

**(1:18)** – Ruth was an example of true faith in the true and living God as revealed in the promised Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Her decision to worship and serve the Lord God was followed and evidenced by her determination to go with Naomi to Bethlehem and identify herself with the people of God. The conversion of Ruth was also an example and testimony of God’s purpose to save and call His elect among the Gentiles. It was always God’s purpose to save Gentiles as well as Jews. In His sinless humanity, our Lord sprang from Jews and Gentiles and is the Savior of His elect from both. This is what the Bible means when it says He is the Savior of the world, not all without exception, but His elect all over the world, out **“of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” (Rev. 7:9)**. And when Naomi saw that Ruth **“was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her,”** i.e. she stopped trying to persuade her to stay in Moab. What a great example Ruth was of a sinner brought to faith in Christ and repentance of dead works and idolatry. She was converted by God’s grace. We understand that. Salvation is of the Lord! It is God’s work alone! Yet, our God condescends to use human instruments to accomplish His work. And the instrument God used to save Ruth was Naomi. Spiritual life, a new spirit and heart, faith and repentance are all gifts of God’s grace that are given and applied to His people by the Holy Spirit through Christ the Lord. Where Christ’s righteousness has been imputed for our justification, His life is imparted in the new birth for our sanctification (**John 16:9-11; Rom 8:10**).

**(1:19)** – So Naomi and Ruth **“went until they came to Bethlehem.”** (the house of Bread where the people of God under the Old Covenant dwelt). In Bethlehem **“all the city was moved about them.”** The news of their arrival was soon spread throughout the place, and the whole city rang of it, **“and they said, IS THIS NAOMI?”** Naomi stands before us as an example of the consequences of sin in our lives even as true believers who are destined by God in Christ to live forever in glory with Him. Even though, because of our standing before God in Christ, sin cannot be charged to our account or condemn us (**Rom. 8:33-39**), it can and does affect our physical bodies and our situations here on earth (**Rom. 8:10**). Because of her age and her troubles in Moab, Naomi was a woman of sorrow, barely recognizable to her friends in Bethlehem. Because of the consequences of our remaining sin, Naomi was an example and a picture of what sin does to us in our flesh.

**(1:20)** – **“And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara”** – The name “Naomi” means “pleasant; “Mara” means “bitter.” She was made bitter over her losses, her poverty, and being left destitute. Many of God’s servants, though their standing before God in Christ is perfect and blessed above all, find themselves bitter and poor in

their state here on earth. We can think of Abel who was murdered by his brother, Cain; Joseph who was sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers. We can think of Job who lost his family, his health, and his possessions for a while. And there are many others. We all go through time of joy and bitterness in our lives here on this cursed earth. Our eternal joy and peace will come when we leave this world and have no remaining presence, contamination, influence, and consequences of sin.

**“For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.”** – Whenever our heavenly Father deals with us in bitter ways, we are told to look at these as the chastisements of a loving Father Who is teaching us the life-lessons that we need to learn (**Heb. 12:5-13**). We are told that these chastisements result in **“the peaceable fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11)**, which is a child of God being brought out by God’s grace and power at the end of the chastisement repenting, learning, growing, and seeing more and more of the love, grace, and power of Christ to save, preserve, and bring him to glory. He sees more of the value of Christ’s blood alone to forgive him of all sin and more of the value of Christ’s righteousness imputed to justify him and bring him to glory. This is part of running the race of grace **“looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2)**.

**(1:21)** – Naomi said, **“I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty.”** Elimelech and Naomi left Bethlehem-judah rich and healthy. Naomi went back to her home poor and destitute. What a good picture of man in the Fall. Adam was created upright and full by God, but he fell into sin, death, and depravity, empty of spiritual life and of any capacity, ability, or desire to know and have fellowship with God. **“Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?”** Again we see that this is all the sovereign and wise work of God, but it was for Naomi’s and Ruth’s spiritual and eternal good and for God’s glory (**Rom. 8:28**).

**(1:22)** – **“So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab:”** It is significant that it is emphasized that Ruth was **“the Moabitess”** who **“returned out of the country of Moab”** and **“came to Bethlehem”** the birth place of the Messiah, Who was to spring from her, a Gentile. Such glorious truths go a long way to emphasize that God’s grace reaches to both Jew and Gentile without any consideration of their heritage, race, or works (**Gal. 3:26-29**).

**“And they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.”** They returned in the Spring, time of renewed life and harvest which pictures the time of the new birth of God’s people where they are given spiritual life in regeneration and their beginning in that life by God-given faith in Christ and repentance of dead works and idolatry. This was Ruth’s experience as she left her home and went to Bethlehem.