

# RUTH

## Naomi and Ruth

**1**<sup>1</sup>LONG AGO, IN THE TIME OF THE JUDGES, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the Moabite country with his wife and his two sons. **2**The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They arrived in the Moabite country and there they stayed.

**3**Elimelech Naomi's husband died, so that she was left with her two sons. **4**These sons married Moabite women, one of whom was called Orpah and the other Ruth. They had lived there about ten years, **5**when both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was bereaved of her two sons as well as of her husband. **6**Thereupon she set out with her two daughters-in-law to return home, because she had heard while still in the Moabite country that the LORD had cared for his people and given them food. **7**So with her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living, and took the road home to Judah. **8**Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go back, both of you, to your mothers' homes. May the LORD keep faith with you, as you have kept faith with the dead and with me; **9**and may he grant each of you security in the home of a new husband.' She kissed them and they wept aloud. **10**Then they said to her, 'We will return with you to your own people.' **11**But Naomi said, 'Go back, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Am I likely to bear any more sons to be husbands for you? **12**Go back, my daughters, go. I am too old to marry again. But even if I could say that I had hope of a child, if I were to marry this night and if I were to bear sons, **13**would you then wait until they grew up? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, no, my daughters, my lot is more bitter than yours, because the LORD has been against me. **14**At this they wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and returned to her people, but Ruth clung to her.

**15**'You see,' said Naomi, 'your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods [*Or god*], go back with her.' **16**'Do not urge me to go back and desert you', Ruth answered. 'Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. **17**Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. I swear a solemn oath before the LORD your God: nothing but [*I swear ... nothing but: or The LORD your God do so to me and more if*] death shall divide us.' **18**When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her she said no more, **19**and the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was in great excitement about them, and the women said, 'Can this be Naomi?' **20**'Do not call me Naomi [*That is Pleasure*], she said, 'call me Mara [*That is Bitter*], for it is a bitter lot that the Almighty has sent me. **21**I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi? The LORD has pronounced against me; the Almighty has brought disaster on me.' **22**This is how Naomi's daughter-in-law, Ruth the Moabitess, returned with her from the Moabite country. The barley harvest was beginning when they arrived in Bethlehem.

## Ruth and Boaz

**2**<sup>1</sup>NOW NAOMI HAD A KINSMAN on her husband's side, a well-to-do man of the family of Elimelech, his name was Boaz. <sup>2</sup>Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'May I go out to the cornfields and glean behind anyone who will grant me that favour?' 'Yes, go, my daughter', she replied. <sup>3</sup>Ruth went gleaning in the fields behind the reapers. As it happened, she was in that strip of the fields which belonged to Boaz of Elimelech's family, <sup>4</sup>and there was Boaz coming out from Bethlehem. He greeted the reapers, saying, 'The LORD be with you'; and they replied, 'The LORD bless you.' <sup>5</sup>Then he asked his servant in charge of the reapers, 'Whose girl is this?' <sup>6</sup>'She is a Moabite girl', the servant answered, 'who has just come back with Naomi from the Moabite country. <sup>7</sup>She asked if she might glean and gather among the swathes behind the reapers. She came and has been on her feet with hardly a moment's rest [*prob. rdg, Heb adds in the house*] from daybreak till now.' <sup>8</sup>Then Boaz said to Ruth, 'Listen to me, my daughter: do not go and glean in any other field, and do not look any further, but keep close to my girls. <sup>9</sup>Watch where the men reap, and follow the gleaners; I have given them orders not to molest you. If you are thirsty, go and drink from the jars the men have filled.' <sup>10</sup>She fell prostrate before him and said, 'Why are you so kind as to take notice of me when I am only a foreigner?' <sup>11</sup>Boaz answered, 'They have told me all that you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband's death, how you left your father and mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people you did not know before. <sup>12</sup>The LORD reward your deed; may the LORD the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge, give you all that you deserve.' <sup>13</sup>'Indeed, sir,' she said, 'you have eased my mind and spoken kindly to me; may I ask you as a favour not to treat me only as one of your slave-girls? [*may I ... slave-girls?: or if you please, treat me as one of your slave-girls*]' <sup>14</sup>When meal-time came round, Boaz said to her, 'Come here and have something to eat, and dip your bread into the sour wine.' So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and still had some left over. <sup>15</sup>When she got up to glean, Boaz gave the men orders. 'She', he said, 'may glean even among the sheaves; do not scold her. <sup>16</sup>Or you may even pull out some corn from the bundles and leave it for her to glean, without reproving her.'

<sup>17</sup>So Ruth gleaned in the field till evening, and when she beat out what she had gleaned, it came to about a bushel of barley. <sup>18</sup>She took it up and went into the town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gleaned. Then Ruth brought out what she had saved from her meal and gave it to her. <sup>19</sup>Her mother-in-law asked her, 'Where did you glean today? Which way did you go? Blessings on the man who kindly took notice of you.' So she told her mother-in-law whom she had been working with. 'The man with whom I worked today', she said, 'is called Boaz.' <sup>20</sup>'Blessings on him from the LORD', said Naomi. 'The LORD has kept faith with the living and the dead. For this man is related to us and is our next-of-kin.' <sup>21</sup>'And what is more,' said Ruth the Moabitess, 'he told me to stay close to his men until they had finished all his harvest.' <sup>22</sup>'It is best for you, my daughter,' Naomi answered, 'to go out with his girls; let no one catch you in another field.' <sup>23</sup>So she kept close to his girls, gleaning with them till the end of both barley and wheat harvests; but she lived with her mother-in-law.

**3**<sup>1</sup>One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, 'My daughter, I want to see you happily settled. <sup>2</sup>Now there is our kinsman Boaz; you were with his girls. Tonight he is winnowing barley at his threshing-floor. <sup>3</sup>Wash and anoint yourself, put on your cloak and go down to the threshing-floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. <sup>4</sup>But when he lies down, take note of the place where he lies. Then go in, turn back the covering at his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do.' <sup>5</sup>'I will do whatever you tell me', Ruth answered. <sup>6</sup>So she went down to the threshing-floor and did exactly as her mother-in-law had told her. <sup>7</sup>When Boaz had eaten and drunk, he felt at peace with the world and went to lie down at the far end of the heap of grain. She came in quietly, turned back the covering at his feet and lay down. <sup>8</sup>About midnight something disturbed the man as he slept; he turned over and, lo and behold, there was a woman lying at his feet. <sup>9</sup>'Who are you?' he asked. 'I am your servant, Ruth', she replied. 'Now spread your skirt over your servant, because you are my next-of-kin.' <sup>10</sup>He said, 'The LORD has blessed you, my daughter. This last proof of your loyalty is greater than the first; you have not sought after any young man, rich or poor. <sup>11</sup>Set your mind at rest, my daughter. I will do whatever you ask; for, as the whole neighbourhood knows, you are a capable woman. <sup>12</sup>Are you sure that I am the next-of-kin? There is a kinsman even closer than I. <sup>13</sup>Spend the night here and then in the morning, if he is willing to act as your next-of-kin, well and good; but if he is not willing, I will do so; I swear it by the LORD. Now lie down till morning.' <sup>14</sup>So she lay at his feet till morning, but rose before one man could recognize another; and he said, 'It must not be known that a woman has been to the threshing-floor.' <sup>15</sup>Then he said, 'Bring me the cloak you have on, and hold it out.' So she held it out, and he put in six measures of barley and lifted it on her back, and she went to the town. <sup>16</sup>When she came to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, 'How did things go with you, my daughter?' Ruth told her all that the man had done for her. <sup>17</sup>'He gave me these six measures of barley,' she said; 'he would not let me come home to my mother-in-law empty-handed.' <sup>18</sup>Naomi answered, 'Wait, my daughter, until you see what will come of it. He will not rest until he has settled the matter today.'

**4**<sup>1</sup>Now Boaz had gone up to the city gate, and was sitting there; and, after a time, the next-of-kin of whom he had spoken passed by. 'Here,' he cried, calling him by name, 'come and sit down.' He came and sat down. <sup>2</sup>Then Boaz stopped ten elders of the town, and asked them to sit there, and they did so. <sup>3</sup>Then he said to the next-of-kin, 'You will remember the strip of land that belonged to our brother Elimelech. Naomi has returned from the Moabite country and is selling it. <sup>4</sup>I promised to open the matter with you, to ask you to acquire it in the presence of those who sit here, in the presence of the elders of my people. If you are going to do your duty as next-of-kin, then do so, but if not, someone must do it. So tell me, and then I shall know; for I come after you as next-of-kin.' He answered, 'I will act as next-of-kin.' <sup>5</sup>Then Boaz said, 'On the day when you acquire the field from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the dead man's wife, so as to perpetuate the name of the dead man with his patrimony.' <sup>6</sup>Thereupon the next-of-kin said, 'I cannot act myself, for I should risk losing my own patrimony. You must therefore do my duty as next-of-kin. I cannot act.'

<sup>7</sup>Now in those old days, when property was redeemed or exchanged, it was the custom

for a man to pull off his sandal and give it to the other party. This was the form of attestation in Israel. <sup>8</sup>So the next-of-kin said to Boaz, 'Acquire it for yourself', and pulled off his sandal. <sup>9</sup>Then Boaz declared to the elders and all the people, 'You are witnesses today that I have acquired from Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Mahlon and Chilion; <sup>10</sup>and, further, that I have myself acquired Ruth the Moabitess, wife of Mahlon, to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the deceased with his patrimony, so that his name may not be missing among his kindred and at the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day.' <sup>11</sup>Then the elders and all who were at the gate said, 'We are witnesses. May the LORD make this woman, who has come to your home, like Rachel and Leah, the two who built up the house of Israel. May you do great things in Ephrathah and keep a name alive in Bethlehem. <sup>12</sup>May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring the LORD will give you by this girl.'

<sup>13</sup>So Boaz took Ruth and made her his wife. When they came together, the LORD caused her to conceive and she bore Boaz a son. <sup>14</sup>Then the women said to Naomi, 'Blessed be the LORD today, for he has not left you without a next-of-kin. May the dead man's name be kept alive in Israel. <sup>15</sup>The child will give you new life and cherish you in your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who has proved better to you than seven sons, has borne him.' <sup>16</sup>Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap and became his nurse. <sup>17</sup>Her neighbours gave him a name: 'Naomi has a son,' they said; 'we will call him Obed.' He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

<sup>18</sup>THIS IS THE GENEALOGY OF PEREZ: Perez was the father of Hezron, <sup>19</sup>Hezron of Ram, Ram of Amminadab, <sup>20</sup>Amminadab of Nahshon, Nahshon of Salmon, <sup>21</sup>Salmon of Boaz, Boaz of Obed, <sup>22</sup>Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of David.