new spiritual rebirth of God's children in Christ (**John 1:11-13; 3:1-7; Rom. 2:28-29**). We must understand that God's Word shows us that there is a general calling through the Gospel that all people by nature will, of their own natural wills, resist and refuse (**Acts 7:51-53; 1 Cor. 2:14**). There is also the effectual and irresistible call to God's elect which will always bring them by God-given faith to Christ for salvation and keep them looking to Christ by faith (**John 6:37-45**).

The Gospel IS the power of God unto salvation, not because of the preacher, but because of the Holy Spirit Who applies in power the blessings of Christ to all for whom He died and arose again. This powerful application of truth is part of their new birth from above where they are given new life, a new heart, a new spirit and desire for the things that glorify God in Christ. This is the picture we see in Naomi's response to the good news.