

**This book contains the account
of Ruth, a non-Israeli woman
who became an Israeli. We call
this book
Ruth**

Ruth declared she would stay with Naomi

¹ During the time before kings ruled Israel, ◀there was a famine/the people there had nothing to eat▶. There was a man who lived there whose name was Elimelech. His wife's name was Naomi, and his sons' names were Mahlon and Chilion. They were all from Bethlehem town, from the Ephrath clan in Judah region. ² Because of the famine, they left Bethlehem and went east to live for a while in Moab region.

³ While they were there, Elimelech died, and Naomi had only her two sons with her. ⁴ They married women from Moab. One of them was named Orpah, and the other one was named Ruth. But after they had lived in that area for about ten years, ⁵ Mahlon and Chilion died. So then Naomi had no husband and no sons.

⁶ One day while Naomi was in Moab, she heard someone say that Yahweh had helped his people in Israel and that now there was plenty of food to eat. So she prepared to return to Bethlehem. ⁷ She left the place where she had been living and started to walk with her daughters-in-law along the road back to Judah. ⁸ Then as the

three of them were walking, Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Each of you should turn around and go back to your mother's home. You treated *your husbands* kindly *before* they died, and you have treated me kindly. ⁹ Now I desire that Yahweh will enable each of you to have another husband in whose home you will *feel* secure." Then she kissed both of them, and they cried aloud. ¹⁰ They each said, "No, we want to go with you as you return to your relatives."

¹¹ But Naomi said, "No, my daughters, return home. ◀It will not do any good for you to come with me!/What good will it do for you to come with me?▶ [RHQ] Do you think I will get married again and have more sons who could become your husbands? ¹² Even if I thought I could have another husband, and even if I got married today and became pregnant [EUP] tonight and later gave birth to sons, ¹³ would you remain single/unmarried until they grew up *and became old enough* for you to marry? No, my daughters, *you would not do that*. Your situations are bad *because your husbands have died, but it is possible that you will each marry again*. My situation is much worse, because Yahweh [SYN] has opposed me, *and now I am too old to get married again*."

¹⁴ Then Ruth and Orpah cried again *because of what Naomi said*. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, *and left*, but Ruth clung to Naomi. ¹⁵ Naomi said to her, "Look! Your sister-in-law is going back to her relatives and to her gods! Go back with her!" ¹⁶ But Ruth

replied, “No! Don’t urge me to leave you! I *want* to go with you. Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Your relatives will be my relatives, and the God you *worship* will be the God I *worship*.¹⁷ Where you die, I will die. Where you are buried, I will be buried. May Yahweh punish me severely if I separate from you. I will be separated from you only *when one of us* dies.”¹⁸ When Naomi realized that Ruth was very determined to go with her, she stopped urging her *to return home*.

¹⁹ So the two women continued walking until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived there, everyone in town was excited *to see* them. The women *of the town* exclaimed, “◀Can this be Naomi?/It is difficult to believe that this is Naomi!▶” [RHQ] ²⁰ Naomi said to them, “Don’t call me Naomi, *which means ‘pleasant’*. Instead, call me Mara, *which means ‘bitter’*, because God Almighty has made my life very unpleasant.²¹ When I left here, I *felt* rich, *because I had a family*. But Yahweh has brought me back here and now I *feel* poor, *because I have no family*. Do not call me Naomi [RHQ]. *I feel as though* Yahweh has spoken against (OR, afflicted) me. Almighty *God* has caused me to experience a great tragedy.”

²² That *summarizes the account* of Naomi returning home along with her daughter-in-law Ruth, the woman from Moab. And *it happened that* when they arrived in Bethlehem, the barley *grain* harvest was just beginning.

2

Ruth met Boaz

¹ There was a man in Bethlehem who belonged to the clan of *Naomi's dead husband*, Elimelech. He was rich and well-known/influential. His name was Boaz.

² *One day* Ruth said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the grain left behind by the workers." Naomi replied, "Go ahead, my daughter." ³ So Ruth went to the fields and began to pick up some of the left-over grain. And it happened that she was working in a field that belonged to Boaz, *the man* from the clan of *her dead father-in-law*, Elimelech!

⁴ Just then, Boaz arrived from Bethlehem. He greeted the men who were harvesting the grain, saying, "I want Yahweh to bless you!" They replied, "We want Yahweh to bless you, *too!*"

⁵ Then Boaz saw Ruth, and asked the ◀foreman/man in charge of the other workmen▶, "Whose *daughter* is that young woman?" ⁶ The foreman replied, "She is the woman from Moab who returned from there with *her mother-in-law* Naomi." ⁷ She said to me, 'Please let me walk behind the men who are harvesting the grain and pick up some of the grain they leave behind.' *I gave her permission, and she went into the field, and she has been working from this morning until now. The only time she did not work was when she rested for a short time in the shelter.*"

⁸ So Boaz went over to Ruth and said to her, "Young lady, listen to me. Don't go and pick up grain in another field. Do not go away from here.

Stay here with my servant girls. ⁹ Watch where the men are harvesting, and follow along behind the *servant* girls. I will tell the men *who are working* not to touch/molest you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get some water to drink from the jars that the men have filled.”

¹⁰ When he said that, she knelt down in front of him *in respect*, with her face touching the ground. She exclaimed, “Why are you acting so kindly toward me, by paying attention to me? *I am not even a Jew; I am a foreigner!*” ¹¹ Boaz replied, “People have told me all about what you have done for your mother-in-law. They told me that you left your parents and your homeland, and you came here to live among people whom you did not know before. ¹² I hope/desire that Yahweh will repay you for what you have done. You have put yourself in the care of Yahweh, *like a little bird puts itself* under its mother’s wings [MET]. I desire that he will reward you very greatly.”

¹³ She replied, “Sir, I hope you will continue to act kindly toward me. You have comforted/encouraged me, even though I am lower in status than any of your servant girls.”

¹⁴ At mealtime, Boaz said to her, “Come over here. Take some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar *and eat it.*” Then when she sat down with the men who had been harvesting, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all the grain she wanted, and had some left over. ¹⁵ As she stood up to start gathering grain *again*, Boaz ordered his workers, “Even if she gathers some

grain near the bundles of grain that have been cut, do not scold her. ¹⁶ Instead, pull out some stalks of grain from the bundles, and leave them on the ground for her to pick up, and do not rebuke her.”

¹⁷ So Ruth gathered grain in the field until evening. Then she ◀threshed/beat with a stick▶ the barley that she had gathered, *to separate the kernels from the stalks*, and the barley filled a large basket. ¹⁸ She carried it back to town, and showed to her mother-in-law how much she had gathered. Ruth also showed to her the grain *that was left over after she had eaten enough from what Boaz had given her at lunchtime*. ¹⁹ Her mother-in-law asked her, “Where did you gather grain today? In whose *field* did you work? *God will surely bless the man who was kind to you.*” Then Ruth told her about the man in whose field she had been working. She said, “The name of the man *who owns the field* where I worked today is Boaz.” ²⁰ Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “I hope/desire that Yahweh will bless him! He has not stopped acting kindly toward *us, who are still living*, and to *our husbands* who have died.” Then she added, “That man is a close relative *of Elimelech*; he is one of those who has a responsibility to help those who are his relatives.”

²¹ Then Ruth said, “He also said to me, ‘Stay with my workers until they have finished harvesting all my grain.’ ”

²² Naomi replied, “My daughter, it will be good for you to go *to his field* with his *servant*

girls, because if you go to someone else's field, someone might harm/molest you."

²³ So Ruth stayed close to Boaz's *servant girls while she was working*. She gathered stalks of grain until the barley harvest and the wheat harvest were finished. During that time she lived with Naomi.

3

Ruth asked Boaz to marry her so she would have a home and other things she needed

¹ One day, Naomi said to Ruth, "My daughter, I think that I should [RHQ] try to arrange for you to have a husband [MTY] who will ◀take care of/provide for▶ you. ² Boaz, the man with whose *servant girls* you have been *gathering grain*, is a close relative of *our dead husbands*. Listen *carefully*. Tonight he will be at the ground where *the barley has* been threshed. He will be separating the barley grain from the chaff. ³ Bathe yourself and put on some perfume. Put on your *best* clothes. Then go down to the ground where they have threshed *the grain*. But do not let Boaz know that you are there while he is eating *supper* and drinking. ⁴ *When he has finished eating*, notice where he lies down to sleep. Then *when he is asleep*, take the blanket off his feet and lie *close to his feet*. *When he wakes up*, he will tell you what to do."

⁵ Ruth replied, "I will do everything that you have told me *to do*." ⁶ So she went down to the ground where they had threshed *the barley*

grain. There she did everything that her mother-in-law had told her *to do*.

⁷ When Boaz finished eating *supper* and drinking *wine*, he felt happy. Then he went over to the far end of the pile of grain. He lay down *and went to sleep*. Then Ruth approached him quietly. She took the blanket off his feet and lay down *there*.

⁸ In the middle of the night, he suddenly awoke. He sat up and saw that a woman was lying at his feet. ⁹ He asked her, "Who are you?" She replied, "I am your servant, Ruth. Since you are the one who has a responsibility to take care of *someone like me whose dead husband was your close relative*, spread the corner of your cloak over my *feet to show that you will marry me*."

¹⁰ Boaz replied, "Young lady, I hope that Yahweh will ◀bless/be kind to▶ you! You have acted kindly *toward your mother-in-law*, and now you are acting even more kindly *toward me by wanting to marry me, instead of wanting to marry a young man*. You have not looked for either a rich young man or a poor young man, *to marry him*. ¹¹ Now, young lady, I will do everything you ask. Don't worry *that people in this town might think I am doing wrong by marrying you because you are a woman from Moab*. All the people in this town know that you are an honorable woman. ¹² But *there is one problem*. Although it is true that I am a close relative *of your mother-in-law's dead husband*, there is another man who is a closer relative *than I am*, and therefore he should be the one to *marry you and take care of you*. ¹³ You stay here for the rest of this night.

Tomorrow morning *I will tell this man about you*. If he says that he will *marry you and* take care of you, fine, *we will* let him do that. But if he is not willing *to do that*, I solemnly promise that as surely as Yahweh lives, I will *marry you and* take care of you. So lie/sleep here until it is morning.”

¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until morning. But she got up and left before it was light enough that people would be able to recognize her, because Boaz said, “I do not want anyone to know that a woman was here.” ¹⁵ He also said to her, “Bring to me your cloak and spread it out.” When she did that, he poured into it six measures/24 liters/50 pounds of barley, and put in on her back. Then he (OR, she) went back to the town.

¹⁶ When Ruth arrived home, her mother-in-law asked her, “My daughter, how did ◀things go/Boaz act toward you▶?” Then Ruth told her everything that Boaz had done for her *and said to her*. ¹⁷ She also said to Naomi, “He gave me all this barley, saying ‘I do not want you to return to your mother-in-law empty-handed.’ ” ¹⁸ Then Naomi said, “My daughter, just wait until we see what happens. *I am sure that Boaz will take care of [LIT] the matter of your marriage today. [LIT]”*

4

Boaz married Ruth

¹ *Meanwhile*, Boaz went up to the town gate and sat there. *That was the place where people met together to decide important matters*. When the man that Boaz had mentioned came there, the close relative of Ruth and Naomi’s dead

husbands *who had a responsibility to take care of Naomi and Ruth*, Boaz said to him, "My friend, come over here and sit down." So the man went and sat down. ² Boaz then gathered ten of the elders of the town and asked them to sit down *there also*. After they sat down, ³ he said to the man who had the responsibility to take care of Naomi, "Naomi has returned from Moab *region*. She wants to sell the field that belonged to our relative Elimelech. ⁴ I thought that I should tell you about that, and suggest that you buy it, while these elders who are sitting here are listening. If you are willing to buy the property, do that. But if you do not want to buy it, tell me, so that I will know. I am suggesting this to you because you are the one who has the first right to buy it, and I am the one who has the second/next right to buy it." The man replied, "I will buy it!" ⁵ Then Boaz told him, "When you buy the land from Naomi, you will also be taking Ruth, *the woman who is from Moab, to be your wife*, in order that she may *give birth to a son who will inherit the property of her dead husband [MTY]*." ⁶ Then the close relative *of Ruth's dead husband* said, "*If that is so, I do not want to buy the field, because then my own children would not inherit the property; Ruth's children would inherit it. You buy the property!*"

⁷ At that time, it was the custom in Israel, when a person bought property that belonged to another person, that the man who was selling the property would take off one of his sandals and give it to the one who was buying the property.

That was the way they finalized sales in Israel. ⁸ So that close relative said to Boaz, “You buy the field yourself!” And he took off *one of* his sandals *and gave it to Boaz*.

⁹ Then Boaz said to the elders and all the *other* people *who were there*, “Today you have all seen that I have bought from Naomi all the property that belonged to *her dead husband* Elimelech and *his dead sons* Mahlon and Chilion. ¹⁰ I am also taking Ruth, *the woman* from Moab, Mahlon’s widow, to be my wife, in order that she may give birth to a son who will inherit the property of the dead man. In that way, Elimelech’s name will continue [LIT] among the members of his family and among all the people of this town. Today you all are witnesses *of what I have done*.”

¹¹ All the elders and the *others* who were sitting at the *town gate agreed, and one of them* said, “Yes, we are witnesses. We hope/desire that Yahweh will enable this woman, who will be coming into your home, to give birth to many children, as Rachel and Leah did. They are the women from whom all *us* people [MTY] of Israel are descended. We hope that you will become rich in the clan of Ephratah, and become famous [MTY] *here* in Bethlehem. ¹² We hope/desire that Yahweh will enable you and this young woman to have many descendants. And we hope/desire that your family will be as important as the family of your ancestor Perez, the son of Judah and Tamar.”

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth *home*, and she became his wife. He ◀slept with/had sexual relations

with► her [EUP] and Yahweh enabled her to become pregnant, and she gave birth to a son.

¹⁴ The women *of Bethlehem* said to Naomi, “Praise Yahweh! Now he has given [LIT] you a grandson who will be the one who will have the responsibility to take care of you. We hope that he will become famous [MTY] throughout Israel.

¹⁵ He will make you feel young again, and he will take care of you when you become old. Your daughter-in-law, who loves you, has given birth to a son, who will ◀be better to/do more for▶ you than *if you had seven sons of your own.*”

¹⁶ Then Naomi took the baby and put him on her lap, and took care of him. ¹⁷ The women who were living near her said, “*It is as though Naomi now has a son!*” And they named him Obed. *Later*, Obed became the father of Jesse, and *later* Jesse became the father of *King David*.

¹⁸⁻²² Here is *a list of the ancestors of King David*: Perez’s son was Hezron. Hezron’s son was Ram. Ram’s son was Amminadab. Amminadab’s son was Nahshon. Nahshon’s son was Salmon. Salmon’s son was Boaz. Boaz’s son was Obed. Obed’s son was Jesse. Jesse’s son was *King David*.

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2024-02-21

PDF generated using Haiola and XeLaTeX on 22 Feb 2024 from source files dated 21 Feb 2024

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