

TELL ORPAH GOODBYE

You can sum up the sordid history of Moab in a few verses:

Genesis 19:36-38 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

MO-AB ... “HER + FATHER” ... “the mother’s father” or “his mother is his father” or “who’s your father?” ... INCEST!

Deuteronomy 23:3-5 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee.

Numbers 25:1-3 And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

Psalm 108:9 Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.

Jeremiah 48:42 And Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the LORD.

Ruth 1:1 Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land.

Judges 21:25 *In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*

Ruth 1:2-3 And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Elimelech Naomi’s husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.

This family traded a famine for a funeral, in fact, for three funerals! There was a famine in the “house of bread” but this was still better than a funeral in the “land of the fatherless”!

Ruth 1:4-5 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

Mahlon = “sick, weak” // Chilion = “pining, consumed” // All that is left of this family is 3 widows and 3 graves in the land of Moab.

Ruth 1:6-7 Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

“I’m returning to the Place of Praise! I’ve heard that God is visiting His people! I’ve heard there is bread in my Father’s House!”

Ruth 1:8-9 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother’s house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

Naomi probably didn’t want Orpah and Ruth going back to Bethlehem with her because they were living proof that she and her husband had permitted their sons to marry women from Moab.

Ruth 1:10-13 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.

Three times Naomi tells them to return! “To go with me means that it will be harder, to go with me means that it will take longer, to go with me means that you will have to change your lives! It will be easier for you if you just stay in Moab!”

Ruth 1:14-15 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

This is where the story turns! "Ruth, look at Orpah. She is going to stay here in Moab where it's easier. She is going to turn back. She will have a husband sooner than you will. She will have an easier life. Why don't you just stay here with her?" But Ruth CLAVE unto her!

Ruth 1:16-18 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: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

Orpah was emotional, but Ruth was fanatical. "I won't go back. I'll tell Orpah goodbye right now, but I'm not leaving your side! I love you, Naomi, but more than that I love the God you serve – and I realize that for God to be loyal to me, I need to be loyal to you! You can't convince me otherwise, so tell Orpah goodbye and let's get going!"

Ruth 1:19-21 So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

Naomi = "pleasant" // Mara = "bitter" // the consequences of sin!

Ruth 1:22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

"Ruth the Moabitess" // "A Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord" // what a picture of God's mercy! // they arrived back home at the beginning of the harvest season // Orpah is never heard of again, Ruth becomes David's great-grandmother!

Matthew 1:5-6 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;