

## Lesson X.

## RUTH AND NAOMI

December 7, 1902

Ruth 1: 16-22. Commit to memory vs. 16, 17. Read Ruth, chs. 1-4.

16 And 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:

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if I ought but death part thee and me.

18 When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

19 So they two went until they came to Beth'lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth'lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and

Revised Version—The women,

they said, Is this Na'omi?

20 And she said unto them, Call me not Na'omi, call me Ma'ra: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21 I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Na'omi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

22 So Na'omi returned, and Ruth the Mo'abitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth'lehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

## EXPLANATION

**Connection**—The beautiful story of Ruth belongs to the times of the Judges. Naomi, a Hebrew woman, because of a famine in her own land, went to the land of Moab. There she lost her husband and her two sons who had married Orpah and Ruth, women of Moab. In her loneliness she decided to return home. Orpah and Ruth went a part of the way with her. When the parting time came Orpah with tears bade her good-by, but Ruth refused to leave her (ch. 1: 1-15.)

16. **Intreat me not to leave thee.** She was fully aware of the sacrifice she was making, but she clung to Naomi with a love that was both tender and strong, and she had learned to love Naomi's God. **Whither thou goest.** She was willing to share the weariness and the dangers of the journey and the poverty and sorrow of Naomi's lot. **Where thou lodgest.** In her poverty Naomi could not afford any but the humblest lodgings. **Thy people, etc.** It was a strong test of her love, for the ties of race and kindred are not easily broken. **Thy God, etc.** a beautiful decision that was amply rewarded. (See on v. 22.)

17. **Where thou diest.** It was to be a life-long friendship. **There will I be buried.** In Eastern lands even more is made of the place of burial than amongst us. **The Lord do so to me;** a form of oath to confirm her vow not to leave Naomi. The appeal to Israel's God shows that she had already accepted Him as hers.

18. **When she saw:** that Ruth's mind was made up and that nothing would shake her purpose to go with her. **She left speaking unto her.** She was no doubt secretly glad to have with her a friend so true.

19. **They two went;** on their long, weary walk to Beth'lehem. **The city was moved.** Naomi had left ten years before (1: 4), and her friends had prob-

ably not heard from her in all that time. Her arrival a poor, widowed and sorrowful woman, would be the talk of the town. **Is this Naomi?** As she entered the town bearing only too plainly the marks of her great trial and of weary travel, her appearance would awaken the interest and sympathy of old acquaintances.

20. **Call me not Naomi;** that is "pleasant, sweet." The sweetness and the pleasure of life had been changed into bitterness and pain. **Ma'ra;** that is "bitter," (Exod. 15: 23.) **The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly, etc.** Her words are full of sadness. The ten years were crowned with suffering, sorrow, tears, and her poor spirit was crushed.

21. **I went out full;** with husband and sons and large hopes and expectations for the future. **Home again empty;** with empty hands and heart. Hope and joy had died with her loved ones (1: 3-5). **The Lord hath testified against me;** had shown her by what she had gone through that she was wrong in leaving home. **The Almighty hath afflicted me.** Note the Hebrew view that suffering is the direct penalty of sin.

22. **The beginning of barley harvest;** at the end of April. This statement prepares us for the events that follow, where gleaning in the harvest-field, Ruth meets Boaz, a relative of her husband, and he marries her. She thus became one of the line of the ancestors of David and of Jesus the Christ.



A Field in Judah (Illustrative Notes)

A lesson writer suggests that the very best treatment of this lesson might be "to read the book of Ruth carefully a sufficient number of times, and then tell the story to one another, trying to see which could tell it most correctly, noting a few explanatory points here and there and closing with the repetition of the memory verses. It would give a fresh impression of a delightful story.