

Ruth Gleaning in the Fields

Ruth 1–4

And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers. Ruth 2:2–3

During the time the judges governed ancient Israel, there was a famine in the land. Elimelech, a man who lived in Bethlehem, decided to take his wife, Naomi, and his two sons to the land of Moab, where they would have enough food to eat. (See Ruth 1:1–2.)

After Elimelech died, Naomi stayed in Moab with her two sons, who married two Moabite women named Orpah and Ruth. After 10 years Naomi's sons died. Because the famine was over in Israel, Naomi decided to return to her people in Bethlehem. (See Ruth 1:3–6.)

Naomi's daughters-in-law started on the journey with her, but Naomi told them to go back to their own families (see Ruth 1:7–8). Both of the younger women wanted to go with Naomi, but she finally convinced Orpah to return to Moab. Ruth, however, would not leave. She pleaded with Naomi to let her go with her to Bethlehem: "Entreat 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). Naomi returned to Bethlehem with Ruth at her side.

It was harvesttime when the women arrived in Bethlehem. During the harvest men gathered the

grain into small bunches. As they worked, some stalks fell to the ground. Poor people were allowed to gather, or glean, the stalks left behind. Because they had no food, Ruth offered to glean the fields to get grain for Naomi and herself (see Ruth 2:2).

Ruth worked in the fields of a righteous relative of Elimelech named Boaz. Boaz was impressed with Ruth's kindness to Naomi and said, "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel" (Ruth 2:12). Boaz was kind to Ruth and told her she could always glean from his fields. He even instructed his harvesters to leave grain behind for her to gather. (See Ruth 2:8–16.)

Naomi wanted Ruth to marry and have children. So she taught Ruth about the customs of the Israelites and told her to go to Boaz and ask to be his wife. Ruth did what Naomi said to do, and Boaz, knowing that Ruth was a virtuous and kind woman, married her. (See Ruth 3:1–4:12.)

After they married, Ruth and Boaz had a son, whom they named Obed. Obed grew up and had a son named Jesse, who later became the father of David. (See Ruth 4:13–17.) David became the king of Israel, and it was through this line that Jesus Christ was born.

Summary

When the judges governed Israel there was a famine in the land. Naomi, who lived in Bethlehem, went with her husband and their two sons to the land Moab so they would have food to eat. While in Moab Naomi's husband died, and later her sons married two Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah. When her sons died, Naomi returned to Bethlehem. Orpah stayed in Moab, but Ruth went to Bethlehem with

Naomi. Ruth cared for her mother-in-law by gathering leftover grain during the harvest. Boaz, who owned the fields, told Ruth that God would bless her for being kind to Naomi. Boaz married Ruth, and they had a son named Obed, the grandfather of King David. Many years later Jesus Christ was born into the royal family of King David.

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