

## Ruth 1 - 2

### Ruth, Naomi and Boaz

### Lesson 1

The book of Ruth is a story told in a simple and direct way. It took place during the time of the Judges, an era best described as *"a time when everyone did what seemed right in his own eyes."* (Judges 21:25) In contrast to the oppression and wars in the land, this is a story of ordinary people going about their everyday lives. The story is focused on the lives of two women, Naomi and Ruth, their relationship to one another and to God. Although God is not mentioned, you will see his hand at work as his story, his plan moves forward through these two amazing women.

#### **Ruth & Naomi - 1:1-22**

1. The story began, *"In the days when the Judges ruled, there was a famine."* What condition might have caused this famine? (Judges 6:3-6)
  
2. Using Ruth 1:1-2:
  - How did this Israelite family deal with the famine?
  
  - How long did they plan to stay?
  
  - Name the family members.
  
- Note: They are called Ephrathites of Bethlehem-Judah. The name Ephrathite was an earlier name for the city of Bethlehem which tells the reader they were an old-established family, local aristocracy.
  
3. Who were the Moabites? (Genesis 19:36-37)
  
4. While in the wilderness, what had God told Israel regarding the Moabites? (Deuteronomy 2:7-9)

5. What happened during the next 10 years? (vs. 1:3-5)
6. While in Moab, Naomi got “news from home.” What did she hear and what was her reaction to the news? (vs. 1:6-7)
7. Using Ruth 1:8-9:
  - As the women traveled, what was Naomi’s counsel to her daughters-in-law?
  - Whose name did Naomi call on?
  - Please comment.
8. How did her daughters-in-law respond? (vs. 1:9b-10)
9. In verse 11, what did Naomi call the girls? Comment.
10. Naomi stated the obvious and how she thought God looked upon her. Please explain. (vs. 1:11-13)
11. What were the responses of Naomi's daughters-in-law? (vs. 1:14-15)
12. What did Ruth say to Naomi? (vs. 1:16-17a)

13. In verse 17b, Ruth said, "May the LORD (YHWH, the personal name for the God of Israel) deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." What was she doing according to "The Law." (Numbers 30:1, 2 & 9) Comment.
14. Naomi stopped urging Ruth to stay and the two women continued on. What was the reaction of the people of Bethlehem when they arrived? (vs. 1:19)
  - Why do you think they questioned her identity?
15. Why did Naomi (which means pleasant) say she wanted them to call her "Mara" (meaning bitter)? (vs. 1:20-21a)
16. Who did she say was responsible for this? (vs. 1:21)

### **Ruth Meets Boaz - 2:1-23**

17. What information was given to set the stage for the next part of this story? (Ruth 1:22 and 2:1)
18. Ruth asked permission to "glean" (collect the remaining grain) in the fields. What were God's laws to Israel's landowners regarding the harvest?
  - Leviticus 19:9-10
  - Deuteronomy 24:19

19. In 1:13, Naomi stated how she saw her life, "the Lord's hand has gone against me." How do you see the Lord's hand on Naomi? (vs. 2:3-5)
20. What was the foreman's answer when Boaz asked him about the identity of the young woman gleaning in his field. (vs. 2:6-7)
21. What impression do you think Ruth made on the foreman?
22. What did Boaz call Ruth when he spoke to her for the first time? (vs. 2:8a) Comment.
23. What did he say and do? (vs. 2:8-9)
24. How did Ruth respond to Boaz? (vs. 2:10)
25. Try to put yourself in Ruth's place and comment on this incident.
26. Why did Boaz say he extended favor towards her? (vs. 2:11)
27. Boaz asked for God's blessing upon her. Explain (vs. 2:12)
28. What did Ruth understand about her social standing? (vs. 2:13)

29. When it was time for the noon meal, Ruth rested in the shade a distance from Boaz's people. Once again Boaz took the initiative. What did he do? (vs. 2:14-16)
30. Describe the scene when Ruth arrived home after her day of gleaning. (vs. 2:17-19)
31. What was Naomi's reaction when she was told the field belonged to Boaz? (vs. 2:20)
32. What was the duty of a kinsman redeemer for a near relative? (Leviticus 25:25)
33. From what you learned from the first two chapters:
  - How would you describe Ruth?
  - How would you describe Boaz?
  - Where do you see the hand of the Lord directing?

**Think about it!**

As you read through this story, take the time to think about how the Lord was directing and working in the lives of these two women who had put their faith and trust in him. This is one of the stories in the Old Testament that help us get a glimpse of what the life and customs were like in a small community in ancient Israel.

Our God is the same today as he was in the time of Ruth and Naomi. How do you see the hand of the Lord directing and working in your life?