

Ruth 1:15-22

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ruth/ruth-1/ruth-115-22/>

Ruth commits to following Naomi wherever she goes and following her God. She returns to Bethlehem with Naomi.

Naomi now finds herself without a husband, and without any sons to care for her. One Moabite daughter-in-law decides to return to her family in Moab while Ruth chooses to remain with her. Ruth states to Naomi *Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me.* This is quite an amazing statement of commitment.

Naomi relented *when she saw that she was determined to go with her.*

Naomi and Ruth completed walking the journey of sixty or so miles from Moab *until they came to Bethlehem.* It seems clear that Bethlehem is a small village because *when they had come to Bethlehem, all the city was stirred because of them.* Two women showing up in town was big news. Although it had been *ten years*, since Naomi's departure, she was still remembered. Again, this indicates the village was small without much change. *The women said, "Is this Naomi?"*

Naomi replied to the question by making a play on the meaning of her name. *She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.* Instead of continuing to go by the name Naomi that means "pleasant," she now wants to be called Mara with the meaning of "bitter."

Naomi does not try to hide her loss. She tells the village women that she *went out full, but the Lord has brought me back empty.* Naomi attributes her calamity to God, saying the *Almighty has afflicted me.*

Naomi chose to return *to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.*

Biblical Text

¹⁵ Then she said, "Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶ But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. ¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me." ¹⁸ When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

¹⁹ So they both went until they came to Bethlehem. And when they had come to Bethlehem, all the city was stirred because of them, and the women said, “Is this Naomi?” ²⁰ She said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. ²¹ I went out full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the Lord has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?”

²² So Naomi returned, and with her Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, who returned from the land of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.