

Ruth 1:1-5; When all Seems Lost

1 Now it came about in the days when the judges [a]governed, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab [b]with his wife and his two sons.

1 Now it came about in the days when the judges [a]governed,

This cycle where Israel _____ in worshipping the idols around them, then God allowing Israel to be _____, then Israel _____ and cries out to God, then God sends a judge to _____ Israel, and Israel remains _____ only as long as that judge lived went on for over 350 years.

that there was a famine in the land.

Given this famine's close association with the times of the Judges, I think that we can infer that this famine was part of God's _____.

And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn

This "house of _____" in the Land of Plenty, the Promised Land, was failing to feed this man's family. This word _____ means to travel to another land, and live as a resident alien. They often faced poverty and being social outcasts in the land in which they were sojourning.

In the Bible, whenever Jewish people leave the land to seek their fortunes somewhere else, trouble for them tends to ensue. Father _____ left the Land because of a famine? Result: Hagar/Ishmael/fighting. When _____ left the land of Israel because of a famine. Result: Israelites being _____ in the land of Egypt for 400 years.

in the land of Moab

For Israel Moab is a symbol of oppression brought about by _____, then _____. Example: In Numbers 25, when Balak King of Moab's plan to get _____ to curse Israel had backfired, and Balaam had blessed Israel instead, it was through seduction of the women of Moab that 24,000 Israelites brought _____ on themselves.

Similarly, Solomon took foreign wives, including women from Moab, and pursued _____ worship of Chemosh, the god of Moab, which turned his heart away from the Lord and cost him his kingdom (1 Kings 11:1, 7, 33).

²The name of the man was Elimelech

Elimelech means God is my King. This is ironic, since he was living in a time when, as it so often says in the book of Judges, "there was no _____ in Israel"

and the name of his wife, Naomi;

The name Naomi means _____, or pleasant one

and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion

The name Mahlon's meaning is really unknown and Chilion is fairly uncertain too—although many guesses have been made.

Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah.

Likely descended from Ephrath, the wife of Caleb, whose descendants settled in Bethlehem, according to 1 Chronicles 2:19, 50-51). This family was probably the most _____ in Bethlehem—a family well-known throughout the Country.

Now they entered the land of Moab and remained there.

We actually don't know how long they remained there. The implication is that they were now staying for an indefinite period of time, maybe _____

³Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons.

It is important as heads of the household to lead our families spiritually—because one day there's going to come a time when we will no longer have the opportunity. It's in those areas of _____ lives where we submit to God as our King, and to Jesus as our Lord, that we will leave a good witness for our family.

If you are a single mother, for whatever reason, _____ can give _____ and your _____ a _____ and a _____.

They took for themselves Moabite women as wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. And they lived there about ten years.

There were probably no _____ women for them to marry in Moab. Elimelech was probably concerned that marrying Moabite women would turn his sons away from God and that they would start worshipping the gods of the Moabites.

But after Elimelech died, the boys went ahead and married the Moabite women Ruth and Orpah. While there may have been some concern about them marrying Moabitesses on the part of Naomi, at least she could look forward to the prospect of grandchildren, and the _____ of her family after her husband had died.

They've now put down roots in Moab. In verse 1b, "they went to _____ there" in verse 2b "they entered the land and _____ there", in verse 4b "they _____ there and _____ there about 10 years." So we see this progression of this family becoming more and more "settled" in this land that was not their own

⁵Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and the woman was bereft of her two children and her husband.

Not only has 10 years of marriage not produced _____ for either Mahlon or Chilion, but now both Mahlon and Chilion have died. This is truly the low point of the book of Ruth. There seems to be no _____ left.

She's not even called by name in verse 5—it just says that "the woman"

You may not be in a situation this bad as these three widows--or maybe you are. But God's Holy Spirit and provision for us never runs _____. It was only after she'd come to the end of her rope, that she remembered that God is Sovereign and that He is in _____, and that she could turn to Him. God in His _____ is going to make a way for Naomi, and turn tragedy to _____.