

EPISODE NO. 114

Ruth 1:1-22

Elimelech and His Family Moved to Moab

1 During the time when the heroic leaders were active in Israel, there was a famine in the land. A man from the town of Bethlehem in Judah went to stay in the country of Moab — he, his wife, and his two sons. 2 The man's name was Elimelech. The name of his wife was Naomi. And, the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites c from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and stayed there.

Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth Became Widows

3 Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died — survived by her and her two sons. 4 Later, both of the sons got married to women from Moab. One's name was Orpah, and the name of the other one was Ruth. They lived there for about 10 years. 5 Then both Mahlon and Chilion died. So, Naomi was left without her two sons AND her husband.

Naomi and Ruth Returned to Bethlehem

6 Then Naomi and her daughters-in-law got ready to move, so that Naomi could return home from the country of Moab. While still in the country of Moab, Naomi heard how the Always-Present One had helped His people by giving them food. 7 So, she and her two daughters-in-law started out from the place where she had been living. They were traveling on the road to go back to the land of Judah. 8 Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go! Each of you should return to your mother's house. May Yahweh be kind to you, as you have been toward my dead husband and sons and toward me. 9 May Yahweh allow both of you to find security, each of you in the house of your new husband."

Then Naomi kissed them. And, they began to cry loudly. 10 They said to her, "No! We should go with you to Judah, to your people!"

11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters. Why should you go with me!? Do I have any more sons in my body who could become your husbands? No. 12 Turn back, my daughters! Go your way. I am too old to have another husband. If I were to think: 'I

have hope' — even if I should get married tonight and give birth to sons — 13 would you wait until they were old enough? Would you wait to marry them? Of course not, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because Yahweh's hand has gone out against me!"

14 Then the two young women began to cry loudly again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye and left, but Ruth continued to cling to Naomi.

15 Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. Follow her!"

16 But Ruth said, "Don't ask me to leave you, to stop following you — because wherever you go, I will go! And, wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will become my people, and your God will be my God. 17 Wherever you die, I will die. And, I will be buried there. May Yahweh treat me harshly — no matter how harsh it is — if anything except death separates you and me!"

18 And when Naomi realized that Ruth was very determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

19 So, the two of them traveled on until they came to the town of Bethlehem. And when they arrived there, the whole village was excited because of them. The old women said, "Is this Naomi!?"

20 Naomi answered them, "Don't call me 'Naomi,' because Almighty God has been so harsh to me. Call me 'Mara.' 21 I went away full, but the Always-Present One has brought me back home empty. Why are you calling me 'Naomi,' since the Always-Present One has afflicted me, and Almighty God has caused me to suffer!?"

22 So, Naomi returned to Bethlehem, and Ruth (the Moabite woman, her daughter-in-law) was with her. They returned from the country of Moab. They arrived at Bethlehem at the beginning of the time for harvesting barley.