

RUTH

¹ In the days of one judge, when judges were sovereigns *in Israel*, hunger was made in the land; and a man of Bethlehem of Judah went to be a pilgrim in the country of Moab, with his wife and [*his*] two free sons.

² He was called Elimelech, and his wife Naomi, and his two sons, the one *was called* Mahlon, and the tother Chilion, *they were* Ephrathites of Bethlehem of Judah; and they entered into the country of Moab, and they dwelled there.

³ And Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she *was* left with her sons;

⁴ and they took wives of Moab, of which wives one was called Orpah, the tother Ruth. And the sons dwelled there ten years,

⁵ and both died, that is, Mahlon and Chilion; and *so* the woman *was* left, and was made bare of her two free sons, and her husband.

⁶ And she rose to go with ever either wife of her sons into her country from the country of Moab; for she had heard, that the Lord had beheld his people, and had given meats to them.

⁷ And so she went out from the place of her pilgrimage with ever either wife of her sons; and now when she was set in the way of turning again into the land of Judah,

⁸ she said to them, Go ye *back* into the house of your mother; the Lord do mercy with you, as ye did with the dead men, and with me;

⁹ the Lord give to you to find rest in the houses of [*the*] husbands which ye shall take. And she kissed them. And they began to weep with high voice,

¹⁰ and to say, We shall go with thee to thy people.

¹¹ To whom she answered, My daughters, turn ye again, why come ye with me? I have no more sons in my womb, that ye may hope husbands of me;

¹² my daughters of Moab, turn ye again, and go; for now I am made eld, and I am not able to the bond of marriage; yea, though I might conceive in this night, and bear sons,

¹³ though ye will abide till they waxed, and [*ful*] fill the years of marriage, ye shall sooner be eld [*or old*] women than ye shall be wedded; I beseech, my daughters, mourn ye not, for your anguish oppresseth me the more, and the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.

¹⁴ Therefore, when the voice was raised, again they began to weep. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, and turned again, and Ruth abode with her mother-in-law.

¹⁵ To whom Naomi said, Lo! thy kinswoman turned again to her people, and to her gods; go thou with her.

¹⁶ And Ruth answered, Be thou not against me, that I forsake thee, and go away; whither ever thou shalt go, I shall go, and where thou shalt dwell, I shall dwell together; thy people is my people, and thy God is my God;

17 what land shall receive thee dying, I shall die therein *also*, and there I shall take place of burying; God do to me these things, and add these things, if death alone shall not part me and thee.

18 Therefore Naomi saw, that Ruth had deemed with steadfast soul to go with her, and she would not be against her, neither counsel further turning again to her *countrymen*.

19 And they went forth together, and came into Bethlehem; and when they entered into the city, swift fame rose with all men, and women said, This is that Naomi.

20 To whom she said, Call ye not me Naomi, *that is, fair*, but call ye me Mara, *that is, bitter*; for Almighty God hath filled me greatly with bitterness.

21 I went out full, and the Lord led me again void; why therefore call ye me Naomi, whom the Lord hath made low, and Almighty God hath tormented?

22 Therefore Naomi came with Ruth of Moab, the wife of her son, from the land of her pilgrimage, and turned again into Bethlehem, when barley was reaped first.

CHAPTER 2

1 Forsooth a mighty man and a man of great riches, Boaz by name, was kinsman of Elimelech.

2 And Ruth of Moab said to her mother-in-law, If thou commandest, I shall go into the field, and I shall gather ears of corn that flee the hands of reapers, wherever I shall find grace of

an husbandman merciful in me. To whom she answered, Go, my daughter.

³ Therefore she went, and gathered ears of corn after the backs of reapers. And it befel, that Boaz was lord of that field, that was of the kindred of Elimelech.

⁴ And lo! Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to his reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered to him, The Lord bless thee.

⁵ And Boaz said to the young man that was chief over the reapers, Who is this damsel?

⁶ And he answered, This is the woman of Moab, that came with Naomi from the country of Moab;

⁷ and she prayed, that she should gather ears of corn leaving behind, and follow the steps of [*the*] reapers; and from the morrowtide till now she standeth in the field, and soothly neither at a moment she turned again home.

⁸ And Boaz said to Ruth, Daughter, hear thou; go thou not into another field to gather, neither go away from this place, but be thou joined to my damsels,

⁹ and follow thou where they reap; for I [*have*] commanded to my young men, that no man be dis-easeful to thee; but also if thou thirstest, go to the fardels, and drink waters, of which my young men drink.

¹⁰ And she felled on her face, and worshipped *or honoured* on the earth; and she said to him, Whereof is this to me, that I should find grace before thine eyes, that thou wouldest know me, a strange woman?

¹¹ To whom Boaz answered, All things be told to me, that thou hast done to thy mother-in-law after the death of thine husband, and that thou hast forsaken thy father and thy mother, and the land that thou were born in, and thou art come to a people, that thou hast not known before.

¹² The Lord yield to thee for thy work, and receive thou full meed of the Lord God of Israel, to whom thou camest, and under whose wings thou fleddest.

¹³ And she said, My lord, I have found grace before thine eyes, and thou hast comforted me, and thou hast spoken to the heart of thine handmaid, which am not like one of thine handmaids.

¹⁴ And Boaz said to her, When the hour of eating is, come thou hither, and eat bread, and wet thy morsel in vinegar. Therefore she sat at the side of [*the*] reapers; and he dressed to her pottage, and she ate, and was filled; and she took the remnants.

¹⁵ And she rose from thence to gather the ears of corn, by custom. And Boaz commanded to his young men, and said, Also if she will reap with you, forbid ye not her,

¹⁶ and also cast ye forth to her handfuls of *or* *on* purpose, and suffer ye those to abide, that she gather those without shame; and no man reprove her gathering *them*.

¹⁷ Therefore she gathered in the field till to eventide; and she beat with a rod, and shook out those things that she had gathered; and she found of barley as the measure of ephah.

¹⁸ Which she bare, and turned again into the city, and showed to her mother-in-law; furthermore she brought forth, and gave to her the remnants of her meat, with which meat she was fulfilled.

¹⁹ And her mother-in-law said to her, Where hast thou gathered *this* today, and where hast thou done this work? Blessed be he, that had mercy on thee. And Ruth told to her mother-in-law with whom she wrought; and she said that the man's name was called Boaz.

²⁰ To whom Naomi answered, Blessed be he of the Lord, for he [*hath*] kept also to dead men the same grace, which he gave to the quick. And again she said, He is our kinsman.

²¹ And Ruth said, Also he commanded this thing to me, that so long I should be joined to his reapers, till all his corns were reaped.

²² To whom her mother-in-law said, My daughter, it is better, that thou go out to reap with his damsels, lest in an-other field any man against-stand thee.

²³ And so Ruth was joined to the damsels of Boaz; and so long she reaped with them, till both the barley and the wheat were enclosed in the barns.

CHAPTER 3

¹ And after that Ruth had turned to her mother-in-law, she heard of her, My daughter, I shall seek rest to thee, and I shall purvey that it be well to thee.

² This Boaz, to whose damsels thou were joined in the field, is our kinsman, and in this night

he winnoweth the cornfloor *or threshing floor* of barley.

³ Therefore be thou washed, and anointed, and be thou clothed with more honest *or best* clothes, and go thou down into the cornfloor; the man see not thee, till he have ended to eat and to drink.

⁴ Forsooth when he goeth to sleep, mark thou the place in which he sleepeth; and thou shalt come, and uncover the cloth, with which he is covered, from the part of the feet, and thou shalt cast thee down, and thou shalt lie there. Forsooth he shall say to thee, what thou shalt do.

⁵ And Ruth answered, Whatever thing thou commandest to me, I shall do.

⁶ And she went down into the cornfloor; and did all things which her mother-in-law commanded to her.

⁷ And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and was made more glad, and had gone to sleep beside the mound of sheaves, Ruth came, and hid herself; and when the cloth was uncovered from his feet, she casted down herself.

⁸ And lo! now at midnight, the man dreaded, and was troubled; and he saw a woman lying at his feet;

⁹ and he said to her, Who art thou? She answered, I am Ruth, thine handmaid; stretch forth thy cloth on thy servantess, for thou art nigh of kin.

¹⁰ And he said, Daughter, thou art blessed of the Lord, and thou hast overcome the former mercy with the latter; for thou followedest not young men, poor either rich.

11 Therefore, do not thou dread, but whatever thing thou shalt say to me, I shall do to thee; for all the people that dwelleth within the gates of my city know, that thou art a woman of virtue.

12 And I forsake not, that I am of nigh kin, but another man is nearer kin than I;

13 rest thou here this night, and when the morrowtide is made, if the man will hold thee to wife by right of nigh kin, the thing is well done; and if he will not, I shall take thee without any doubt, the Lord liveth; sleep thou till the morrowtide.

14 Therefore she slept at his feet till to the going away of [*the*] night, and then she rose, before that men should know each other. And Boaz said to her, Be thou ware lest any man know, that thou camest hither.

15 And again he said, Stretch forth thy mantle with which thou art covered, and hold thou with ever either hand. And while she stretched forth and held, he meted [*or measured*] six measures of barley, and putted [*or put up*] on her; and she bare, and entered into the city,

16 and came to her mother-in-law. Which said to Ruth, What hast thou done, daughter? And Ruth told to her all things, which the man had done to her.

17 And Ruth said, Lo! he gave to me six measures of barley; and he said, I will *or desire* not that thou turn again void to thy mother-in-law.

18 And Naomi said, Abide, daughter, till we see what issue the thing shall have; for the man shall

not cease, no but he [*ful*] fill those things which he spake.

CHAPTER 4

¹ Therefore Boaz went up to the gate, and sat there; and when he had seen the kinsman pass forth, of whom the word was had, Boaz said to him, Bow thou a little, and sit here; and he called him by his name. And he turned, and sat.

² And Boaz took ten elder men of the city, and he said to them, Sit ye down here. And while they sat,

³ Boaz spake to the kinsman, Naomi, that turned again from the country of Moab, sold, *that is, is in purpose to sell, for it was not yet sold*, the part of the field of our brother Elimelech,

⁴ which thing I would that thou hear; and I would say to thee before all men sitting, and greater in birth of my people. If thou wilt have in possession the field by right of nigh kin, buy thou, and have thou in possession; soothly if it displeaseth thee, show thou this same thing to me, that I know what I shall do; for none is nigh in kin, besides thee which art the former, and besides me which am the second. And the man answered, I shall buy the field.

⁵ To whom Boaz said, When thou hast bought the field of the hand of the woman, thou owest also to take to wife Ruth of Moab, that was the wife of the dead man, that thou raise the name of thy kinsman in his heritage.

⁶ And he answered, I forsake the right of nigh kin; for I owe not to do away the heritage of mine

own meine; use thou my privilege, the which I acknowledge me to want gladly.

⁷ Forsooth this was the custom by eld [*or old*] time in Israel among kinsmen, that if a man gave his right to another man, that the granting were steadfast, the man should unlace his shoe, and give it to his kinsman; this thing was witnessing of a gift in Israel.

⁸ Therefore Boaz said to his kinsmen, Take off thy shoe from thee; and he unlaced it anon from his foot.

⁹ And Boaz said to the greater men in birth, and to all the people, Ye be witnesses today, that I have taken in possession all things that were of Elimelech, and of Chilion, and of Mahlon, by the gift of Naomi;

¹⁰ and that I have taken into wedlock Ruth of Moab, the wife of Mahlon, that I raise up the name of the dead man in his heritage; lest his name be done away from his meine, and from his brethren, and his people. Ye, he said, be witnesses of this thing.

¹¹ All the people, that was in the gate, answered, and the greater men in birth, We be witnesses; the Lord make this woman, that entereth into thine house, as Rachel and Leah, that builded the house of Israel, that she be ensample of virtue in Ephratah, and have a solemn name in Bethlehem;

¹² and thine house be made as the house of Perez, whom Tamar childed to Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give to thee of this damsel.

13 Then Boaz took Ruth, and he took her to wife; and he entered [*in*] to her, and the Lord gave to her, that she conceived, and childed a son.

14 And women said to Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which suffered not, that an heir failed to thy meine, and his name were called in Israel;

15 and that thou have, that shall comfort thy soul, and nourish thine eld age. For *a child* is born of thy daughter-in-law, that shall love thee, and he is better to thee, than if thou haddest seven sons.

16 And Naomi putted [*or put*] the child, whom she received, in her bosom; and she did the office of a nurse, and of a bearer-about.

17 And [*the*] women neighbours thanked her *or joyed together with her*, and said, A son is born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed. This is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

18 These be the generations of Perez; Perez begat Hezron;

19 Hezron begat Ram; Ram begat Amminadab;

20 Amminadab begat Nahshon; Nahshon begat Salmon;

21 Salmon begat Boaz; Boaz begat Obed;

22 Obed begat Jesse; Jesse begat David the king.

Wycliffe's Bible with Modern Spelling English: Wycliffe's Bible Modern Spelling (with Deuterocanon)

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Language: English

Dialect: Archaic

Translation by: Terry Noble

Wycliffe's Bible with Modern Spelling, was made in response to requests from readers who wanted my Wycliffe's Old and New Testaments and Apocrypha in one volume. Printing limitations dictated the number of pages available to me and the letter size. In my previous books, Wycliffe's Bible, Wycliffe's Old Testament, Vols. 1 amp 2, Wycliffe's New Testament, and Wycliffe's Apocrypha, I have tens of thousands of rewritten verses, presented in parentheses "()", to provide help in comprehending the 14th century Middle English vocabulary and grammar. In this present volume, with space at a premium, those "helps" had to be eliminated, to make room for the text of the Apocrypha.

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2019-09-26

PDF generated using Haiola and XeLaTeX on 3 Mar 2023 from source files dated 10 Feb 2022

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