

Family as Community

Key Verse: *“Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”*
—*Ruth 1:16*

Selected Scripture:
Ruth 1:1-16

mother of David. (Matt. 1:1-5) Her character and her demonstration of love and devotion to God is something that we should desire to emulate in our own lives.

As we consider the events that took place in the life of Ruth, we must also realize the influence that Naomi had on her. Recalling from the account, we see that Elimelech—the husband of Naomi—left his home in Bethlehem-Judah and traveled to the land of Moab. A severe famine had gripped the land and Elimelech was forced to take his wife and sons into this new land. (Ruth 1:1,2) Following their father’s death, Naomi’s two sons took wives from the Moabites. “They took them wives of

THE STORY OF RUTH IS A

very interesting one, not only as an account from Jewish history since it covers a period of about ten years, but also it has a further lesson concerning the beautiful aspects of God’s grace. Ruth was born in Moab so, being a Moabite and therefore a Gentile, she desired to become a Jewish convert, and would come to be recognized by God as one of his chosen people. She would come to be honored with a place in the line of our Lord Jesus’ human ancestry in that she would be the great-grand-

the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth.” (vs. 4) Naomi’s sons also died, and the women were left alone. It was now the desire of Naomi to return to Judah, the land of her birth, but she thought that it would be best for her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab. Orpah decided to remain in Moab, but Ruth was not of the same mind. “They lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.” (vs. 14) Ruth was actually affirming by her affection the good example that Naomi had provided for her resulting in her beautiful character. This led her to speak the words that are found in our theme text. It also caused her to express that she would stay with her until her very life would come to an end. “Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.” (vs. 17) The fact that now Ruth’s life was centered around the words, ‘your God shall be my God,’ is a testimony to the faithful living of Naomi, and a gesture of appreciation for the leadings of God. “When she [Naomi] saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.”—vs. 18

We, who were by nature Gentiles as Ruth was, by the grace of God have become spiritual Israelites. “Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. . . . Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” (Eph. 2:13,19) We should determine that from now on the former conditions, interests, pleasures, and relationships are gone forever. We desire to live close to the LORD and his people—our brethren, the footstep followers of Jesus. These words apply to the true believer, “The former things are passed away.” (Rev. 21:4) They have also willingly, as Ruth did, followed the scriptural advice from Psalm 45:10, “Forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house.” ■