


# unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

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*Ruth*

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# Ruth

**1** During the time that judges ruled *Israel*, there was
a famine in that country. A man from the town of
Bethlehem in the region of Judah *in the country of Israel* left
there and went to live for a while in the country of Moab.
His wife and his two sons went with him. 2 The man's name
was Elimelech and his wife's name was Naomi. The names of
his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. All of them were part
of the clan of Ephrathah, from Bethlehem in Judah. They
came to the land of Moab and stayed there. 3 Then Naomi's
husband, Elimelech, died, and Naomi had only her two sons
with her. 4 *Eventually,* the sons married women from Moab.
The name of one woman was Orpah, and the name of the
other woman was Ruth. But after Naomi and her sons had
lived in Moab for about ten years, 5 Mahlon and Kilion also
died. So then Naomi was alone without her husband or her
two sons.

6 *One day* while Naomi was in Moab, she heard someone
say that Yahweh had helped his people *in Israel* and that
now they had plenty of food. So she got ready to return
*to Bethlehem* with her daughters-in-law. 7 She and her two
daughters-in-law left the place where she had been living
and they started to walk along the road back to Judah.
8 Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Each of you
should turn around and go back to live with your mother. I
am asking Yahweh to be as faithful to you as you have been
to your dead husbands and to me. 9 I am asking Yahweh to
allow each of you to have another husband with whom you
will have a secure home." Then she kissed each of them,
and they cried aloud. 10 They each said, "No! We will return
with you to your relatives."

11 But Naomi said, "No, my daughters. Return home. It
will not do any good for you to come with me! It is not
possible for me to have more sons who could become your
husbands. 12 You should go back, my daughters. It is too late
for me to have another husband. Even if I thought that I
could have another husband, and was married even tonight
and had more sons, 13 you would not wait until they grew
up! You could not remain unmarried until then! No, my
daughters, Yahweh has done very bad things to me, causing
me to grieve very much. But your lives do not need to be as
bad as mine."

14 Then Ruth and Orpah cried loudly again. Orpah kissed
her mother-in-law *goodbye and left*, but Ruth stayed with
Naomi. 15 Naomi said to her, "Look! Your sister-in-law is
going back to her relatives and to the god that she worshiped
*previously*! Go back with her!" 16 But Ruth replied, "No!
Please do not insist that I abandon you and stop taking care
of you! Wherever you travel, I will travel too. Wherever
you live, I will live too. Your relatives will be my relatives,
and I will worship the God whom you worship. 17 Wherever
you die, there I will die, and they will bury me there. May
Yahweh punish me severely if I leave you even after we die."
18 When Naomi realized that Ruth had firmly resolved to go
with her, Naomi stopped urging Ruth to return home.

19 So the two women continued walking until they came
to the town of Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem,
many people in the town began talking loudly about them.
Many women of the town exclaimed, "It is hard to believe
that this is Naomi!" 20 Naomi said to them, "You should not
call me Naomi anymore, since it means 'pleasant.' Instead,
call me Mara, because it means 'bitter.' God Almighty has
made my life very bitter. 21 When I left, I had everything I
could want, but Yahweh has brought me back with nothing.
Do not call me Naomi. Yahweh has opposed me. Almighty
God has treated me badly."

22 So that is how Naomi returned home along with her
daughter-in-law Ruth, the woman from Moab. When they
arrived in Bethlehem, it was the season for people there to
begin harvesting their crops of barley.

**2** There was a man *there* who was a relative of Naomi's
*dead* husband, Elimelech. He was rich and important,
and a member of the same clan to which Elimelech belonged.
The man's name was Boaz. 2 Ruth (the woman from Moab)
said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the
grain that the harvesters leave behind. I will go behind any
harvester who allows me to do so." Naomi replied, "Go
ahead, my daughter." 3 So Ruth went. When she got to the
fields, she followed the harvesters and picked up grain. The
part of the field that she was working in just happened to
belong to Boaz, Elimelek's relative.

4 Just then, Boaz arrived from Bethlehem! He greeted the
harvesters, "May Yahweh be with you!" They replied, "May
Yahweh bless you!"

5 Then Boaz *saw Ruth, and* asked his foreman, "Who is that
young woman related to?" 6 The foreman replied, "She is the
young woman from Moab who accompanied Naomi when
she returned from there. 7 The woman said to me, 'Please
let me pick up the grain that the men who are harvesting
leave behind.' *I allowed her to do so.* She has worked since
early this morning until recently, when she rested for a short
time under the shelter." 8 Then Boaz *walked over to where
Ruth was and* said to Ruth, "Young lady, please listen to
me. You do not need to go to any other field or anywhere
else to gather grain. You should stay right here with my
servant girls. 9 Watch where the men are harvesting and
follow along behind my servant girls. I have told the men
*who are harvesting* not to molest you. Whenever you are
thirsty, go and get some water to drink from the jars that
the men have filled."

10 Then she knelt before him *in respect* with her forehead
touching the ground. She exclaimed, "Why are you being
so kind to me? I did not think that you would pay any
attention to me, since I am a foreigner!" 11 Boaz replied,
"People have told me everything that you have done for
your mother-in-law since your husband died. They told me
that you left your parents and your homeland, and that you
came here to live among people whom you did not know
previously. 12 I pray that Yahweh will fully repay you for
what you have done. Yes, may Yahweh, the God of Israel,
the one whom you are trusting to protect you, reward you
in full."

13 She replied, "Sir, I hope I will continue to please you.
You have comforted me by speaking so kindly to me, your
servant, and yet I am not even *worthy to be* one of your
servant girls!"

14 When it was time to eat, Boaz said to Ruth, "Come
over here *and get some food*. Take some of this bread and
dip it in the vinegar and eat it." So she *came and* sat down
with the harvesters. Then he gave her some roasted grain.

She ate all *the food* that she wanted and had some left over.
15 After she stood up to go back to work, Boaz ordered his
workers, "Even if she gathers some grain near the bundles
of grain *that you have cut*, do not tell her to stop doing that.
16 Even more than that, I want you to pull out some stalks
of grain from the bundles and leave them *on the ground* for
her to pick up—and do not scold her."
17 So Ruth gathered grain in the field until evening. Then
she threshed the barley that she had gathered*, to separate
the kernels from the stalks*. The barley kernels were enough to
fill a large basket. 18 She carried it back to town and showed
her mother-in-law how much she had gathered. Ruth also
gave her mother-in-law the roasted grain that she had left
over after she had eaten all that she had wanted *at lunchtime*.
19 Her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you gather all
this grain today? In whose field did you work? I pray that God
will bless the man who was so kind to you." Then Ruth told
her about the person with whom she had worked. She said,
"The name of the man who owns the field where I worked
today is Boaz." 20 Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May
Yahweh bless him! Yahweh has continued to act faithfully
toward *us* who are still living, and to *our husbands* who have
died." Then Naomi said, "That man is a close relative *of
Elimelek*. In fact, he is one of those responsible for taking
care of our family."
21 Then Ruth, the woman from Moab, said, "He also told
me to stay with his workers until they are done bringing in
all his grain from the field."
22 Naomi replied to her daughter-in-law Ruth, "My
daughter, it will be good for you to go *to his field* with
his servant girls, because if you go to someone else's field,
someone might assault you."
23 So Ruth worked alongside of Boaz's servant girls. She
gathered heads of grain until the workers had finished
harvesting both the barley and the wheat. *During that time,*
she continued to live with Naomi.

**3** One day, Naomi said to Ruth, "My daughter, I want
to arrange for you to have a secure home with a good
husband. 2 Now, you have been working with Boaz's servant
girls. As you know, he is a close relative of ours. So listen
carefully. Tonight he will be at the place where they thresh
the barley. He will be separating the grain from the chaff.
3 Bathe yourself and put on some perfume. Put on your full
outer cloak. Then go down to the place where they thresh
the grain. But do not let him know that you are there until
he has finished his *evening* meal. 4 When he lies down *to
sleep*, pay attention to where he lies down. Then go *over to
him*, uncover his feet, and lie down *there*. *When he wakes up,*
he will be the one to tell you what to do *next*."
5 Ruth replied, "I will do everything that you have told me
to do." 6 So she went down to the place where people thresh
the grain. There she did everything that her mother-in-law
had told her to do.
7 *This is what happened:* When Boaz finished eating and
drinking, he was feeling good. He went over to the far end of
the grain pile, lay down there*, and went to sleep*. Then Ruth
stealthily approached him. She took the covering off his feet
and lay down *there*. 8 In the middle of the night, he woke up
suddenly. He sat up and was amazed to find a woman lying
at his feet! 9 He asked her, "Who are you?" She replied, "I
am your servant, Ruth. Since you are the one responsible
for my dead husband's family, please make me secure by
marrying me."
10 Boaz replied, "May Yahweh bless you, my dear!
Previously, you were very faithful to your mother-in-law,
but you are acting even more faithfully now by not chasing
after a young man to marry, whether rich or poor. 11 Now,
my dear, I will do everything that you asked. Do not be
afraid, because everyone in this town knows that you are
an honorable woman. 12 However, while it is true that I am
one of Elimelek's close relatives and, therefore, could be
responsible *for you and Naomi*, there is another man who
is a closer relative than I am. *He is the one who is actually
responsible for you.* 13 You stay here for the rest of the night.
Tomorrow morning I will tell this man about you. If he says
that he will take care of you, fine, he can marry you. But if
he is unwilling to take care of you, I solemnly promise that,
as surely as Yahweh lives, I will marry you and take care of
you myself. So stay here until it is morning."
14 Then Boaz added, "It would be best if no one knew
that a woman came here." So she lay at his feet until early
morning and got up *to leave* before *it was light enough that*
people would be able to recognize her. 15 Then Boaz said to
her, "Bring your shawl over here and hold it out." When she
did that, he poured a generous amount of barley into it and
put it on her back. Then he went into town.
16 When Ruth arrived home, her mother-in-law asked her,
"How did things turn out for you, my daughter?" Then Ruth
told her all that Boaz had said and done for her. 17 She also
said to Naomi, "He gave me all this barley, saying, 'I do not
want you to return to your mother-in-law with nothing.'"
18 Then Naomi said, "My daughter, just wait here until we
see what happens. That man will work hard on this matter
until he has resolved it today."

**4** Meanwhile, Boaz went up to *the place inside* the town
gate *where people conducted their official business*. He
sat down there. Just as he had hoped, the man responsible
for Naomi's family came along, the man whom Boaz had
mentioned earlier. Boaz called out to him by name and
said, "Come over here and sit down." So the man came
over and sat down. 2 Boaz then gathered ten of the older,
well-respected men from the town and said *to them*, "Please
sit here *so you can witness our business*." So they sat down.
3 Then Boaz said to the man responsible for Naomi's family,
"The part of the field that belonged to our relative Elimelek is
for sale. Naomi, who recently returned from Moab, is selling
it. 4 I thought that I should tell you *about it* and suggest that
you buy *the field* while the people who are sitting here are
listening, including these leaders of our people. If you want
to buy it back into the family, then do so. But if you do
not want to buy it back, then let me know, because you are
the closest relative to Elimelek, and I am next after you."
The man replied, "No, I will buy it!" 5 Then Boaz told him,
"When you buy the land from Naomi, you will also need to
marry Ruth, our deceased relative's widow from Moab, in
order that she may have a son who will inherit the property
and who will continue Elimelek's family line." 6 Then the
nearer relative said, "Then I cannot buy it back myself. If I
did that, I would ruin my own son's inheritance. You may
be responsible for the land and the woman instead of me. I
cannot do it."
7 (At that time in Israel, people had a different way of
redeeming *land* or exchanging *goods between them*. In order
to make these matters legally binding, one man would take
off one of his sandals and give it to the other man. That was
the way people in Israel made final what they had agreed to

do.) 8 So after the relative said to Boaz, “You buy the field
yourself,” he took off one of his sandals *and gave it to Boaz*.
9 Then Boaz said to the respected men and to all the
other people who were there, “Today you have all seen that
I have bought from Naomi all the property that belonged
to Elimelek, Kilion, and Mahlon. 10 I am also taking Ruth,
Mahlon’s widow from Moab, to be my wife. This is in order
that she may give birth to a son. Everyone will consider this
son to be a descendant of Elimelek. This son will inherit the
property and carry on Elimelek’s family name among his
relatives and here in his hometown. Today you have seen
and heard these things and can speak of them to anyone
who asks about them.”
11 All the respected men, and the others who were sitting
at the town gate, agreed, and they said, “Yes, we have seen
and heard. We pray that Yahweh will allow this woman,
who will be coming into your home, to be like Rachel and
Leah, the two who bore our ancestors and started our people,
Israel. May you become great in the clan of Ephrathah and
famous here in Bethlehem! 12 We pray that your family will
be like the family of your ancestor Perez, son of Judah and
Tamar, because of the many descendants that Yahweh will
give to you and this young woman.”
13 So Boaz married Ruth and had sexual relations with
her. Yahweh enabled her to become pregnant, and she gave
birth to a son. 14 The women of Bethlehem said to Naomi,
“Praise Yahweh for giving you a man to preserve your family
today. We pray to Yahweh that people throughout Israel
will greatly respect him. 15 Your daughter-in-law, who loves
you and who has been better to you than if you had seven
sons, has given birth to him. Therefore, he will make you
feel young again, and he will take care of you when you
become old.”
16 Then Naomi picked up the baby and held him closely
and became a second mother to him. 17 The women who were
living nearby said, “It is as though Naomi now has a son!”
They named him Obed. Later, Obed became the father of
Jesse, who became the father of *King* David. 18 Here is a list of
the descendants of Perez: Perez’s son was Hezron. 19 Hezron’s
son was Ram. Ram’s son was Amminadab. 20 Amminadab’s
son was Nahshon. Nahshon’s son was Salmon. 21 Salmon’s
son was Boaz. Boaz’s son was Obed. 22 Obed’s son was Jesse.
Jesse’s son was *King* David.