



L3L30: Ruth the Moabites

Ruth 1

The book of Ruth is a story of friendship, commitment, adversity, triumph and true love. The setting is in the time of the judges. Israel had turned her back on God, so He brought a famine upon the land to punish them for their rebellion. A man named Elimelech, along with his wife Naomi and sons Mahlon and Chilion, left their home in Bethlehem, and traveled to neighboring Moab in hopes of escaping the famine. But hard times followed them. First, Elimelech died, leaving Naomi a widow. Then after ten years of marriage, Naomi's sons Mahlon and Chilion died, leaving both of their young wives without a husband. All three women face a hopeless situation, as widows without the protection of a husband or father. One of Naomi's daughter-in-laws, Ruth, rises to the occasion, and gives us an example of love and service that continues to inspire us today.

Discuss:

- The Moabites were descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew. Also, the Moabites opposed the children of Israel when they left Egypt, and there was a history of animosity between the two peoples (Deuteronomy 23:3–6).
- During the time of Ruth, women depended on their husbands or sons to protect them. Ruth knew that Naomi had neither so she volunteered to take on that role.
- Ruth showed great respect, love, and commitment to her mother-in-law. She also courageously made a huge sacrifice to leave everything familiar to her to go to a place where she might not be accepted because she was a Moabite. What do you think it was like for Ruth to make that decision?



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Memorization Challenge:

Ruth 1:16

But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God."



L3L31: Ruth in the Land of Judah

Ruth 1-2

Ruth and Naomi arrived in Bethlehem of Judea during the spring at the beginning of the barley harvest. Naomi was well known in Bethlehem and when the people saw that Naomi had returned they were excited! Naomi told them that she was mourning. She no longer had a husband to take care of her. But, she had Ruth! God has a statute that allows the poor to gather produce that the reapers leave in the fields during harvest time. Ruth decided that she would glean in the fields to support her mother-in-law. Gleaning was very hard work but each day Ruth walked to the fields where she toiled from sunrise to sunset gathering what the reapers had left. Ruth worked very hard to take care of Naomi, and people began to notice.

Discuss:

- Ruth and Naomi arrived in Bethlehem during the barley harvest. The wavesheaf offering during the Days of Unleavened Bread marked the beginning of the barley harvest which always occurs in the spring (Leviticus 23:10–14).
- God's law includes statutes to provide for the needs of the poor, yet the poor are still expected to work. How is this different than the way different governments take care of the poor people today?
- What are some of the ways Ruth displayed diligence?



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Memorization Challenge:

Ruth 1:22

So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.



L3L32: Ruth Finds Favor with Boaz

Ruth 2

It was now up to Ruth to look after her mother-in-law. As the barley harvest began she went to a nearby grain field. Little did she know that was owned by Boaz, one of Naomi's relatives. It was customary to let poor people pick up the leftover grain that was missed by the men who were harvesting. Ruth bent to the work, gleaning the barley, unaware that Boaz was watching. Kind-hearted Boaz asked his men who this diligent and hard-working woman was. When one of his servants explained who Ruth was, and how she had left her homeland to care for Naomi, he was deeply impressed. He spoke to Ruth, inviting her to eat and drink with his servants. He then instructed her to harvest the barley sheaves alongside his servants. No longer would she have to pick up the leftover grain. Not only did this make her work easier, but she could collect a lot more grain in the same amount of time. Boaz took responsibility to protect her and help her, just as she had done for her aging mother-in-law. When Ruth returned home and told her about the kindness of the landowner, showing her the overflowing basket of barley, Naomi asked who the man was. When she learned that this generous, caring man was her close relative, Boaz, she understood how God's hand had turned to favor her.

Discuss:

- Ruth's works demonstrate her character. Christ said we can know a person's character by their fruits (Luke 6:44-45). The Bible also says that even a child is known by their deeds (Proverbs 20:11).
- Ruth had stopped serving idols to serve the one true God. She had left everything she knew to be among the people of God. We, as Christians, must be willing to forsake everything to serve God. What does it mean for us to give up everything to serve God?
- The Bible says that God rewards those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). God often does this by blessing our efforts. Ruth worked very hard, and as God promises, He blessed her efforts.



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Memory Challenge:

Ruth 2:12

“The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.”



L3L33: Ruth Gets Married

Ruth 3-4

Boaz was a prominent man in the community, having great wealth and many servants. He was also a close relative of Elimelech, Naomi's deceased husband. Ruth had found favor with Boaz, and Naomi thought to secure Ruth's future with him. The law of redemption allowed the nearest of kin to purchase the family land and to marry the widow of the one who owned it. Naomi instructed Ruth to secretly go to Boaz one night, with this statute in mind, and express her desire to put herself into his care. She said to Boaz, "Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative." She was basically asking Boaz to marry her! Boaz was glad that she came to him, and said he would be willing to take care of her, only there was a problem. There was another man who was more closely related to her than Boaz. This other man would have to decide not to redeem the land and marry Ruth if Boaz was to have a chance to do so himself. Not wanting to waste any time, Boaz got up early in the morning and went to the gate of the city to see what could be done. The decision made that day would determine what would happen to Ruth and Naomi.

Discuss:

- The book of Ruth is one of two books in the Bible that has a woman's name in the title.
- Consider the character and honor that Boaz displayed in the book of Ruth. What were some things that he did which reflected favorably on his character?
- True love always shows outgoing concern for others and does no harm. When Boaz showed concern for Ruth's reputation and went to great lengths to protect her name. What are some other examples of true love from the book of Ruth?



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Memory Challenge:

Ruth 3:10-11

Then he said, "Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman."