



OpenEnglish**Bible**

Ruth

THE BOOK OF

RUTH

Naomi and Ruth

IN THE TIME WHEN THE JUDGES RULED, there was once a famine in the land; and a man from Bethlehem in Judah took his wife and two sons to live in the territory of Moab. His name was Elimelech and his wife's was Naomi, and his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. After they had been living in Moab for some time, Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women named Orpah and Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, Mahlon and Chilion both died, and Naomi was left a childless widow. 1
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So she set out with her daughters-in-law to return from the land of Moab, for she had heard that the LORD had remembered his people and given them food. As they were setting out together on the journey to Judah, Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to the home of your mother. May the LORD be kind to you as you have been kind to the dead and to me. The LORD grant that each of you may find peace and happiness in the house of a new husband." 6
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Then she kissed them; but they began to weep aloud and said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." But Naomi said, "Go back, my daughters; why should you go with me? Can I still bear sons who might become your husbands? Go back, my daughters, go your own way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I should say, "I have hope," even if I should have a husband tonight and should bear sons, would you wait for them until they were grown up? Would you remain single for them? No, my daughters! My heart grieves for you, for the LORD has sent me adversity." Then 10
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14 they again wept aloud, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-
 15 bye, but Ruth stayed with her.

16 Naomi said, "See, your sister-in-law is going back to her own
 17 people and to her own gods; go along with her!" But Ruth an-
 18 swered, "Do not urge me to leave you or to go back, for I will go
 19 where you go, and I will stay wherever you stay; your people will
 20 be my people, and your God my God; I will die where you die, and
 21 be buried there. May the LORD bring a curse upon me, if anything
 22 but death separate you and me." When Naomi saw that Ruth was
 determined to go with her, she ceased urging her to return.

23 So they journeyed on until they came to Bethlehem. Their arrival
 24 stirred the whole town, and the women said, "Is this Naomi?" But
 25 she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara¹, for the
 26 Almighty has given me a bitter lot. I had plenty when I left, but the
 27 LORD has brought me back empty handed. Why should you call me
 28 Naomi, now that the LORD has afflicted me, and the Almighty has
 29 brought misfortune on me?" So Naomi and Ruth returned from
 30 Moab; and they reached Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley
 31 harvest.

In the Fields of Boaz

2 NOW NAOMI WAS RELATED THROUGH HER HUSBAND TO A VERY WEALTHY
 3 MAN of the family of Elimelech named Boaz. Ruth the Moabite
 4 said to Naomi, "Let me now go into the fields and gather leftover
 5 grain behind anyone who will allow me." Naomi said to her, "Go,
 6 my daughter."

7 So she went to glean in the field after the reapers; and it was her
 8 good fortune to glean in that part of the field which belonged to
 9 Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. When Boaz came from
 10 Bethlehem and said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you," they
 11 answered him, "May the LORD bless you." Then Boaz said to his
 12 servant who had charge of the reapers, "Whose girl is this?" The
 13 servant who had charge of the reapers replied, "It is the Moabite girl
 14 who came back with Naomi from the territory of Moab. She asked,
 15 'Let me glean and gather sheaves after the reapers.' So she came and
 16 has continued to work until now and she has not rested a moment
 17 in the field."

¹In Hebrew "Naomi" means "pleasant," and "Mara" means "bitter."

Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field nor leave this place, but stay here with my girls. Watch where the men are reaping and follow the gleaners. I have told the young men not to trouble you. When you are thirsty, go to the jars and drink of that which the young men have drawn."

Then she bowed low and said to him, "Why are you so kind to me, to take interest in me who am a foreigner?" Boaz replied, "I have heard what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you left your father and mother and your native land to come to a people that you did not know before. May the LORD repay you for what you have done, and may you be fully rewarded by the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge." Then she said, "I trust I may please you, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, although I am not really equal to one of your own servants."

At mealtime Boaz said to Ruth, "Come here and eat some of the food and dip your piece of bread in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers; and he passed her the roasted grain, and she ate until she was satisfied and had some left. When she rose to glean, Boaz gave this order to his young men: "Let her glean even among the sheaves and do not disturb her. Also pull out some for her from the bundles and leave for her to glean, and do not find fault with her."

So she gleaned in the field until evening, then beat out that which she had gleaned. It was about a bushel of barley. Then she took it up and went into the city and showed her mother-in-law what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her that which she had left from her meal after she had had enough.

Her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today, and where did you work? A blessing on him who took interest in you!" Then she told her mother-in-law where she had worked, and said, "The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz." Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May the blessing of the LORD rest upon him who has not ceased to show his loving-kindness to the living and to the dead." Naomi also said to her, "The man is a near relation of ours." Ruth the Moabitess added, "He said to me, 'You must keep near my young men until they have completed all my harvest.'" Naomi said to Ruth, "It is best, my daughter, that you should go out with his girls and that no one should find you in another field." So she gleaned with the girls of Boaz until the end of the barley and wheat harvest; but she lived with her mother-

in-law.

Night and morning

3 THEN NAOMI SAID TO HER, "My daughter, should I not seek to secure
2 a home for you where you will be happy and prosperous? Is not
3 Boaz, with whose girls you have been, a relative of ours? This very
4 night he is going to winnow barley on the threshing-floor. So bathe
5 and anoint yourself and put on your best clothes and go down to
6 the threshing-floor; but do not make yourself known to the man
7 until he has finished eating and drinking. Then when he lies down,
8 mark the place where he lies. Go in, uncover his feet, lie down, and
9 then he will tell you what to do." Ruth said to her, "I will do as
10 you say."

11 So she went down to the threshing-floor and did just as her
12 mother-in-law told her. When Boaz had finished eating and drink-
13 ing and was in a happy mood, he went to lie down at the end of the
14 heap of grain. Then Ruth came softly and uncovered his feet and
15 lay down. At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and
16 there was a woman lying at his feet. He said, "Who are you?" She
17 answered, "I am Ruth your servant; spread your cloak over your
18 servant, for you are a near relative." He said, "May you be blest by
19 the LORD, my daughter; for you have shown me greater favor now
20 than at first, for you have not followed young men, whether poor
21 or rich. My daughter, have no fear; I will do for you all that you ask;
22 for all my townsmen know that you are a virtuous woman. Now it
23 is true that I am a near relative; yet there is one nearer than I. Stay
24 here tonight, and then in the morning, if he will perform for you the
25 duty of a kinsman, well; let him do it. But if he will not perform for
26 you the duty of a kinsman, then as surely as the LORD lives, I will do
27 it for you. Lie down until morning."

28 So she lay at his feet until morning, but rose before any one
29 could recognize her, for Boaz said, "Let it not be known that a
30 woman came to the threshing-floor." He also said, "Bring the cloak
31 which you have on and hold it." So she held it while he poured into
32 it six measures of barley and laid it on her shoulders. Then he went
33 into the city.

34 When Ruth came to her mother-in-law, Naomi said, "Is it you,
35 my daughter?" Then Ruth told Naomi all that the man had done for

her. She said, "He gave me these six measures of barley; for he said, 'Do not go to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'" Naomi said, "Wait quietly, my daughter. Until you know how the affair will turn out, for the man will not rest unless he settles it all today." 17 18

Then Boaz went up to the gate and sat down. Just then the near kinsman of whom Boaz had spoken came along; to him he said, "Hello, So-and-so (calling him by name), come here and sit down." So he stopped and sat down. Boaz also took ten of the town elders and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. 4 2

Then he said to the near relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is offering for sale the piece of land which belonged to our relative Elimelech, and I thought that I would lay the matter before you, suggesting that you buy it in the presence of these men who sit here and of the elders of my people. If you will buy it and so keep it in the possession of the family, do so; but if not; then tell me, so that I may know; for no one but you has the right to buy it, and I am next to you." He said, "I will buy it." 3 4

Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from Naomi, you must also marry Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the dead, in order to preserve the name of the dead in connection with his inheritance. The near relative said, "I cannot buy it for myself without spoiling my own inheritance. You take my right of buying it as a relative, for I cannot do so." 5 6

Now this was formerly the custom in Israel: to make valid anything relating to a matter of redemption or exchange, a man drew off his shoe and gave it to the other man; and this was the way contracts were attested in Israel. So when the near relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," Boaz drew off the man's shoe. 7 8

Then Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, "You are witnesses at this time that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's from Naomi. Moreover I have secured Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, to be my wife, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in connection with his inheritance, so that his name will not disappear from among his relatives and from the household where he lived. You are witnesses this day." 9 10

Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built the house of Israel so worthily in Ephrata, and make you also famous in Bethlehem. From the children whom the LORD will give you by this 11 12

young woman may your household become like the household of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah."

13 So Boaz married Ruth, and she became his wife; and the LORD
14 gave to her a son. Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the
15 LORD who has not left you at this time without a near relative, and
 may his name be famous in Israel. This child will restore your vigor
 and nourish you in your old age; for your daughter-in-law who
 loves you, who is worth more to you than seven sons, has borne a
 son to Boaz!"

16 So Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him as if he
17 was her own. The women of the neighborhood gave him a name,
 saying, "A son is born to Naomi!" They named him Obed; he
 became the father of Jesse, who was the father of David.

Genealogy

18 This is the genealogy of Perez:
 Perez was the father of Hezron,
19 Hezron of Ram,
 Ram of Amminadab,
20 Amminidab of Nashon,
 Nashon of Salmon,
21 Salmon of Boaz,
 Boaz of Obed,
22 Obed of Jesse,
 Jesse of David.

