

Choices

by Geneva Brown Smith

“Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.”

Ruth, a young lady reared in Moab, a heathen land had recently suffered one of the most painful and heart wrenching loses known to woman – the death of her husband.

As she looked back on the happy years she had spent, she remembered how Elimelech and Naomi, Israelites from Bethlehem-Judah and parents of her late husband had come to her country Moab to live. In the process of time, Elimelech had died leaving Naomi and two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Ruth and Orpah (also a young lady of Moab) had married these two sons. After about ten years of marriage, both Mahlon and Chilion died. No doubt, Ruth remembered how happy she was on her wedding day, and the ten years she had spent as the wife of Naomi’s son. Her heart must have ached when she realized she was facing an uncertain future without her husband. She knew she had to choose how she would continue to live her life.

Naomi, being a good mother-in-law and wanting what she felt was best for Orpah and Ruth, encouraged them to go back to their families. She was going back to Judah. Orpah, after much persuasion from her mother-in-law, wept and departed for her home.

Ruth, on the other hand, would not allow herself to be persuaded. She loved Naomi and wanted to go back to Judah with her. Serving heathen gods no longer appealed to her. She had seen for herself the character-building influence of Naomi. She knew that Naomi served Jehovah, the living God. How could she go back to the heathenism she had known before? She knew she had to find some way to persuade Naomi to take her to Judah. Somehow, she found the right words – words so profound that God recorded them in His Book for us to read today. “Thy people shall be my people, and Thy God my God.”

This one choice changed the course of Ruth’s life forever. Naomi allowed her to return with her to Bethlehem-Judah. She later married Boaz, a devout Israelite, and became the mother of a son. She also became the great-grandmother of David, king of Israel, and an ancestor of the ruling dynasty in Israel through which Jesus was born (Ruth 1:4).

As we live our lives in this fast-paced society, we are confronted every day with choices. Decision making in our day can become very complicated. Situation

ethics advocates tell us that all things are right according to the situation. We are told by some there is no standard by which to make decisions. Others say that each person decides what is right for himself. 'Round an 'round it goes! Amid these and other conflicting theories, we sometimes become confused. Joshua said, ". . . Choose you this day whom you will serve . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). As young people we must decide where to get an education, and what career we will peruse. We have to make decisions about marriage, family, God, and many other things affecting our lives. What shall we do? What is best? Is this right, or is that right? Ruth chose the "better part." Her one decision put here in the position to become one of the ancestors of Jesus Christ the Savior of the world. How import are our choices today? What do you think?