

SERIES TITLE: RESCUED

PART ONE: WHEN LIFE IS MISERABLE

TEXT: RUTH 1

INTRODUCTION.

The action of Ruth takes place during the time of Judges, more than 1,000 years before Christ. Since Ruth is a Moabitess (a nationality generally considered immoral in Israel—see Gen. 19:30-38; Numbers 25:1-3), the story shows how she became part of the royal lineage of David. An important part of the plot involves the kinsman-redeemer. To understand more about how the next of kin was obliged to help the widow and the impoverished, see Deut. 25:5-10; Lev. 25:23-28.

DISCUSSION.

What was the economic climate like for the family in which you were raised? How does it compare with your situation today?

EXAMINATION.

Vv.1-5 What are the indications that the decision to leave Bethlehem might not have been the right one?

What crises is Naomi facing?

In a male-dominated, pre-social services age, how important were male relatives for widows?

v.6-13 Given the social problems facing these widows, why do you think Naomi tells them to return to their families?

v.14-18 Between Orpah and Ruth, which action was most surprising and which one was the most difficult and why?

Even though Naomi urged Ruth to return to her gods, Ruth claims Naomi's God, calling him LORD Yahweh (v.17). How is that significant?

v.19-22 What is right and wrong about Naomi's characterization of God?

APPLICATION.

- Which of these tends to be the source of your times of misery, and why: poor choices? painful circumstances? wrong theology?
- Why is it important to believe that God is both in control and good?
- How does our understanding of God shape our suffering? In other words, if you believe God is sovereign and good, how does that change your reaction to bad things?
- Who in your life is like Ruth, loyal to you in your emptiness?
- Fact: What is a key truth that you understood from this passage?
- React: What did you feel?
- Act: What are you going to do?