**“Ruth Didn’t Know!”**

Jarrod Jacobs

I am sure most Bible students are familiar with Ruth, the Moabitess who was widowed, but followed her mother-in-law back to Bethlehem to live. Once there, she met and married Naomi’s kinsman, Boaz. From this union came Obed; and in time she became the great-grandmother of David. It is easy for us, having read the story, to focus upon Ruth being David’s great-grandmother, and all that this would imply in God’s plan for man’s salvation. In fact, Ruth is one of only four women mentioned in the earthly lineage of Christ (Matt. 1:5).

What makes this good lady stand out in my mind was her conscientious, considerate, and sacrificing attitude. Unlike those of us living today who have the benefit of reading the book, remember, ***Ruth*** ***didn’t know what the outcome of her life would be***! Still, she displayed an attitude that continues to shine for future generations. Like Abel, she “being dead yet speaketh” (cf. Heb. 11:4)!

The first time we read anything of substance about Ruth is after she had become a widow. When Naomi wanted to go back to Bethlehem, Ruth begged to accompany her mother-in-law (Ruth 1:7-18). At this time, all that was known was that she was begging to go to Bethlehem where she would live with her mother-in-law and endure a life of poverty. She would live among strangers, speak a foreign language, worship a foreign God, and have no promise of ever returning to Moab. (So far as the book of Ruth is concerned, she never returned to see her family!) Such faithfulness to a mother-in-law tells me just what kind of woman Naomi was, and how she conducted herself among her daughters-in-law during the years in Moab!

Yet, our thoughts right now focus upon Ruth. Such people as Ruth stand out and serve as good examples for the rest of us (Rom. 15:4). Just as she faced hardships and unknown elements in her life, so also it happens today. Isn’t this the real challenge of serving God? It is easy to serve God when things are going well and we are not facing the pitfalls, challenges, temptations, and hard choices in life. It is much harder when we are in the middle of enduring the temptations, hardships, and challenges! It is at this time, we need to remember Ruth’s example of faithfulness. We would do well to also remember the words of Ruth’s great-grandson: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me” (Ps. 23:4)!

While married and then widowed in Moab; while following a mother-in-law to a strange land; Ruth didn’t know the results of her life’s choices. In like manner, we don’t know how our lives will turn out (Prov. 27:1). However, choosing to be saved (Mk. 16:16), and to be faithful to God through our lives, brings true blessedness. (Rev. 2:10; I Cor. 15:58; I Cor. 16:13-14; Matt. 24:13)

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