

Ruth

Famine in Judah

1 Long ago, during the time the judges* ruled, there was a famine* in the land, and a man named Elimelech left the town of Bethlehem in Judah. He, his wife, and his two sons moved to the country of Moab.* **2**The man's wife was named Naomi, and his two sons were named Mahlon and Kilion. They were from the Ephrathah family of Bethlehem in Judah. The family traveled to the hill country of Moab and stayed there.

3Later, Naomi's husband, Elimelech, died, so only Naomi and her two sons were left. **4**Her sons married women from the country of Moab. One wife's name was Orpah, and the other wife's name was Ruth. They lived in Moab about ten years; **5**then Mahlon and Kilion also died. So Naomi was left alone without her husband or her two sons.

Naomi Goes Home

6While Naomi was in the country of Moab, she heard that the LORD had helped his people. He had given food to his people in Judah. So Naomi decided to leave the hill country of Moab and go back home. Her daughters-in-law also decided to go with her. **7**They left the place where they had been living and started walking back to the land of Judah.

8Then Naomi told her daughters-in-law, "Each of you should go back home to your mother. You have been very kind to me and my sons who are now dead. So I pray that the LORD will be just as kind to you. **9**I pray that he helps each of you find a husband and a good home." Naomi kissed her daughters-in-law, and they all started crying.

10Then the daughters said, "But we want to come with you and go to your family."

11But Naomi said, "No, daughters, go back to your own homes. Why should you go with me? I can't have any more sons to be your husbands. **12**Go back home. I am too old to have a new husband. Even if I thought I could be married again, I could not help you. If I became pregnant tonight and had two sons, **13**you would have to wait until they grew to become men before you could marry them. I cannot make you wait that long for husbands. That would make me very sad. And I am already sad enough—the LORD has done many things to me!"

14So again they cried very much. Then Orpah kissed Naomi goodbye, but Ruth

hugged her and stayed.

15Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her own people and her own gods. You should do the same."

16But Ruth said, "Don't force me to leave you! Don't force me to go back to my own people. Let me go with you. Wherever you go, I will go. Wherever you sleep, I will sleep. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God. **17**Where you die, I will die, and that is where I will be buried. I ask the LORD to punish me if I don't keep this promise: Only death will separate us."^a

The Homecoming

18Naomi saw that Ruth wanted very much to go with her. So Naomi stopped arguing with her. **19**Naomi and Ruth traveled until they came to the town of Bethlehem. When the two women entered Bethlehem, all the people were very excited. They said, "Is this Naomi?"

20But Naomi told the people, "Don't call me Naomi^b; call me Marah.^c Use this name because God All-Powerful has made my life very sad. **21**I had everything I wanted when I left, but now, the LORD brings me home with nothing. The LORD has made me sad, so why should you call me 'Happy'^d? God All-Powerful has given much trouble to me."

22So Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth, the Moabite, came back from the hill country of Moab. These two women came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Ruth Meets Boaz

2 There was a rich man named Boaz living in Bethlehem. Boaz was one of Naomi's close relatives^e from Elimelech's family.

2One day Ruth, the Moabite, said to Naomi, "I think I will go to the fields. Maybe I can find someone who will be kind to me and let me

^a**1:17** I ask ... *separate us* Literally, "May the LORD do this to me, and even more, unless death separates us!"

^b**1:20** *Naomi* This name means "Happy" or "Pleasant."

^c**1:20** *Marah* This name means "Bitter" or "Sad."

^d**1:21** *Happy* This is the name Naomi.

^e**2:1** *close relatives* If a man died without children, one of his close relatives would take the dead man's wife so that she could have children. He would care for this family, but this family and their property would not belong to him. They would all be in the dead man's name.

gather the grain they leave in their field.”

Naomi said, “Fine, daughter, go ahead.”

³So Ruth went to the fields. She followed the workers who were cutting the grain and gathered the grain that was left.^a It happened that part of the field belonged to Boaz, the man from Elimelech’s family.

⁴Later, Boaz came to the field from Bethlehem and greeted his workers. He said, “The LORD be with you!”

And the workers answered, “And may the LORD bless you!”

⁵Then Boaz spoke to his servant who was in charge of the workers. He asked, “Whose girl is that?”

⁶The servant answered, “She is the Moabite woman who came with Naomi from the country of Moab. ⁷She came early this morning and asked me if she could follow the workers and gather the grain that was left on the ground. She rested only a short time in that shelter.”^b

⁸Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen, child. Stay here in my field to gather grain for yourself. There is no need for you to go to any other field. Continue following behind my women workers. ⁹Watch to see which fields they go into to cut the grain and follow them. I have warned the young men not to bother you. When you are thirsty, go and drink from the same water jug my men drink from.”

¹⁰Then Ruth bowed very low to the ground. She said to Boaz, “I am a foreigner, so I am surprised you even noticed me.”

¹¹Boaz answered her, “I know about all the help you have given to your mother-in-law Naomi. I know you helped her even after your husband died. And I know that you left your father and mother and your own country and came here to this country. You did not know anyone from this country, but you came here with Naomi. ¹²The LORD will reward you for all the good things you have done. The LORD, the God of Israel, will pay you in full. You have come to him for safety,^c and he will protect you.”

¹³Then Ruth said, “I hope I can continue to please you, sir. You are very kind. I am only a servant and not even one of your own servants. But you have said kind words to me and comforted me.”

¹⁴At mealtime, Boaz told Ruth, “Come and eat some of our bread. Here, dip your bread in our vinegar.”

So Ruth sat down with the workers. Boaz gave her some roasted grain. Ruth ate until she was full, and there was some food left.

¹⁵Then Ruth got up and went back to work.

^a2:3 There was a law that a farmer must leave some grain in his field during harvest, so poor people and travelers could find something to eat. See Lev. 19:9; 23:22.

^b2:7 *She ... shelter* Or “That is her house over there.”

^c2:12 *You have ... for safety* Literally, “You have come under his wings for safety.”

Then Boaz told his servants, “Let Ruth gather even around the piles of grain. Don’t stop her. ¹⁶And make her work easier by dropping some full heads of grain for her. Let her gather that grain. Don’t tell her to stop.”

Naomi Hears About Boaz

¹⁷Ruth worked in the fields until evening. Then she separated the grain from the chaff.* There was about one-half bushel^d of barley. ¹⁸Ruth carried the grain into town to show her mother-in-law what she had gathered. She also gave her the food that was left from lunch.

¹⁹Her mother-in-law asked her, “Where did you gather all this grain? Where did you work? Bless the man who noticed you.”

Then Ruth told her who she had worked with. She said, “The man I worked with today is a man named Boaz.”

²⁰Naomi told her daughter-in-law, “LORD bless him! He has continued showing his kindness to the living as well as the dead.” Then Naomi told her daughter-in-law, “Boaz is one of our relatives. He is one of our protectors.”^e

²¹Then Ruth said, “Boaz also told me to come back and continue working. He said that I should work closely with his servants until the harvest is finished.”

²²Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth, “It is good for you to continue working with his women servants. If you work in another field, some man might hurt you.”

²³So Ruth continued working closely with the women servants of Boaz. She gathered grain until the barley harvest was finished. She also worked there through the end of the wheat harvest. Ruth continued living with her mother-in-law Naomi.

The Threshing Floor

3¹Then Naomi, Ruth’s mother-in-law, said to her, “My daughter, maybe I should find a husband and a good home for you. That would be good for you. ²Boaz is our close relative.^f You worked with his women servants. Tonight he will be working at the threshing* floor. ³Go wash yourself and get dressed. Put on a nice dress, and go down to the threshing floor. But don’t let Boaz see you until he has finished eating his dinner. ⁴After he eats, he will lie down to rest. Watch him so that you will know where he lies down. Go

^d2:17 *one-half bushel* Literally, “one ephah” (22 l).

^e2:20 *protectors* Or “redeemers,” those who cared for and protected the family of a dead relative.

Often they bought back (redeemed) the poor relatives from slavery, making them free again.

^f3:2 *close relative, protector* A close relative who could marry Ruth so that she could have children. This man would care for this family, but this family and their property would not belong to him. They would belong to Ruth’s dead husband. Also in 3:9, 12; 4:1, 3, 6.

there and lift the cover off his feet.^a Then lie down there with Boaz. He will tell you what you should do about marriage.”

⁵Then Ruth answered, “I will do what you say.”

⁶So Ruth went down to the threshing floor and did everything that her mother-in-law told her to do. ⁷After eating and drinking, Boaz was very satisfied. He went to lie down near the pile of grain. Then Ruth went to him very quietly and lifted the cover from his feet and lay down by his feet.

⁸About midnight, Boaz rolled over in his sleep and woke up. He was very surprised. There was a woman lying near his feet. ⁹Boaz said, “Who are you?”

She said, “I am Ruth, your servant girl. Spread your cover over me.^b You are my protector.”

¹⁰Then Boaz said, “May the LORD bless you, young woman. You have been very kind to me. Your kindness to me is greater than the kindness you showed to Naomi in the beginning. You could have looked for a young man to marry, rich or poor. But you did not. ¹¹Now, young woman, don’t be afraid. I will do what you ask. All the people in our town know that you are a very good woman. ¹²And it is true, I am a close relative. But there is a man who is a closer relative to you than I am. ¹³Stay here tonight. In the morning we will see if he will help^c you. If he decides to help you, that is fine. If he refuses to help, I promise, as the LORD lives, I will marry you and buy back Elimelech’s land for you.^d So lie here until morning.”

¹⁴So Ruth lay near Boaz’s feet until morning. She got up while it was still dark, before it was light enough for people to recognize each other.

Boaz said to her, “We will keep it a secret that you came here to me last night.” ¹⁵Then he said, “Bring me your coat. Now, hold it open.”

So Ruth held her coat open, and Boaz measured out about a bushel of barley^e as a gift to Naomi, her mother-in-law. Boaz then wrapped it in Ruth’s coat, and put it on her back. Then he went to the city.

¹⁶Ruth went to the home of her mother-in-law, Naomi. Naomi went to the door and asked, “Who’s there?”

Ruth went in telling Naomi everything that

Boaz did for her. ¹⁷She said, “Boaz gave me this barley as a gift for you. He said that I must not go home without bringing a gift for you.”

¹⁸Naomi said, “Daughter, be patient until we hear what happens. Boaz will not rest until he has finished doing what he should do. We will know what will happen before the day is ended.”

Boaz and the Other Relative

4¹Boaz went to the place where people gather near the city gates. He sat there until the close relative Boaz had mentioned passed by. Boaz called to him, “Come here, friend. Sit here.”

²Boaz gathered ten of the elders* of the city. He told them, “Sit here!” So they sat down.

³Then Boaz spoke to the close relative. He said, “Naomi came back from the hill country of Moab. She is selling the land^f that belonged to our relative Elimelech. ⁴I decided to tell you about this in front of the people living here and in front of the elders of my people. If you want to buy back the land, buy it. If you don’t want to redeem the land, tell me. I know that I am the next one after you who can redeem the land. If you don’t buy the land back, I will.”

⁵Then Boaz said, “If you buy the land from Naomi, you also get the dead man’s wife, Ruth, the Moabite woman, and the first child will get the land. That way, the land will stay in the dead man’s family.”

⁶The close relative answered, “I cannot buy back the land. That land should belong to me, but I cannot buy it. If I do, I might lose my own land. So you can buy the land.” ⁷(Long ago in Israel, when people bought or redeemed property, one person took off a sandal and gave it to the other person. This was their proof of purchase.) ⁸So the close relative said to Boaz, “Buy the land.” And then the close relative took off his sandal and gave it to Boaz.⁹

⁹Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses today that I am buying from Naomi everything that belonged to Elimelech, Kilion, and Mahlon. ¹⁰I am also taking Ruth to be my wife. I am doing this so that the dead man’s property will stay with his family. This way, the dead man’s name will not be separated from his family and his land. You are witnesses this day.”

¹¹So all the people and elders that were near the city gates were witnesses. They said,

“May the LORD make this woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah who built the house of Israel.^h

^f4:3 *She is selling the land* Or “She has sold the land.”

^g4:8 *and gave it to Boaz* This is from the ancient Greek version.

^h4:11 *built the house of Israel* The Hebrew word “built” is like the word meaning “gave birth to sons.”

^a3:4 *lift the cover off his feet* Literally, “uncover his legs.” This showed that Ruth was asking Boaz to be her protector.

^b3:9 *Spread your cover over me* Or “Spread your wing over me.” This showed that Ruth was asking for help and protection. See Ruth 2:12.

^c3:13 *help* Or “redeem.” This meant the close relative would care for and protect the dead man’s family and property, but that property would not be his.

^d3:13 *I will marry ... you* Literally, “I will redeem you.”

^e3:15 *bushel of barley* Literally, “six measures_J of barley.”

Become powerful in Ephrathah!^a
Be famous in Bethlehem!

- ¹² Tamar gave birth to Judah's son Perez.^b
And his family became great.
In the same way may the LORD give you
many children through Ruth,
and may your family be great like his."

¹³ So Boaz married Ruth. The LORD allowed
Ruth to become pregnant, and she had a son.

¹⁴ The women told Naomi,

"Praise the LORD who gave you this child.^c
He will become famous in Israel.

- ¹⁵ He will make you alive again
and care for you in your old age.
Your daughter-in-law made it happen.
She bore this child for you.

^a4:11 *Ephrathah* Another name for Bethlehem.

^b4:12 *Perez* One of Boaz's ancestors.

^c4:14 *child* Literally, "protector" or "redeemer." This might refer to Boaz, or the women might have used this name for the baby because he would be the one to care for Naomi and her family and to carry on the name of Elimelech.

She loves you,
and she is better for you than seven
sons."

¹⁶ Naomi took the boy, held him in her arms, and cared for him. ¹⁷ The neighbors gave the boy his name. These women said, "Naomi has a son now!"^d They named him Obed. Obed was the father of Jesse, and Jesse was the father of David.*

Ruth and Boaz's Family

¹⁸ This is the family history of Perez:

- Perez was the father of Hezron.
¹⁹ Hezron was the father of Ram.
Ram was the father of Amminadab.
²⁰ Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.
Nahshon was the father of Salmon.
²¹ Salmon was the father of Boaz.
Boaz was the father of Obed.
²² Obed was the father of Jesse.
Jesse was the father of David.

^d4:17 *Naomi ... now* Literally, "A son was born for Naomi."

1 Samuel

Elkanah's Family Worships at Shiloh

1 There was a man named Elkanah from the Zuph family who lived in Ramah in the hill country of Ephraim. Elkanah was the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph from the tribe of Ephraim.

² Elkanah had two wives. One wife was named Hannah and the other wife was named Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah did not.

³ Every year Elkanah left his town of Ramah and went up to Shiloh. He worshiped the LORD All-Powerful at Shiloh and offered sacrifices* to the Lord there. Shiloh was where Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, served as priests of the LORD. ⁴ Whenever Elkanah offered his sacrifices, he always gave one share of the food to his wife Peninnah and a share of the food to each of Peninnah's children. ⁵ Elkanah always gave an equal share^e of the food to Hannah. He did this because he loved her very much, even though the LORD had not let Hannah have any children.

^e1:5 *equal share* Or "double share."

Peninnah Upsets Hannah

⁶ Peninnah always upset Hannah and made her feel bad because the LORD had not made her able to have children. ⁷ This happened every year when their family went to the LORD's house at Shiloh. Peninnah would upset Hannah so much that she would begin to cry and would not eat anything. One year when this happened, ⁸ her husband Elkanah said to her, "Hannah, why are you crying? Why won't you eat? Why are you so sad? You have me. Isn't that better than having even ten sons?"

Hannah's Prayer

⁹ After eating and drinking, Hannah quietly got up and went to pray to the Lord.^f Eli the priest was sitting on a chair near the door of the LORD's Holy Building.^g ¹⁰ Hannah was so sad that she cried the whole time she was praying to the LORD. ¹¹ She made a special promise to God and said, "LORD All-Powerful, you can see how sad I am. Remember me.

^f1:9 *went to pray to the Lord* This is from the ancient Greek version.

^g1:9 *Holy Building* This could mean the Holy Tent at Shiloh where people went to worship the Lord or a larger area where they put the Holy Tent.

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