

## God's Providence in Ruth

### Introduction:

1. The book of Esther illustrates how:
  - a. God works providentially in the lives of His people
  - b. God cares for and is with His people during times of difficulty
  - c. God's people will ultimately be victorious.
2. We need to be reminded of these great principles on a regular basis.
3. This lesson is a study of God's providence at work in the life of Naomi, one of the main characters in the book of Ruth.

### Discussion:

#### I. THE SETTING

- A. (1:1a) The events recorded in Ruth took place *"when the judges ruled."*
  1. This was a very unsettled period in Israel's history (Judges 2:16-19).
  2. Israel lacked a strong central leader (Judges 21:25).
- B. (1:1b-2) Because of a famine, Elimelech took his family to Moab.
  1. Elimelech's wife was Naomi.
  2. His sons were Mahlon and Chilion.
- C. (1:3-5) In Moab, Elimelech and his sons died.
- D. (1:19-21) Because of her losses, Naomi was "bitter" when she returned to her home.
- E. Even though Naomi suffered greatly, . . .

#### II. GOD'S PROVIDENCE WAS AT WORK

- A. (1:6) God *"had visited his people in giving them bread."*
- B. (1:16-18) God had blessed Naomi with a devoted daughter-in-law, Ruth.
- C. (1:22b) Naomi returned to Bethlehem *"in the beginning of barley harvest."*
  1. Ruth was able to *"glean"* in the field of Boaz (2:1-3).
  2. Naomi was blessed with food to eat (2:17-18).
- D. (4:1-9) Eventually, Boaz redeemed everything that had belonged to Elimelech and his sons.
- E. (4:13-22) Boaz married Ruth, and they had a son who carried on a very special bloodline (Matthew 1:5).
- F. Naomi endured great hardship; however, all things did work together for good in her life (Romans 8:28).
- G. On the basis of this information, let us make . . .

#### III. TWO OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING GOD'S PROVIDENCE

- A. God's providence does not prevent His people from suffering.
  1. Naomi certainly suffered, but God's providence was at work.
  2. When difficulties arise, let us remember:
    - a. that God will not allow His people to be tested above what we are able to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13)
    - b. to look for and count our blessings (James 1:17)
    - c. to cast our burdens upon God (1 Peter 5:7).
- B. God's providence works in conjunction with His revealed Word.
  1. Three of God's laws for the Israelites played prominent roles in the book of Ruth:
    - a. the law of "gleaning" (Leviticus 23:22)
    - b. the law of "redeeming" (Leviticus 25:25-28)
    - c. the law of "performing the part of a kinsman" (Deuteronomy 25:5-10).
  2. God's instructions in His Word are designed to work in conjunction with His providence.
  3. Our response to God's Word will affect His providential working in our lives as well as the lives of other people.