

# Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz

**Key Verse:** “*And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.*”  
—**Ruth 1:16**

**Selected Scriptures:** *Ruth*  
1:1-22; 4:9-13

## THE BOOK OF RUTH

opens with these words: “Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled [Israel], that there was a famine in the land. A certain man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab. ... And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion. ... And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.”—Ruth 1:1,2

While in Moab, “Elimelech Naomi’s husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.”—vss. 3-5

When Naomi heard that the famine in Israel had ended, she decided to return to her homeland. Her daughters-in-law desired to go with her. However, as Naomi began her journey, she advised them to return to

their mother's homes. Orpah complied and returned to Moab, but Ruth insisted on staying with Naomi. (vss. 6-15) Ruth's words of love and devotion found in our Key Verse comprise one of the most touching statements found in the Bible and show her complete trust in Naomi and in Naomi's God.

When Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, it was the time of barley harvest. Ruth went to the edge of a field to collect grain, which was allowed under the Jewish law. Boaz, the owner of the field, noticed Ruth and inquired who she was. When he discovered that they were related through Naomi's husband Elimelech, who had died, Boaz instructed those working in the field to treat Ruth kindly.—Ruth 1:22; 2:1-16

Ruth continued collecting grain, and Boaz watched over her. Naomi instructed Ruth to make herself attractive and to lie at Boaz's feet after a long day on the threshing floor. Boaz awoke about midnight and realized that someone was lying near him. When he asked who she was, she said, "Ruth thine handmaid," and informed him that he was her family's "near kinsman."—Ruth 3:1-9

Under Jewish law, a near kinsman of one who had died could take on the role of progenitor in order to continue the lineage of the deceased one. Since both Naomi and Ruth were widows of Israelites, there was no one to carry on the family line. Boaz pointed out to Ruth that there was a closer family member who had first rights to her as a kinsman. (vs. 12) He assembled his family to discuss the matter, and it was agreed that Boaz would assume the responsibility as kinsman redeemer.—Ruth 4:9-12

Boaz married Ruth and their son Obed was born. Obed was the father of Jesse, who was the father of David, who became king of Israel. The book of Ruth furnishes an important link in the family chain of the tribe of Judah leading to King David, which then leads to the man Christ Jesus, the Redeemer of mankind.—Ruth 4:13-22; Matt. 1:5,6,16; Luke 3:23,31,32 ■