

**JUDGES AND RUTH: FACING GROUP APOSTASY AS INDIVIDUALS**  
**Part XIV: Encouraging Directives For INDIVIDUALS Amidst Great GROUP Apostasy**  
**(Ruth 1:1-2:23)**

I. **Introduction**

- A. When the group or nation to which one belongs flounders in spiritual darkness, the **individual** may wonder, "How am I supposed to live uprightly amidst all of this **sin** around me?"
- B. Living in the dark era of the Judges, Ruth exhibited an example for **individuals** on how to remain upright:

II. **Encouraging Directives For INDIVIDUALS Amidst Great GROUP Apostasy, Ruth 1:1-2:23.**

- A. Ruth, the Moabitess, lived in an era of great apostasy, and faced great obstacles to God's blessing, 1:1-22:
  - 1. Ruth came to live in Bethlehem in the apostate era of the Judges when a Levite's mistress from that town was sexually abused to death, and a civil war had erupted in its wake, Ruth 1:1a, 19ff; Jud. 19-21.
  - 2. Also, Ruth's **personal** obstacles to God's blessing due to sin around her were great, Ruth 1:1b-15:
    - a. Ruth came from the Moabites who originated from incest between Lot and a daughter, Gen. 19:30ff.
    - b. That event was influenced by the exposure of that daughter to Sodom's great immorality, a fact that undoubtedly made ungodliness in Ruth's Moabite heritage more tolerable, Gen. 13:7-12; 19:1-26.
    - c. Ruth lived when Israel was under divine discipline with a famine, Ruth 1:1b; Deut. 28:15, 23-24.
    - d. She was wed to a Hebrew living outside of Palestine; hence, she was married to a man who was outside of God's will for him as a Hebrew, Ruth 1:2-4 with Joshua 1:1-4.
    - e. She grieved losing her husband in death as well as remaining childless, a social stigma, Ruth 1:5-9.
    - f. Ruth had the burden of caring for a depressed, widowed mother-in-law, Ruth 1:10-13, 19-21.
    - g. Ruth was left without the encouragement of other relatives to help her with her mother-in-law, 1:15.
- B. Yet, Ruth chose to **support** her mother-in-law and **adopt** her faith in God, Ruth 1:14b, 16-18; 2:1-2:
  - 1. Ruth chose to commit herself unconditionally to her mother-in-law's welfare, Ruth 1:14b, 16-18.
  - 2. She then supported this commitment by risking her own welfare to care for Naomi, Ruth 2:1-2:
    - a. Since the only **upright** way for her to have a livelihood was to take advantage of the Mosaic Law's provisions for gleaning the harvest fields, Ruth gleaned in the fields, 2:1-2 & Lev. 19:9-10; 23:22.
    - b. However, this effort for Ruth meant literally risking her physical welfare: (a) In **Ruth's** day in the **Bethlehem** area, gleaning was **dangerous** for a **single woman** in view of the atrocity that had come upon the Levite's concubine in her era, cf. Judges chs. 19-21. (b) So for her to **glean**, she publicly signaled she had no **male supporters**, and thus left herself vulnerable for mistreatment by vile men who might be tempted to take advantage of her like those who had abused the Levite's concubine.
- C. However, **God rewarded** Ruth's commitment to Naomi and her **faith in Himself** with great blessing:
  - 1. God led Ruth to glean in the field of Boaz, the upright kinsman-redeemer of Naomi, Ruth 2:3-4; 1:2-5.
  - 2. God then led Boaz to notice Ruth's presence as a gleaner, Ruth 2:5-7.
  - 3. This encounter led to God's provision for Ruth's blessing, Ruth 2:8-23: (a) God led Ruth to the right field to glean to maximize her productivity (Ruth 2:8), (b) protection from evil men under Boaz's jurisdiction (2:9a), (c) water so she did not have to cut her production by leaving the field (2:9b), (d) encouragement by Boaz's compliment of Ruth's testimony in trying to care for her mother-in-law (2:10-13), (e) noon meals under Boaz's care (2:14), (f) an easier work assignment through Boaz's oversight (2:14-17), (g) a good atmosphere with her superiors in her work effort (2:15b-16) and (h) the opportunity to edify Naomi, her depressed mother-in-law (2:18-23).

***Lesson:*** *In the midst of APOSTATE conditions affecting so many around her in Israel, Ruth, the alien Moabitess, came under God's edifying oversight (Ruth 2:12) by FAITH in HIM, finding protection, sustenance, a good job, rest, encouragement and achievement in edifying her mother-in-law.*

***Application:*** *When tempted to become DEPRESSED or FEARFUL over the SIN and DEBILITATING EFFECTS of SIN in groups (national, local, etc.) to which we belong, we should heed RUTH'S example: (a) may we stay LOYAL to those to whom we are already committed and who need our help (Naomi), (b) may we TRUST in GOD and (c) take advantage of opportunities for improving our lot (gleaning in accord with the Law's provisions). (d) In the process, God will reward us with blessing!*