

## **Book of Ruth**

### **Chapters 1-2**

During the time of the judges, a famine struck the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem took his wife and two sons to live in the country of Moab. In a span of 10 years in Moab, the man died and his wife, Naomi, was left with her two sons. Her sons took Moabite wives but then they too died. And Naomi was left alone without her husband or her sons.

When Naomi learned that the famine had ended, she decided to return to Bethlehem. Early in the journey, she turned to her daughters-in-law and said, “Go back each of you to your mother’s house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with me. The Lord grant that you may find security each of you in the house of your husband.”

Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. They said to her, “No, we will return with you to your people”

But Naomi said, “Turn back my daughters, why will you go with me? I have no more sons to become your husbands. Even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, would you wait until they were grown. No, it has been far more bitter for me than for you because the hand of the Lord has turned against me.

Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and left, but Ruth clung to Naomi.

Naomi said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; follow her and leave me.”

But Ruth answered her:

Do not ask me to leave you or to turn back from following you.

Where you go, I will go.

Where you live, I will live.

Your people shall be my people

And your God shall be my God

Where you die, I will die

And there I will be buried.

Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said no more and they continued their journey to Bethlehem.

When they arrived, the whole town was stirred and the women said, “Is this Naomi?”

But she answered, “Call me no longer Naomi; call me Mara

For the Lord has dealt bitterly with me.

I left here full but the Lord has brought me back empty.

Why call me Naomi when the Lord has dealt harshly with me.

The Almighty has brought calamity upon me.

So, Naomi and Ruth established their home in at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Life was difficult for the women, so Naomi sent Ruth to the field of a kinsman named Boaz to glean behind the reapers among the ears of grain.

When Boaz came to his fields, he asked his servant, “To whom does this the young woman belong?”

She is the Moabite who returned with Naomi. She has been on her feet since early this morning without even resting for a moment.”

Boaz spoke to Ruth, “My daughter, do not go to glean in any other field or leave this one. Keep close to my young women. I have ordered my men not to bother you. If you grow thirsty, go to the vessels and drink.”

She fell before Boaz and said, “Why have I found favor in your sight when I am a foreigner?”

Boaz answered, “I have heard of all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband. Of how you have left your father and mother and your native land to come to a people that you didn’t know. May the Lord reward you for your deeds, and may you live under the wings of the God of Israel to whom you have come for refuge.”

Ruth thanked Boaz. At mealtime he said to her, “Come here and eat some of this bread.” So she sat among the reapers and he heaped up for her some of the parched grain. She ate until she was satisfied and saved the rest to bring to Naomi.

Boaz instructed his men to pull out handfuls from their bundles for her and to leave extra grain for her to reap.

That evening Ruth returned home with all she had gleaned and gave Naomi the rest of her meal. Naomi was amazed by all of this and Ruth told her about the kindness of Boaz.

Naomi responded, “The man is a relative of ours. Stay in his field as he has said. You will be safe there.”

So Ruth continued to work with the servant girls of Boaz throughout the barley harvest and the wheat harvest.