

/Hello, we will have first lecture of book of Ruth. / Our text for today is Ruth 1:1-7.

/Please read verse 1-7./ In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there. .Now Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. .They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband. When she heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

/The writer of the book of Ruth is a prophet Samuel. / And the time which book of Ruth is written is about BC 1050. / When you see the text, written 'In the days when the judges ruled'

/In verse 1, age of judge is from after Joshua died, until before Samuel. / So we call Age of Judges for 300 years from B.C 1400.

/So book of Ruth is written happening which is on the Age of Judges historically. / And it is written that on that time, there was a famine in the land. /Written "there was fame in the land"

/That famine was the one which is very difficult to live for the people./ Israel is the chosen people from God, and they serve God, but why this big famine came to the land?

/It is because the Israelites committed huge sins before God. / Age of Judges were the Dark Ages spiritually. / In the bible, there were two times of Dark Ages spiritually, and one of them was this Age of Judges for 300 years.

/And there was another spiritual Dark Age was 400 years after prophet Malachi died. /They were getting corrupt after their leader died.

/They worshiped idols national widely in religion, / and politically corrupted. / And ethically, the huge sins like adultery was very popular.

/So we could see that even Levi people commits sins without hesitation, / and people like Nazirite also came into sins. / When you look at Judges 21:25, in those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

/This verse shows to us that how Israelites getting corrupt in Age of Judges eventually. / People of the LORD, Israelites are the people which chosen by God.

/They should not live like other gentiles. / But they lived as they saw fit./ We should not live as what we want like Israel people in that time.

/We have to always live fit for the word of God in any circumstance. /And we have to live as His will./ We need to live that God is centered and live for the glory of the LORD.

/But in the Age of Judges, Israel people lived as they want to. That shows to us Israel's corrupt.

/Because of Adam's sin, his descendants being corrupted by sin. / So prophet Jeremiah confessed "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure."

/So if people do what they want to and follow their own hearts, they don't do righteousness, but committing sin.

/So when you see the Age of Judges, they worshiped idols a lot. / They were corrupt religiously and morally. / So as a result, they got punishment by God which is famine.

/In the Old Testament ages, there are 3 ways which God punishes when Israelites commit sins.

/According to the prophet Ezekiel, they are sword, famine, plague.

/"Sword" means war. / When you look into the book of Judges, whenever Israelites commit sins God makes war with neighbor countries and defeat and the neighbor country rules Israel.

/So God is punishing with sword and judging them. / Second, famine. / "Famine" means bad year of harvest and it is like because of grasshopper or famine, or flood. So it is hard to live because no harvest.

/For nowadays, it is not just localized to agriculture, also every economic sides like our work or business. / And "plague" means communicable disease.

/So when you look at the bible, when Israel people keep His law well and live with faith, they got blessing by God. So no war in that time and had peace.

/And also God blessed them economically. / When you look at Deuteronomy 28, it is written 'If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God: You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock--the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.'

/Contrarily when Israel people disobey Him, and worship idols, and leave Him, God will judge them like hand over Israel to enemy country or economical punishment.

/Written, even your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed.

/So therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and dire poverty.

/We see many wars and terrors in this day right? It is the punishment of God. / Specially in this age we are living, whole world having hard time because of economical famine.

/The 1st great economic country U.S.A and 2nd great economic country Japan is now having hard time economically. / Before, Europe countries were rich and powerful, but now they are also having crisis economically.

/This is the punishment of God because people became very wicked so committing sins like Noah's age and Sodom and Gomorrah's age these latter days.

/Not only that, an epidemic is raging in the world. / When you look at Korea and South East Asia countries, one infectious disease called foot and mouth disease is raging.

/When a communicable disease occurs to animals like a pig or a cow, it spreads very fast to all area, so we need to slaughter thousands of them. That is the punishment of God.

/Avian influenza, Influenza viruses, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Ebola virus, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). Like these diseases, many communicable diseases occurs these latter days. And it influences very fast.

/Verse 1 introduces that in the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons. /The name of husband is Elimelech. /And the name of his wife is Naomi.

/First son's name is Mahlon, / and second son's name is Killon. / This family, left Bethlehem when famine came, and went to the Moab.

/"Bethlehem" means "House of bread". / If you stayed at church for several years, you might have thoughts about Bethlehem. / We hear the word Bethlehem around Christmas, and it is the town which Christ has born.

/And also the hometown of the king David which most respected in Judah. /But why Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, not in Jerusalem which is the capital of Israel?

/It is that He was born in Bethlehem in order to save the sprits which is dying for sin. / In the gospel of John 6:35m Jesus said, I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

/People die when he doesn't eat food. / And Jesus came to the Bethlehem, house of bread, as a living bread when our miserable lives are depraved, and our soul was dying.

/So whoever accept Him and believe him gets atonement and get salvation.

/As it is written in Micah 5:2, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. / Do you remember? Where did Maria put when Jesus was born? /It is written that He was laid in manger.

/A manger is a bowl that horse eats its food. / It has deep meaning. / It means that Jesus came to this world, especially Bethlehem which is house of bread to save us which were like an animal.

/Like that, Bethlehem is a land which blessed by God. / And it is promised land. / When you look at the book of Deuteronomy 11:11-12, says the eyes of the LORD your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end.

/And it is written, it is land which took care of by God. / Canaan land was the land which God promised to Abraham, father of the faith, and Isaac and Jacob. And Bethlehem area is blessed land.

/And it is very wrong to leave that land because this promised and blessed land had famine. / And their family went to the Moab land from Bethlehem means that they left God and went to the world

/Bethlehem is blessed land which God promised. / And there is God. / And also there are servants of God. / There is the word of God. / It is the land which took care of.

/What about Moab? / Moab symbolizes the countries in this world. / Temple of God is not existing there. / And of course no servants of God there, / and also no word of God.

/But the family left Bethlehem and went to the land of Moab means left their faith, left God, and left the word of God. / Householder of faith in Elimelech's family is Naomi.

/When you look at the beginning part in the book of Ruth, story unfolds through Naomi and Ruth. / It shows Naomi is a householder of this family symbolically. / Temptation comes to those who are weak in faith every time.

/If then the one who is strong in faith should detain unfaithful demanding firmly. / When unfaithful demanding were came to this family through Elimelech, Naomi couldn't refuse and moved to Moab together.

/Adam, the first person, if he refused when Eve ate the food of knowledge and tempted to Him, that sin wouldn't come into the human race.

/But Adam accepted Eve's request and ate the fruit of knowledge and sin came into the world.

/When you look at the book of Act chapter 5, it is written about how sin came into the Jerusalem which were full of grace before.

/It teaches that Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, they perished while deceiving God's servant. /They said they will offer all when their land is sold, but when they got money after selling their land, they lied and brought only part, so they died.

/They might live if Sapphira refused for fearing God when the temptation came through Ananias.

/But no one didn't stop and they perished together. / In contrary, we can see Job, the person of faith./ When huge temptation came to Job, his wife said to him "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

/And Job scolded his wife and strongly denied. / "You speak as one of the foolish women speak." / So Job got the blessing of double for keeping his faith.

/My beloved people, this truth is very important. / We will get blessing and grace when we deny and refuse temptation by family members or some people from church.

/So what was the result when Naomi, householder of faith, couldn't refuse her husband's request and left Bethlehem and moved to Moab? / Verse 3 says, Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons.

/It is the punishment of God for sin of Naomi which she didn't keep her faith when famine came and she left to Moab.

/When you look at the bible, there is a punishment of God if a Christian didn't keep his faith and betrayed word of God by difficult environment or hardships.

/When you look at Genesis 12:10-20, there was a famine in Abraham's age. / And Abraham left Canaan, promised land, because of no food there and went to Egypt.

/Egypt was originally a big country and also the land is fertile, so no famine in any environment. That's why Abraham went to Egypt for he knew there's food.

/But after all Abraham left faith and left God's promises. / So as a result, he lost his wife to Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

/According to bible Sarah, wife of Abraham was a very beautiful woman. / When wanderers came to Egypt, vassals of Egypt saw Sarah and she was very beautiful. / So vassals brought her to the Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

/Of course God kept Sarah. / He kept Sarah because she has to bear Isaac, and she has to be the ancestor of faith. If He didn't, Abraham might have lost her wife to other guy.

/And to Jonah, when God said "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it", he didn't go for danger so he ran into Tarshish, and was eaten by big fish.

/Jonah got punishment because he went other way, not the way God wanted to. / But there are many opposite cases.

/Some Christians get blessing from God because they kept God's promises and kept their faith when tribulation came.

/Typically, Isaac was. / In Genesis 12, there was fame in Abraham's age, and also in Genesis 26, Isaac's age.

/On that time, Isaac was about to leave to Egypt for living.

/Then God came to Isaac. / God said to Isaac, do not go to the Egypt, and just farming in the land which He pointed, and keep faith.

/At that time, Circumstance was difficult because of bad year for harvest. But Isaac grasped word of God and farmed there. Genesis 26:12. / And as a result, Isaac harvested 100 times and he got blessed.

/Disciples of Jesus and 120 Saints too. / When Jesus was crucified, and resurrected after 3 days, and He showed 40 days for evidence. And when he ascended to the heaven at Mount of Olives, He said do not leave and pray until they get what God promised.

/In that time, Jerusalem has lots of tribulations. / Roman soldiers and Pharisees, Scribes, Elders, High priests were persecuting and threatening disciples of Jesus.

/So some people started to leave Jerusalem. /But 11 disciples of Jesus and 120 saints didn't leave, and prayed. So they received Counselor Holy Spirit in Pentecost.

/These days, lots of Christians leave the environment where they belongs to rather keep the word of God when they had some tribulation like Naomi's family.

/So they leave their family, and leave their home. / And divorce is kind of trend now like leaving husband or wife. / And there are some Christians who leave churches and move to another church when they have some problem while having Christian life.

/We don't get blessing from God when we go to good place nor good environment, God gives us blessing when we keep our faith wherever we stand.

/When do they get blessing? When people are in good environment? No, when you keep your faith wherever you are. When you keep your faith, God help us with blessing, so He gives us blessing.

/When you look at the verse 4-5, when Elemelech died and only Naomi and two sons left, Naomi allowed her sons to get married with Moab women.

/This shows that Naomi didn't realize her sins in the middle of punishment of God, and didn't repent her sins, and struggling in the world.

/In Noah's age, they were perished because they saw the daughters of humans and they were beautiful. So they married any of them they choose.

/Abraham did not send his servant to the place which daughters of gentile people live but sent him Paddan Aram and chose Rebeca, to marry Isaac to faithful person.

/Naomi in the text, her sons got married with gentile people is that she couldn't repent and

/So what is the result?

/And her two sons, Mahlon and Kilion, are died. / This shows that if you don't repent when punishment of God came to you, there will be bigger punishment.

/When you look at Proverbs 29:1, " Whoever remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed-without remedy."

/Naomi should have repented when she got punishment, but she didn't repent and walk into the sins, so that she got bigger punishment by God and eventually, her two sons died.

/In result, Naomi lost her husband and two sons, and only 3 widows left.

/We will finish 1st lesson of book of Ruth here. /Thank you.