



Church of God Sunday School

THE STORY OF RUTH

Ruth 1-4

This story happened in the days of the Judges, when a famine came on the land of Judah. Elimelech, a native of the city of Bethlehem, took his family to Moab, to escape the famine. Moab was a heathen country and did not worship the God of Heaven.

Elimelech was risking the possibility of losing his family to idolatry by going to a heathen country. Nevertheless, he packed up his family: Naomi, his wife, and their sons, Mahlon and Chilion, and went into the land of Moab. They lived there for some time, with idolatry all around them. Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with only her two sons.

Mahlon and Chilion married Moabite women. One was Orpah; the other was Ruth. Mahlon and Chilion lived on in the land of Moab, with their wives and mother, for ten years; then they both died!

Naomi and only her two daughters-in-law were left. Naomi grew homesick for Bethlehem. She had heard that the terrible famine was over. She longed to return to her own land. One day Naomi decided to do it. She called for her daughters-in-law and told them that she had decided to go back to Bethlehem. She blessed them and told them to return to their own people. She kissed them good-bye, but they wanted to go with her. They cried, saying, "Surely we will return with thee unto thy people."

Naomi felt that God had set His hand against her. She urged Ruth and Orpah to return to their own families. She did not want them to return to idolatry, but she felt that she could not take care of them alone. Finally, Orpah kissed Naomi and went back to her own people, back to the life of idolatry.

But Ruth clung to Naomi. No doubt, Ruth had watched her mother-in-law down through the years. She loved her. She had learned of the one true God, while

being around Naomi and her family. She put aside the idol worship and turned her heart to the God of Heaven.

Ruth said to Naomi, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither [where] thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." Naomi saw that she could not change Ruth's mind. Together they set out for Bethlehem.

When they came to the city of Bethlehem, Naomi's friends were glad to see her. They noticed, though, how changed she was. She said: "Call me not Naomi [pleasant], call me Mara [bitter]: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty."

When Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem, it was the time of the barley harvest. The custom was that any grain that fell to the ground during the harvest was to be left on the ground for the poor people to glean, or gather. Ruth and Naomi were poor and needed food. Ruth asked Naomi for permission to go to someone's field and glean grain.

She went out, no doubt praying that God would guide her. When she found a field that looked good to her, she began to glean with the other reapers. Ruth did not know it, but she had come to a field belonging to a kind man named Boaz. He was a very rich relative of Elimelech's.

As Ruth was gathering grain, Boaz came into the field and saw her. He asked his servant who she was. Boaz' servant told him she was Naomi's daughter-in-law. Boaz had heard how Ruth had come back with Naomi from Moab and how she was trying to take care of her. Boaz admired Ruth for doing that; he knew that she was a good woman. Boaz told Ruth to stay and glean in his field as long as she liked, and Ruth thanked him for his kindness.

At noon, Boaz invited Ruth to eat with his workers. Later, he told his reapers to let Ruth glean with



them as long as she wanted and to drop some of the grain on purpose for her.



That evening Ruth came home, bringing the grain she had gathered. When Naomi learned that Ruth had been gleaning in the field of Boaz, she told Ruth of his relationship to Elimelech. Naomi was glad and thankful to God for guiding Ruth. Naomi said it was good for Ruth to stay in the field of Boaz. So Ruth gleaned grain in the

field of Boaz until both the barley and the wheat had been harvested.

Naomi was concerned about Ruth's future though. She knew there was a law that said the closest kinsman to a widow should buy her dead husband's land from her, and if there were no children, he also had to marry her, to

raise children in her dead husband's name. Naomi wondered if Boaz would fulfil that law.

Naomi had land that needed to be bought, or redeemed, and in Ruth's case, since she was a widow without children, Boaz would have to marry her, to raise children to carry on her dead husband's name.

Naomi advised Ruth to go to Boaz. Ruth went and did as Naomi had told her. Boaz received Ruth well, but he said there was one man who was a closer kinsman to them than himself. That man had the first duty and choice to buy the land from Naomi and to marry Ruth. When Boaz asked him, he did not want to do it though because he was afraid it would ruin his own inheritance. So, he turned the duty over to Boaz. Boaz bought the land from Naomi and also the right to marry Ruth.

In the process of time, I am sure that Boaz and Ruth came to love each other. God blessed their marriage. It was not long until God gave them a little son. He was named Obed. Obed became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of King David. That means, Ruth had a part in the family line of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 1:1-6).

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"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  
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Match the Scriptures to the Pictures



"Then said Boaz unto his servant . . . Whose damsel is this?"



"And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers."

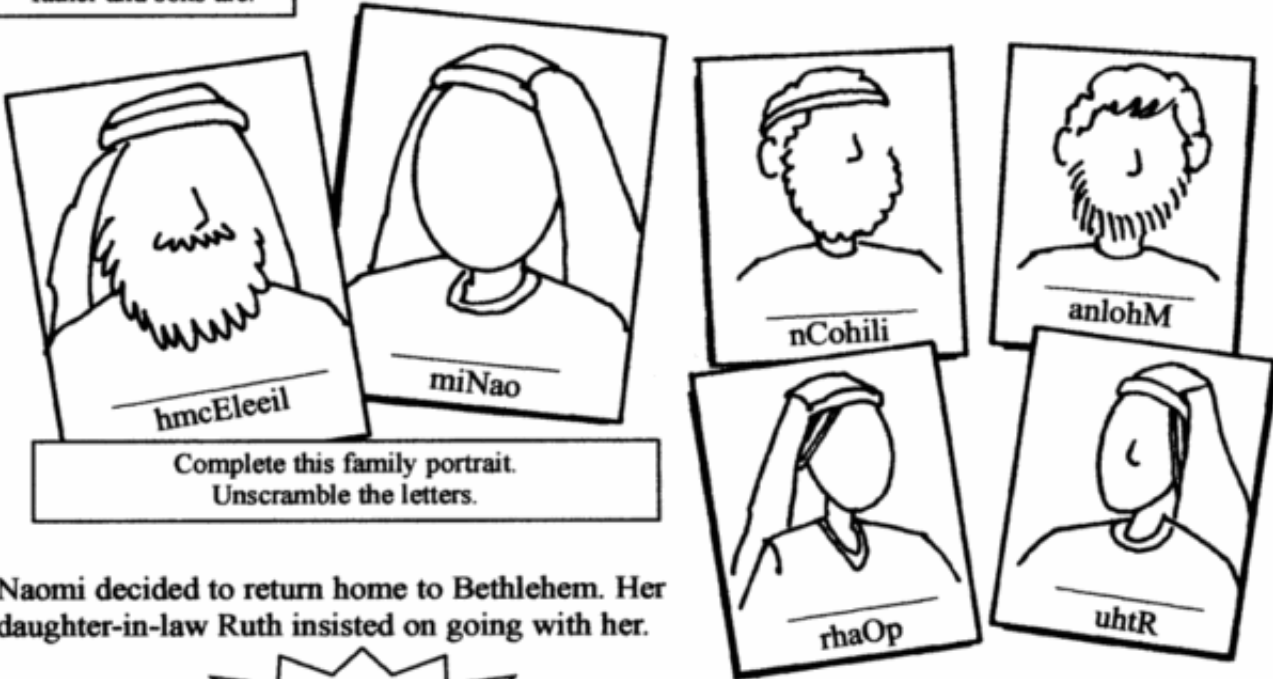


"Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge."



A man from Bethlehem took his wife and sons to the land of Moab because there was famine in Israel. The man died there. The 2 sons married Moabite women. Both sons died after about 10 years. The women were alone.

Check your Bible to find out who the mother, father and sons are.



Complete this family portrait. Unscramble the letters.

Naomi decided to return home to Bethlehem. Her daughter-in-law Ruth insisted on going with her.

Help them go from Moab to Bethlehem.





Ruth Gleans in the Field