

# Going Back To Bethlehem

*“In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there. Now Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband. When she heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah. Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show kindness to you, as you have shown to your dead and to me. May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband." Then she kissed them and they wept aloud and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people." But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me -- even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons -- would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD's hand has gone out against me!" At this they wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth clung to her. "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her." But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her. So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?" "Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me." So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.” (Ruth 1:1-22)*

The Book of Ruth is a story of a family who had left Bethlehem because there was a famine. Therefore for this reason they decided to go to Moab, because they thought that there they can escape from famine, and who knows may be there the lives will get better. That event of the famine and the decision that this family had taken it happened during the time of Judges, and one of the characteristic thing of that period is this: **“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.” (Judges 21:35)**

So there was no King and there was no central government and no clear instructions or guidance to the people of God. So in that setup when any problem happened like what we find here a famine, or when anyone pass a difficult situation there is no proper person or

proper channel to receive the right advice. And that what had happened to that family; when they have a famine in Bethlehem they left to Moab to get a temporal relief. But what was the outcome? They escaped the famine but they end up with the following mishaps: The death of the father of the family, marriage with non-believers, barrenness, and finally the death of their two sons.

Bethlehem is the house of the bread; and the bread that sustains us in our lives is the Word of God that we need for our guidance and to take the right direction in life. So when we face any problem or any situation, we need to go back to the Word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ is the living Word of God. He came from heaven to save us from sin and death. He died on the cross for our sins, He was buried but rose from the dead on the third day to give eternal life to these who believe in His name and follow His steps in their lives.

To believe in Christ is to believe in His Word and follow His Word in your life. Therefore it is not good to run away when you are facing problems and tries to get resolutions; you ought to stand firm and stay on the Word with God. You have to find out what is the cause of the famine in your life. If it is sin then you need to repent and be ready to face the consequences. If it is God's discipline then you need to persevere to endure that. If it is trial or persecution then you need to stand firm and don't be afraid. You need to trust God and His Word and He will deliver you.

God allow troubles and hardships in your life to see your response whether you will continue to remain in Him and in His Word or you will run away. He allows famine in your life to refine you. He allows season of drought and dryness to see who will stay and remain in Him and in His Word. The Lord finally will come to aid those who belong to Him as we read in the story in regard to Naomi: **“When she heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from.” (Ruth 1:6)** One of Naomi two daughter-in-law, Ruth, was not persuaded to stay back, but she clung to her mother-in-law and she determine to go back to Bethlehem; the house of bread, the bread of life, where our Lord and Saviour was born there, and where true life she will find in His Word.

**My Dear and Beloved:** Living far away from the Word of God and from the true teaching will bring more suffering in your life. Don't be double minded and don't be reluctant to come back. Even if the journey from where you are to Bethlehem might seem long and difficult but no blessing if you are away from the house of bread. Come back to Him, and pray to Him and He will receive you once again in His arms of love. Come back and be restored and revived once again with His Word and the Holy Spirit as you agree to pray.

**My Prayer:** *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins, who was buried but rose from the dead on the third day to give me eternal life. Lord I repent from these sins \_\_\_\_\_. Restore me back to you Lord and restore to me my inheritance and what You had allocated to me. This is my prayer in Jesus name. Amen.*