

WHICH WILL I EXALT? MY REASONING OR GOD'S WILL?

Ruth 1: 1: Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. 2: 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. 3: And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. 4: 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. 5: And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

Elimelech teaches us never to lean to our carnal understanding. Instead, we should obey God's will in his word, even when other ways appear more reasonable.

Bethlehem-Judah was God's house of bread where he promised to meet with his people. It was God's will that around his house his dwell together in unity. They could fellowship together, bear one another's burdens and, most importantly, worship together as one. On the other hand, Moab was the land where God's curse rested. God's will was that his people *not* dwell in Moab away from his house and their brethren. There was no place to worship God in Moab, only idolatry.

Then God sent a test. He sent famine into Bethlehem-Judah while making Moab fruitful. Elimelech knew God's will. But he began to reason by natural sight. How do we reason when we judge by sight rather than faith? It goes like this: "I know it is God's will for me to dwell with his people but it just makes more sense to move to Moab; I know Bethlehem is God's house of bread but my livelihood is in Moab; I know it is God's will for his people to dwell together and to consistently be under the preaching of the gospel but we can go to the house of bread from time to time, we just want be near to bear our brethren's burdens or have them bear ours when we are in need." So Elimelech moved to Moab.

Which of these will God bless? Will God bless us exalting him by trusting that his house is the house of Bread where he is able to provide for us against all carnal reasoning? Or will God bless us exalting our

understanding over his will, exalting our earthly bread over Christ our Bread, choosing to live together with Christ-hating rebels over God's people? The answer is found when we see God arrange his good providence so that what began as Elemilech's temporary "*sojourn*" turned into him staying over ten years in Moab. We see the answer in that God killed Elemilech in Moab. Then as their father taught them by his example, his two sons rebelled against God by marrying Moabite women. Then God killed his two sons leaving Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth with no man to provide, no brethren near to help and, worst of all, no place to worship God. Oh, God saved Naomi and Ruth because they were his elect. But Naomi suffered much bitterness as God removed all the obstacles that were hindering her and brought her back to Bethlehem-Judah.

Now, which will I exalt? My carnal reasoning or God's sovereign will?