

Naomi & Ruth

Selected Studies in Aging – How Did Characters in the Bible Finish in Life?

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“Don’t Let Me Drown in Shallow Water” (Crawford Loritts)

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith “A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!”
Robert Browning – “Rabbi Ben Ezra”

Naomi & Ruth

As I think about the life of Naomi and how she lived her later years, I cannot help but think of a principle that we learn in the Advent story – you cannot tell the end from the beginning. Apart from the Old Testament promises of the Messiah and the angelic announcements of Messiah’s birth, the majestic destiny of Jesus might never be guessed from His humble beginnings and surroundings.

As we read the opening lines of Naomi’s story one might never guess how the story will end. How anyone lives out the final years of life, like Naomi, is learned as we intentionally trust our lives to a sovereign God and live obediently following His hand.

- Naomi’s story begins with incredible hardship.

Now it came about in the days when the judges governed, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab with his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife, Naomi; and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. Now they entered the land of Moab and remained there. Then Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, died; and she was left with her two sons. They took for themselves Moabite women as wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. And they lived there about ten years. Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and the woman was bereft of her two children and her husband (Ruth 1.1-5).

- With the devastation of death of the men in her life, Naomi pleads with her daughter-in-laws to stay in their own land as she plans to return to her homeland. She feels that God has left her desolate and she has no hope.

