

**Transforming Daily**  
**“ . . . a famine in the land . . . ”**  
*Ruth 1:1c.*

What brought to Ruth her husband and in-laws was a famine in the land of Bethlehem, Judah. It was this famine that led Elimelech, Naomi, Mahlon, and Chilion to Moab from Judah in the first place. It is a common practice for the people of any culture to follow the food, jobs or any other necessary material resources for living. They did it in their time and we have done it and are doing it in ours. Often when this takes place, to some extent the visiting family settles in and takes on the present culture's traditions and customs related to holidays, marriage, politics, religion, etc. But why was there a famine in Bethlehem, Judah?

It is not certain why there was a famine in Bethlehem (which ironically means “house of bread”), or how far it extended, probably far and wide. Famine can be caused by natural disaster, and catastrophic events. Famine can be caused by war or tyrannical exploits. Famine can also be caused by God's sovereign will for His divine purpose, in which case, He might use natural disasters, wars or the devastating hand of a tyrannical leader. By whatever means God allowed, arranged, assigned, or appointed the famine that caused this family to journey to Moab, His divine intervention brought Ruth and Boaz together, and that ultimately resulted in the birth of Jesus Christ.

Keep in mind that though the context of this story deals specifically with a natural famine (food and human resources), historically and theologically, there existed a spiritual famine (due to the rebellion and defiance of Israel) as well. It just might have been the case that the spiritual famine led to the natural famine. God's discipline has often taken the form of famines and droughts, wars and captivity, injustices and wrath. All of this because man would rather do his will than His will. I often say that God can give a straight lick with a crooked stick, but why would the believer, the child of God, want Him to?

To avoid a spiritual famine, believers simply need apply the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible study and Scripture memory, soul winning, giving of tithes and special offerings, as well as time and talents (use of spiritual gifts), joyful, Spirit-filled fellowship with other brothers and sisters in Christ (church, and all of its related gatherings), and genuine Spirit led worship of God alone. Is this your practice? Notice I said “believers” simply need apply the spiritual disciplines, not those of the world. The lost are doing just what is expected of them, but are you? We are to be as salt and light in the world and by being so we just might eliminate the prospect of a famine in the land.