

RUTH

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 1

- Vv. 1-5 *Ten tragic years in Moab.* Naomi with Elimelech, her husband, and her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, left Bethlehem-judah when the famine in the land was so severe that they were unable to maintain themselves any longer in Israel. As the Scripture says, they dwelt there about ten years. In that time Elimelech died. Mahlon and Chilion married, Chilion to Orpah and Mahlon to Ruth. Both Mahlon and Chilion died, thus Naomi was left alone with her two widowed daughters-in-law.
- Vv. 6-14 *Orpah left behind in Moab.* Naomi was determined to return to the home she had left in Israel at Bethlehem-judah. She encouraged both her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab. Orpah decided this was best for her and kissed Naomi, parting from her.
- Vv. 15-22 *Ruth and Naomi return to Bethlehem.* Ruth's famous articulation of her decision has been an encouragement to many, especially to a man and his wife when they exchange their vows. The two widowed women thus made their lonely way across Jordan to the west and came to Naomi's home in Bethlehem-judah. There was a love between them which made them inseparable.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *No bread in the "house of bread."* Bethlehem means "house of bread." There was a famine in the land, and there was no bread in the "house of bread." Life's

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situations are often similar to this. The title of a place or a person may belie the truth of the matter. "Professors are not always possessors" is a proverbial statement. They may profess truth but not possess truth. Kings are not always rulers. They may be ruled by vile passions. Churches are not always filled with people who are "called out," the root meaning of *ecclesia*. It is ironic that people living in the place signifying the house of bread had to flee to a foreign country in order to find something to eat.

2. "*Thy God shall be my God.*" Ruth had found more in Naomi than a concerned and conscientious mother-in-law. By her association with Elimelech's family, especially her marriage to Mahlon, she had come to the point where she was willing to leave her family, her people, and her pagan gods. When such firm foundations are laid for marriage and family life, all around is happiness.
3. *Call me "Mara."* When Naomi came home to Bethlehem-judah, many older members of the community remembered her and welcomed her back. Since she came home alone—widowed and without sons—they asked if it really were Naomi. It was hard to believe that she had suffered such losses. In answer she replied, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara." The Hebrew word, *Mara*, means bitter. She felt God had dealt bitterly with her. A similar fate may await many Christians, but all need to remember that the child whom a father loves he chastens. Even though we may feel God has dealt bitterly with us, we should praise His holy name.

CHAPTER ONE

Ruth Comes to Bethlehem 1:1-22

Introduction to the Life and Times of Ruth 1:1-7

Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

2 And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.

4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelt there about ten years.

5 And Mahlón and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.

7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

1. What time is described in Ruth? 1:1

Ruth is attached to other well-known events by the definite statement "in the days when judges judged." It is assigned to the period of the judges generally. "A famine in the land," i.e., in the land of Israel and not merely in the neighborhood of Bethlehem is the import of

a second introductory statement. The time of this famine cannot be determined with certainty, although it seems very natural to connect it with the devastation of the land by the Midianites (Judges 6); and there are several things which favor this. For example, giving consideration to the marriages mentioned in the last chapter, the events are pushed back to the middle of the period of the judges, and no period fits better than the period of Gideon.

2. *Do the names of the characters explain the narrative?*
1:2

(1) Elimelech, *God is King*; (2) Naomi, *the gracious*; (3) Mahlon, *the weakly*; and (4) Chilion, *pinning* are genuine Hebrew names; whereas the names of the Moabish women, Orpah and Ruth, who were married to Elimelech's sons, cannot be satisfactorily explained from the Hebrew. The meaning given to Orpah, "turning back," is very arbitrary; and the derivation of Ruth from a word for "a friend," is quite uncertain. According to 4:10, Ruth was the wife of the elder son, Mahlon. The names do not really explain the narrative. They are genuine names; and if any further information is gathered from them, it is coincidental to the real historical message of the narrative.

3. *Why were they called Ephrathites?* 1:2

They were residents of Bethlehem; and the old name for Bethlehem was *Ephratha*, as "Queen City" was for Cincinnati. The name appears again and again as a reference to Bethlehem. Micah speaks of Bethlehem Ephratha (5:2). An explanation of the meaning of the name is given in the account of the death of Benjamin near this spot. As the record says: "Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (the same is Bethlehem)" (Genesis 35:19).

4. *What was the route from Bethlehem to Moab? 1:2b*

They might have gone over the Jordan River around the north end of the Dead Sea or through the Negeb around the south end of the Dead Sea. Since no mention is made of their taking a boat across the Dead Sea, it was not likely that this was their means of making the journey. A trip around the south end would lead them through an area which was very hot and arid, and it is reasonable to doubt their going this way. By going around the north end of the Dead Sea, they would have entered rather quickly into the territory where they would be among members of the tribe of Judah, and it is best to think of their going in this direction.

5. *What was the danger of this move to Elimelech's sons? 1:4*

He was taking his family into a pagan country. The young men were of marriageable age, and there was a danger of their marrying pagan wives. This they did. Under usual circumstances these wives would have a great influence upon the young men, running almost always to the point of leading them away from the faith of their parents. In fact such was so often the case that God forbade the Israelites to marry among the Canaanite people into whose midst they came.

6. *How long did they sojourn there? 1:4*

They were in Moab long enough for the boys to mature, marry, and expire. All of this occurred in about ten years. Since all these events occurred in such a short span of time and turned out to be very tragic, Naomi said God had dealt bitterly with her and afflicted her (verses 20, 21). These ten years were very significant; and although they were rather few in number, they must have dragged slowly by for the lonely Naomi.

7. *Why was there a famine in Judah and not in Moab?*

1:6

If the famine were inflicted by the Midianites, Moab would not have been affected. The terrain of the two areas was not particularly different. The latitude of Moab and Judah was almost the same, the two areas being parallel and directly across the Dead Sea from each other. Since the Moabites were not a part of the commonwealth of Israel, the Midianites would have little reason to attack them. The Midianites were sent as a plague against the Israelites, who had turned their backs on God.

8. *Why did the daughters-in-law start to return with Naomi?* 1:7

They were somewhat obligated to care for their aged relative. More than this, they were attracted to the Israelite way of life. In addition, any change of scenery may have been welcome to them. Normally young people are of an adventurous spirit, and it would be a new experience for them. The trip from Moab to Judah must have been emotion-packed, as Ruth and Orpah were leaving families behind; but it also was filled with anticipation as the young women especially looked forward to a new phase of their lives.

Ruth's Determination to Remain With Naomi 1:8-18

8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

9 The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have a husband also tonight, and should also bear sons;

13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law.

16 And Ruth said, 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:

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

18 When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

9. *Why did Naomi ask each of her daughters-in-law to return "to her mother's house"? 1:8*

They would need the maternal protection since their husbands were dead. By referring to the mother's house instead of the father's house, Naomi may have indicated the girls were without fathers. If so, they had suffered tragic losses in the early deaths not only of their husbands,

but also of their fathers. Even if the fathers were alive, Naomi may have mentioned the mothers on account of the close ties of the women with their mothers.

10. *What kind of wives had Orpah and Ruth been? 1:8*

They had been kind, good, and loving. No reason is given to the Bible student to believe the suggestion of their being wicked women and occasioning the deaths of their husbands. Some believe Judah received this kind of impression from the associations of his sons with Tamar and thus procrastinated in giving his youngest son to her as her husband. Still more believe Onan was possessed of this same fear of Tamar. The Bible narrative is clear, however, in attributing the death of both Er and Onan to their own wickedness (Genesis 38:7, 9). Judah's procrastination in giving Shelah to Tamar as her husband should rather be attributed to his being dilatory. Certainly nothing in the account of the lives of Ruth and Orpah suggest their being wicked and occasioning the deaths of their husbands, Mahlon and Chilion. All of the record of their lives is good.

11. *What is the meaning of the remark about "the hand of the Lord"? 1:13*

Naomi felt the losses were punishment from God. Most people quickly jump to the same conclusion when they suffer losses. Job's friends accused him of doing evil and thus receiving punishment from the hand of God. The Apostles thought the man born blind must have sinned and received his blindness as a punishment from God (John 9:1 ff.). Since Naomi had lost her husband and her two sons after having fled from their home on account of a famine, she believed God was against her.

12. *Why did Ruth wish to return with Naomi? 1:16*

Naomi had simply the earthly prosperity of her daughter-in-law in her mind. With Ruth, however, it was evidently not merely strong affection and attachment

by which she felt herself drawn to her mother-in-law. She wished to live and die with her. There was a leaning of her heart towards the God of Israel and His laws, of which she herself was probably not yet fully conscious. She had acquired this faith in her married relation. It was her earnest wish never to be separated from Naomi and her God.

13. *From where did Ruth obtain her power of expression?*
1:16, 17

She had been accustomed to hearing similar expressions of love and devotion from her new family. Some may think her expression was inspired of the Holy Spirit. God must have been pleased with her statement of her faith and desire, but nothing in the narrative suggests Ruth's being overpowered by the Spirit of God and enabled to give an expression beyond what was natural to her. Her pleasant associations with Mahlon and his family brought these thoughts to her mind.

14. *What was the effect of the intermarriage on the two young women?* 1:17, 18

They had been brought out of idolatry. Orpah was not as devoted as Ruth, but she had at least begun to find her way out of the pagan society in which she had been reared. Ruth's faith was deep enough to cause her to leave her family behind, to go out of her native country into a strange land, and to seek a new life in a community where she had no prospect of happy married life. Her experience as the wife of Mahlon had brought a big change in her life.

Ruth's Arrival in Bethlehem 1:19-22

19 So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?

20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21 I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

15. *How did Naomi contrast her return with her departure? 1:20*

The whole town of Bethlehem seemed to be excited at Naomi's return, but we suppose it was the women of the city in particular. They were not as surprised to see Naomi was still alive and had come back again as to see her returning in so mournful a condition. She was a solitary widow, without either husband or sons. Naomi replied, "Call me not *Naomi* (i.e. gracious), but *Mara* (the bitter one; i.e., who has experienced bitterness)." She said she went away full and Jehovah had made her come back again empty. She did not mean she had been "full" of riches, money and property but in the possession of a husband and two sons. She had been a rich mother. Now she was deprived of all that makes a mother's heart rich. She was bereft of both husband and sons. She felt Jehovah had testified against her by word and deed (see Exodus 20:16; I Samuel 1:6).

16. *In what season was the return to Bethlehem? 1:22*

It was the harvest time. Barley was the first crop harvested by the people of the land. When the harvest began, the people of Israel were commanded to bring a sheaf of the firstfruits to the priest. He was to wave the

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sheaf before the Lord on the day after the sabbath, and the people were to offer a he-lamb without blemish for a burnt offering unto the Lord (Leviticus 23:10-12). Since so many of the events recorded in Ruth occurred during the time of the barley harvest, it was customary to read the little book as the people celebrated the feast of Pentecost, the feast which came fifty days after the passover. This statement in the closing verse of chapter one opens the way for telling of events which happened in the barley fields where Ruth worked after she came to Bethlehem-judah.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 1

1. Where was Naomi's home in Israel?
2. What was the name of Naomi's husband?
3. What were the names of the two sons of Naomi?
4. What were the names of the two women of Moab whom Naomi's sons married?
5. How long was Naomi in Moab?
6. Did Orpah return to Bethlehem with Naomi?
7. What is the meaning of the word *Naomi*?
8. What name did Naomi ask the people of Bethlehem to call her?
9. What is the meaning of the word *Mara*?
10. What time of year was it when Naomi returned to Bethlehem?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 2

- Vv. 1- 7 *Ruth gleaning in the field of Boaz.* Provision was made in Israel for the poor and widowed to glean the fields for their sustenance. Land owners were instructed not to reap wholly the corners of their fields. They were not to

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gather the gleanings of the harvest. Fallen fruits of the orchards were to be left as were the grapes in the vineyard. These were for the poor and the sojourner among them (Leviticus 19:9, 10). Ruth took her place among these "non-advantaged" people.

Vv. 8-16 *Ruth treated kindly by Boaz.* Ruth was invited to eat with the reapers of Boaz. When they went out to the field again, Boaz gave instructions to his men telling them to leave additional grain in the field for Ruth. He was a near kinsman of Naomi's and had heard of Ruth's coming back to Bethlehem with Naomi.

Vv. 17-23 *Naomi informed of Ruth's good fortune.* The day's work in the fields of Boaz gave enough grain to Ruth to meet the immediate needs of the two women. Naomi thanked God that Ruth received such kind treatment, and she encouraged Ruth to work only in the fields of Boaz. For this reason, Ruth stayed with the workers in the fields of Boaz until the end of the barley harvest.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Labor and Management are compatible.* When Boaz came to meet his workers, he greeted them with a prayer that the Lord would be with them. They replied by praying that God would bless their master. Such a healthy relationship between the owner of land and those who worked for him is a good example to be imitated by all who are in similar situations today.

2. *A good reputation is the best kind of introduction.* When Boaz met Ruth, she was humble before him. She was surprised that he paid any attention to her since she was a foreigner. Boaz replied that he had heard already how she had treated her mother-in-law kindly after the death of her husband. He knew how Ruth had left her father and mother and the land of her nativity to come into the land of Judah. All of this spoke highly of Ruth's character.
3. *Generation gaps need not occur.* In the twentieth century much has been made of children entering into an era of life known as the "teen ages." Young people believe they enter into some kind of magic time of life when they are not quite children and not quite adult. Throughout many of these years they look askance at anyone more than ten years older than they are and quite often refuse to listen to the counsel of wiser and more mature judgment. Ruth did not take this attitude. She looked to Naomi for counsel, and Naomi counseled her wisely as she asked her to stay in the fields of Boaz. Each generation should look for this pleasant association with those younger or older than they.

CHAPTER TWO

Ruth Meets Boaz 2:1-23

Ruth Gleans in the Field of Boaz 2:1-7

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.

2 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.

3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

4 And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee.

5 Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this?

6 And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab:

7 And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.

1. *What is the meaning of mighty man of wealth? 2:1*

Boaz is described as "a mighty man of wealth." Such terminology is usually used to describe one who was a brave "man of war." The term was used in this way in Judges 6:12 in describing Gideon. The angel of the Lord called Gideon "a mighty man of valor," but the original language is the same in both places. The phrase is translated in the same way in Judges 11:1 where Jephthah is called "a mighty man of valor." Since Boaz had nothing to do with warfare, it is presumed the phrase means he was an influential man with considerable wealth, and the translation is so given.

2. *What was the law regarding gleaning? 2:2, 3*

The Mosaic law (Leviticus 19:9, 23:22, cf. Deuteronomy 24:19) expressly secured to the poor the right to glean in the harvest fields. It prohibited the owners from gleaning themselves, but hard-hearted farmers and reapers threw obstacles in the way of the poor. Some even forbade

their gleaning altogether. Hence, Ruth proposed to glean after him who should generously allow it. She carried out this intention with the consent of Naomi. God led her to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, a relative of Elimelech, without her knowing the owner of the field or being at all aware of his connection with Elimelech. Ruth was industrious and willing to work with her hands to provide their daily bread.

3. *What was the relationship between Boaz and his reapers?* 2:4

He treated them mercifully and they served him faithfully. He greeted them by saying, "The Lord be with you." They replied to him by saying, "The Lord bless thee." Such a greeting indicates the existence of a good rapport between the landowner and those who worked in his fields. Their expressions were more than the customary greetings which are often thoughtless and given hastily, such as our everyday, "Hi!" or "Hello!" Both the greeting of Boaz and the reply of his reapers were prayers.

4. *Why did he come from Bethlehem?* 2:4

Men lived in towns and went out to their fields. It was unsafe for individual farmers to live alone in the countryside. They would be vulnerable to highway robbers and in danger of harm from predatory animals. Most of the time, these settlements had walls around them with gates which could be locked at night, thus protecting the people who dwelled there from any harm. Boaz resided in Bethlehem and went out to his field during the daytime. Thus we read, "Boaz came from Bethlehem."

5. *Why did Ruth ask to work "among the sheaves"?* 2:7

She wanted permission to go into the fields—more than walking along the roadside. The Old Testament law was specific in giving instructions as to how much grain could be gathered by those who were dependent upon this activity for their livelihood. For example, it was specified

that they could go into the vineyard of their neighbor, but they were not to take any grapes out in a vessel. They could eat all that they needed while they were there. A similar rule was made with regard to walking through the standing grain of the fields. People were allowed to pluck the ears with their hands, but they were not allowed to use a sickle in the standing grain (Deuteronomy 23:24, 25). According to this custom and regulation Jesus' disciples plucked grain as they walked through the grain fields on the sabbath day (Matthew 12:1, 2). Ruth's request was for freedom to work in the fields following the reapers.

6. *What can we learn from the servant's conversation with Boaz? 2:4-7*

It is evident from this answer of the servant who was placed over the reapers that Boaz did not prohibit any poor person from gleaning in his field. It is also clear that Ruth asked permission of the overseer of the reapers. She availed herself of this permission with untiring zeal from the first thing in the morning. She wanted to get the necessary support for her mother-in-law and herself. Lastly, we learn her history was well known to the overseer and also to Boaz, although Boaz saw her now for the first time.

The Kindness of Boaz 2:8-16

8 Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:

9 Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.

10 Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.

12 The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

13 Then she said, Let me find favor in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

14 And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

15 And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not:

16 And let fall also some of the handfulls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.

7. Why did Boaz make special arrangements about the water? 2:9

Men who hired workers were especially careful to provide water for them. Even in modern times these provisions are cared for with great detail. Men soon be-

come disgruntled if good clean water is not made available to them. The hot climate of Palestine demands such arrangements. If Ruth were forced to provide her own jug for drinking water, she would be handicapped in this respect. It was a fine concession which Boaz made to her in this regard.

8. *What was the cause of the kind treatment? 2:11, 12*

Boaz heard a good report of Ruth. Word must have spread rapidly about the woman from a foreign country who had shown great kindness to her deceased husband's family. Boaz mentioned especially her leaving her own father and mother and her native land to come into Judah. He was impressed because she had entered a country about which she had no prior knowledge. He was also duly impressed with her renunciation of a former pagan faith in order to be counted among the redeemed of Israel. His picturesque expression of this action was similar to an expression used by Moses as he mentioned God's bearing the children of Israel on "eagle's wings" (Deuteronomy 32:11). Boaz prayed that Ruth would be rewarded by "the Lord God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to trust."

9. *Why did Ruth compare herself unfavorably with the other gleaners? 2:13*

She was a stranger in Israel. She said she was not like any of the handmaidens in the service of Boaz. She may have had different facial characteristics since she was not descended from one of the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. Her people had been separated by location and social customs from the people of Israel. Her appearance was evidently different enough to set her apart. Some feel the main thrust of this book is to break down barriers of national and racial prejudice, and certainly Boaz did not withhold his kindness from Ruth because she was of foreign nationality.

10. *What was the parched corn? 2:14*

Parched corn was a delicacy prepared by roasting the heads of grain (not ears of maize). Israel's offering of the firstfruits to the Lord demanded their giving "green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears" (Leviticus 2:14). These roasted grains of wheat are still eaten by reapers in the harvest field. On occasion strangers will be offered some of these delicacies. One traveler told of coming into a field where nearly two hundred reapers and gleaners were working. The gleaners were nearly as numerous as the reapers. Some of them were resting from their labors and taking some refreshment. These offered the traveler some of their "parched corn." Those who have partaken of this kind of grain describe the grains of wheat as being not yet fully dried and hard. They are roasted in a pan on an iron plate and constitute a very tasty bit of food. This is sometimes eaten along with bread or at other times in place of it. Boaz gave Ruth an abundant supply of the parched grain. She was not only satisfied, but saved some to take home to her mother-in-law.

11. *Why did Boaz give special instructions to his young men? 2:15, 16*

Ruth had evidently asked for permission to glean among the sheaves, an allowance which was not normally made. Boaz also felt it necessary to instruct his reapers not to torment her or cause her any injury. Furthermore, he instructed them to drop little bundles of grain for her. These were to be left lying so that she could pick them up and add to her supply of gleaned grain. Some of the workmen may have thought Ruth was out of place. Others may have resented the presence of a Moab woman among the other gleaners, but Boaz instructed them to "reproach her not." He continued by saying, "rebuke her not."

Ruth Returns to Naomi 2:17-23

17 So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

18 And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.

19 And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned today? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought today is Boaz.

20 And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.

21 And Ruth the Moabite said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.

22 And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.

23 So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother-in-law.

12. How much is an ephah? 2:17

An ephah equals three pecks and three pints. It was almost a bushel. This standard of measure was popular throughout much of Israel's history. When the children of Israel received manna in the wilderness, the portion given to each person was counted as a tenth part of an ephah (Exodus 16:36). Since one-tenth of this amount was sufficient for an individual's need of manna, Ruth's por-

tion from her gleaning was considerably more than a day's supply of grain. She was quite evidently industrious and achieved a great deal from her day's work.

13. *Why was Ruth reserving some grain?* 2:18

The writer of Proverbs wisely counseled a young man to put a knife to his throat when he went to eat with a ruler. Otherwise, he might be tempted to plunge into the abundant provisions and make a spectacle of himself. He would thus show his greediness and offend his host (Proverbs 23:1, 3). Such conduct was not becoming to any person, and it was especially so with Ruth since she was a woman and a foreigner. Consequently, she did not eat all of the parched grain which was provided for her. Furthermore, she must have been thinking about Naomi. Her unselfish and loving character prompted her to save some of the delicacies for her mother-in-law.

14. *How was God showing kindness to the dead?* 2:20

What was done to Ruth and Naomi was also done to Mahlon and Chilion. Naomi admits it was kindness done to her and to Ruth, the living. God was showing kindness to Elimelech and his sons inasmuch as He was caring for their widows. The property was still in the name of Elimelech, and Ruth was still known as the wife of Mahlon. The kindness of Boaz to Ruth was a remembrance of both the living and the dead.

15. *What is the meaning of "next kinsmen?"* 2:20b

There were three ways in which redemption was specified in Leviticus 25:25 ff. *The first case was this:* if a man became poor and sold his property, his nearest redeemer was to come and release what his brother had sold. He was to buy it back from the purchaser and restore it to its former possessor. The nearest kinsman was the relative upon whom this obligation rested. *The second*

case was this: if one had no redeemer, either because there were no relatives upon whom the obligation rested or because they were all too poor and he had earned and acquired sufficient to redeem it, he was to calculate the years of purchase and return the surplus to the man who had bought it. He gave as much as was paid for the years which still remained up to the next year of jubilee. Thus, the original owner might come into possession of it again. *The third case was this:* if a man had not earned as much as was required to make compensation for the recovery of the land, what he had sold was to remain in the possession of the buyer till the year of jubilee and then it was to "go out." It was to become free again, so that the impoverished seller could enter into possession with compensation. Since the "near kinsman" was also to marry the widow of a brother, the two transactions—redemption of the land and marriage of the surviving wife—became inextricably associated.

16. *How long did the gleanings continue?* 2:23

Barley harvest was early spring (March, April). Wheat harvest was in the summer. Altogether harvest lasted from three to four months. These were important events in the lives of this agricultural people. The plagues which came on Egypt were identified in time by the condition of the crops. When the plague of hail came on Egypt, the flax and the barley was smitten "for the barley was in the ear and the flax was balled" (Exodus 9:31). At the same time a note was made of the season because the "wheat and the rye were not smitten: because they were not grown up" (verse 32). These people were accustomed to noting time by making reference to the progress of their crops. Such activities as the harvesting of the grain were very important to the lives of these people.

ing to Ruth 4:5, it had become a traditional custom to require the Levirate marriage of the one who bought the property of the deceased relative. Thus the landed possession was permanently retained in the family, but also the family itself was not suffered to die out.

Ruth Returns to Naomi 3:14-18

14 And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.

15 Also he said, Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city.

16 And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her.

17 And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.

18 Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

8. *Why did Ruth rise so early? 3:14*

Boaz was anxious to protect Ruth's physical well-being. He did not want to send her out into the night from the threshing floor. She would be at the mercy of such men as those who milled about Lot's house in Sodom (Genesis 19) and the men of Gibeah who tried to misuse the Levite in the days of the judges (Judges 19-21). Boaz also was careful to protect Ruth's reputation. Although he was willing to keep her safe from harm during the middle of the night, he counseled her to leave his

threshing floor early in the morning before the sun was risen. In this way, any who saw her leave would not be able to discern who she was and would not point a finger of scandal in her direction.

9. *What kind of veil did Ruth wear?* 3:15

The veil into which Boaz poured the grain was a large garment, possibly similar to a large shawl. The cloaks worn by ancient people were very full. One part could be thrown over the shoulder and another corner could be gathered up under the arm. By holding a certain part of the pallium, as it is sometimes called, Ruth could receive into her bosom the grain which Boaz gave her. The garment is called a veil since it could easily be drawn up over the face to hide the countenance of a modest woman from the unholy gaze of wicked men.

10. *How much barley did Boaz give to Ruth?* 3:15

The old rabbins said the measure was a seah which is equal to two ephahs. Since an ephah was nearly equal to a bushel, Boaz would have given twelve bushels to Ruth by this calculation. Certainly this is incorrect. Ruth could not have carried such a large quantity of barley. The smallest unit of dry measure was a log and equaled approximately a pint. If Boaz gave six of these measures to Ruth, the amount of grain she received would be approximately the same as one omer which was the amount of daily provision made for the children of Israel during their exodus as God gave them manna (Exodus 16:16). This is the better view.

11. *Why did Naomi say, "Who art thou?"* 3:16

Since Ruth had left the threshing floor of Boaz before anyone could tell who she was, Naomi may have been unable to identify Ruth in the darkness when she arrived home. The question, however, makes a fuller inquiry than the mere matter of identification. Naomi was asking what kind of person it was who stood before her. She was

trying to find out in what circumstances Ruth had returned. She really wanted to know what had been accomplished. She was anxious to find out what Boaz had done. Her question was much the same as asking, "How did it go?"

12. *Why did Ruth call attention to the six measures of barley?* 3:17

Ruth told Naomi all about her interview with Boaz. She must have rehearsed every detail and finally called attention to the six measures of barley as concrete evidence of the favor which Boaz had bestowed upon her. The concern of Boaz reached not only to Ruth's needs, but to the immediate needs of both Ruth and Naomi. Ruth recited how Boaz had told her not to go empty to her mother-in-law. In a sense, the gift of six measures of barley was more for Naomi than for Ruth herself.

13. *Why did Naomi tell Ruth to sit still?* 3:18a

Naomi wanted Ruth to remain quietly at home. Such instructions were also given to Tamar by Judah as he told his daughter-in-law to "remain a widow" (Genesis 38:11). Naomi was instructing Ruth not to look any further for a husband. She had earlier instructed her not to glean in anybody else's field, and she felt sure of Boaz's good intentions. God had blessed Naomi and Ruth as they made their way from Moab to Bethlehem. By His good providence, Ruth had been led to glean in a field which belonged to a near kinsman. Naomi had guided Ruth to remind Boaz of his fraternal duty. Now the time had come for the two women to await the consummation of the matter.

14. *Why was Naomi confident concerning the outcome?* 3:18

Naomi knew Boaz was a man of faith and ability. Everything he had done pointed to his intentions and abilities to consummate his agreement with Ruth. Naomi

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had told Ruth to stay at home and await the outcome. She instructed her to learn in this way how the matter would fall. It was more needful for Ruth to put her confidence in Boaz than for her to take any other actions on her part. Naomi believed Boaz to be a man of deep faith, and she must have had faith in God's providence for the outcome of Ruth's association with Boaz.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 3

1. Where was Boaz winnowing grain?
2. Where did Ruth lie down?
3. What did Ruth ask Boaz to do for her?
4. Did Boaz scold Ruth for coming to his threshing floor?
5. What kind of woman did Boaz say all the people in the city knew Ruth to be?
6. Why did Boaz not marry Ruth immediately?
7. In what did Boaz put grain for Ruth?
8. How much grain did Boaz give Ruth?
9. What kind of grain did Boaz give her?
10. How long did Ruth stay with Boaz?

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER. 4

Vv. 1- 5 *The near kinsman approached.* Boaz went to the gate of the city and waited for the approach of the man who was a kinsman nearer than he. When he came by, Boaz approached him. The kinsman was ready to redeem the land which had belonged to Elimelech; but when he was reminded of Ruth being Mahlon's widow and his responsibility to marry her, he declined to accept his obligations.

STUDIES IN JOSHUA-JUDGES-RUTH

- Vv. 6-12 *Boaz married to Ruth.* When the kinsman nearer to Elimelech than Boaz refused to take Ruth as his wife, Boaz called the elders of the city to witness the man's refusal. Boaz then purchased the property himself and stated his intention of marrying Ruth. The men of the city gave Boaz their blessing, praying for Ruth to be like Rachel and Leah, the two wives of Jacob to whom were born the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Vv. 13-22 *The birth of Obed.* The women of the city rejoiced, especially on behalf of Naomi because she was not left without descendants. Even though she had lost her husband and her two sons in Moab, she lived to have the pleasure of nursing a grandchild. The genealogy of Ruth and Boaz is carried down to David, the second king of Israel. Since it goes no further, we assume it was written in the days of David before the birth of Solomon.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Be not slothful in business (Romans 12:11).* Boaz lived up to the reputation he enjoyed in Naomi's eyes. He went immediately to the gate of the city where the men met to discuss the affairs of the day. Before long he met the man who had the priority in redeeming Elimelech's land. In the presence of ten men of the city, Boaz called to him to get his decision concerning the matter. God's people should ever be as full of alacrity and concern as they go about the work entrusted to them.

2. *They buy the poor for a pair of shoes* (Amos 8:6). The man who was nearer of kin than Boaz seemed quite anxious to have the land which had once belonged to Elimelech, but he was not interested in performing the right of a near kinsman in the matter of raising up children to bear the name of Mahlon. As in the days of Amos, a man was considered of little value; but the people were very much interested in possessions of every other kind.
3. "*Good tidings of great joy*" (Luke 2:10). The women of Bethlehem-judah rejoiced when a son was born to Boaz and Ruth. Their joy was enhanced since Naomi was not left without an heir. From this marriage of Boaz and Ruth came the family of David, the king of Israel who was a man after God's own heart. Every Christian mother and father rejoice at the birth of a child; for they see in their children the prospect of God's work being done among men. Man's greatest joy came when the Son of God was born.

CHAPTER FOUR

Ruth Marries Boaz 4:1-22

Boaz Redeems the Inheritance 4:1-8

Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.

2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

3 And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's:

4 And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it.

5 Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

6 And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it.

7 Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor: and this was a testimony in Israel.

8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

1. *Where was the "gate" to the city?* 4:1

The gate was the open space before the city gate. It was the forum of the city, the place where public affairs were discussed. The statement that he went up signified the ideal eminence of the place of justice to which a man went up (see Deuteronomy 17:8). In this instance, ten elders of the city were called to be witnesses of the business in hand. Lot was sitting in the gate of the city of Sodom when the two angels came to him (Genesis 19:1). The husband of the virtuous woman described in the book of Proverbs was "known in the gates when he sitteth among the elders of the land" (Proverbs 31:23). The meeting of Boaz and the other near kinsman was typical of life in Bible times.

2. *Was it customary to take ten men as witnesses?* 4:2

The law stipulated that matters should be decided on the testimony of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6). A man might be condemned to death at the testimony of this small number of witnesses if the witnesses themselves were the first to lay hands on the accused. More serious matters were taken to the priests and the Levites for decision (Deuteronomy 17:9). God foresaw the day when the people of Israel would need a king and made regulations concerning his installation (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). Evidently the people of Israel had come to the place where they customarily had a council of ten men. Certainly none could say the matter was done "in a corner" when such a large number of people were involved in the decision.

3. *Why had the land been sold?* 4:3

Elimelech and his family were evidently in need. There was a famine in the land. It was so severe that Elimelech had taken his wife and two sons to flee to Moab in order to survive. He would have needed funds for making the journey, and this may have necessitated his surrendering his title to his land. Although he had to give up the land temporarily, it would have returned to his family in the year of jubilee. If there were a kinsman who could redeem it for him, it was the privilege of this man to assist his needy brother. If the man himself came into better times, he also could redeem the land.

4. *Why take Ruth instead of Naomi?* 4:5

Naomi was past the age of raising up children. The whole purpose of the Levirate marriage was to raise up children in the name of a deceased brother who had died without heirs. Boaz naturally married Ruth instead of Naomi, who had earlier indicated she was not considering marriage for herself. She had provoked Orpah and Ruth to deep thought about their plans by asking, "Are there

yet any more sons in my womb?" (Ruth 1:11). Later she said, "I am too old to have an husband" (Ruth 1:12).

5. *Why did the kinsman refuse his obligation?* 4:6

The kinsman was selfish. He said he was afraid to "mar" his own inheritance. What he meant by this is hard to determine. Some suggest he was unwilling to marry a woman who was of foreign extraction. If such were the case, he was prejudiced against the foreign nations. More than likely he was afraid later generations would not be able to make a distinction between children born to him in the name of Mahlon and those born in his own household. In this way, some confusion might arise over title to family property and genealogical data.

6. *What was the origin of the custom of removing the shoe?* 4:7

From the expression "formerly," and also from the description given of the custom in question, it follows that the custom had gone out of use at the time when the book was composed. This custom also existed among the Indians and the ancient Germans. It arose from the fact that fixed property was possessed by treading upon the soil. Taking off the shoe and handing it to another was a symbol of the transfer of a possession or right of ownership (see Deuteronomy 25:9).

7. *Was the law fully carried out?* 4:8

The practice of spitting in the face of one who refused to perform his Levirate duty had evidently ceased. The Law had stipulated that the widow would come to the man in the presence of the elders and loose his shoe from off his foot. She was also instructed to spit in his face and say, "So shall it be done unto the man that will not build up his brother's house" (Deuteronomy 25:9). As a result of this, the man was called in Israel "the house of him that hath his shoe loosed" (Deuteronomy 25:10). In this instance only the shoe was removed and given to

the neighbor. The years intervening between the giving of the Law and the time of Ruth had caused the people to drop the spitting in the face from the practice of the day.

Boaz Marries Ruth 4:9-12

9 And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

10 Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day.

11 And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratha, and be famous in Bethlehem:

12 And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.

8. *How could Naomi have the right to sell Elimelech's property? 4:9*

Property descended through the sons and not through the daughters of the family, but the law relating to the inheritance of the landed property of Israelites who died childless did not determine the time when such a possession should pass to the relatives of the deceased. Sometimes it may have been immediately after the death of the owner. At other times, it may not have been until after the death of the widow who was left behind (see Numbers 27:9 ff.). No doubt the latter rule prevailed at the time, having been

established by custom. Thus the widow remained in possession of the property as long as she lived. For that length of time she had the right to sell the property in case of need. Still, the sale of a field was not an actual sale of the field itself, but simply of the yearly produce until the year of jubilee.

9. *Why did the people pray for Ruth to be like Rachel and Leah?* 4:11

Rachel was the beloved wife of Jacob. She bore two sons to him, Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, were given equal status in the house of Israel with the other sons, thus Rachel was the mother of three of the founders of the tribes of Israel. Leah bore six sons to Jacob and all of these became heads of the tribes. One, Levi, was the father of all the priestly family. The handmaids of Rachel and Leah gave birth to the other sons who became the heads of the tribes of Israel. The prayer of the people for Ruth was for her to be like these respected mothers of Israel.

10. *Why did the people wish Boaz to be like Pharez?* 4:12

Pharez was the son of Judah. He was born to Judah by Tamar (Genesis 38:29). The families of Judah were descended through him. Judah became the leading tribe of Israel. When Jacob blessed his sons and prayed for them, he predicted the preeminence which would belong to Judah (Genesis 49:8-12). Since Judah was such a leading tribe and his families were counted through the descendants of Pharez, the people of Bethlehem, a city in Judah, could think of no greater blessing than for Boaz and his family to be like the family of Pharez.

Ruth Bares a Son 4:13-17

13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son.

14 And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel.

15 And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.

16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

17 And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

11. Why was Naomi congratulated? 4:14

Her family was not extinct. She had suffered severe losses in the deaths of Elimelech, her husband, and Mahlon and Chilion, her two sons. When she came back to Bethlehem, she felt God had dealt harshly with her. She even asked the people not to call her Naomi any more. Now her fortunes were changed. She indeed deserved the name, Naomi. She was blessed and happy. The women of the community prayed for God's richest blessings to be upon Naomi.

The Ancestry of David 4:18-22

18 Now these are the generations of Pharez; Pharez begat Hezron,

19 And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,

20 And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon,

21 And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed,

22 And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

12. *At what period was this?* 4:20-22

Obed was David's grandfather. If David were born when Jesse was fifty years old and Jesse was born when his father was at a similar age, we would expect this marriage and birth to have occurred at least a century before the time of David. David came to the attention of Israel when he slew Goliath. Later, he became king at the age of thirty. We are fairly certain of his era as beginning around 1010 B.C., thus the events recorded in the book of Ruth must have transpired sometime during the middle of the twelfth century before Christ.

13. *When was the Book of Ruth written, and for what purpose?* 4:22

It was written before Solomon but after David was a popular hero. If Solomon had been born when Ruth was written, it is natural to expect his name would appear in the genealogy. Since his name is not there, we assume the book was written prior to the time of his birth. Samuel did not live to see David on the throne. His death is recorded in I Samuel 25:1, therefore we place the date of writing as somewhere near 1015 B.C. This would have been after David came to national prominence by killing Goliath (I Samuel 17). He was also a man of war who went in and came out from among the Israelites with great dignity. They sang songs celebrating his prominence; and during this time after his anointing by Samuel (I Samuel 16) and before he became king (II Samuel 2), the book must have been written.

14. *What is the significance of the closing verses?* 4:18-22

The genealogy closes with David, an evident proof that the book was intended to give a family picture from the life of the pious ancestors of this great and godly king of Israel. For us the history which points to David acquires a still higher signification from the fact that all members

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of the genealogy of David whose names occur here are also found in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. The passage is given by Matthew word for word in the genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1:5, 6a). In view of this, we see this history looks not so much to David as to Jesus Christ, who was proclaimed by all as the Savior and Redeemer of the human race. We learn with what wonderful compassion the Lord raises up the lowly and despised to the greatest glory and majesty.

15. *What state of society under the judges does the book indicate?*

Many of the people were faithful to the Law. They were without central government. Matters such as the redeeming of land by the marrying of widows were handled by the council of men who met in the city gate. All in all, it was a time of peace and prosperity except for the terrible famine which must have been brought on the people by the invasion of the Midianites. They were an agricultural people and took pleasure in the common things of life. Women rejoiced when a healthy child was born to one of their number, and the leaders of the community prayed for rich blessings to be upon husbands and wives whose marriages were consummated in their presence. Certainly, mankind has known cruder eras, and Israel's crying for a king must have been more from selfishness than from actual need.

TEN QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER 4

1. Where did Boaz go to meet the near kinsman?
2. How many men did Boaz call to witness the transaction?
3. In whose name was the property in question?
4. Why did the kinsman refuse to enter into the transaction?

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5. What article of clothing was exchanged to witness the transaction?
6. Whose wife had Ruth been?
7. Whom did the people wish Ruth to be like?
8. To whose house did they wish the house of Boaz to be like?
9. What was the name of the son born to Boaz and Ruth?
10. In whom did the genealogy of Boaz culminate?

EPILOGUE

The books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth were not written merely to tell the story of what happened in the years covered by the narrative. If this were so, the story would be very incomplete. Many more details should have been given in order to give the reader a full perspective of the era. Neither were the books written to tell a life story of the heroes and heroines of the period. The book of Ruth would be especially incomplete in this regard. Her story is not told completely at all. Many questions are left unanswered. How did Ruth die? How long did she live? Where was she buried? Nothing is said about these details of her life at all.

Ruth fits in between the books of Judges and Samuel like a bone in a socket. Probably the events which are recorded in these four chapters occurred during the time of Gideon. The final verses of the book reach down to the time of David. Hence, the book reaches back into the middle of the time of the Judges and reaches far down into the time of Samuel.

Israel gloried in David. He was not only a man after God's own heart, but he was a man who captured the hearts of the people. They sang of him. They ascribed more honor to him than they did to their first king, King Saul.

The people gloried in the house of David. His house was to be established forever. As long as there was a throne on which a king might sit in Jerusalem, there was a man from the loins of David to sit on that throne. Like the woman from Tekoah, they looked to David as "an angel of God" (II Samuel 14:17).

David captured the city of the Jebusites. The narrative in the book of Judges makes a last mention of this city with a note of despair and contempt. The city was

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in the hands of the Jebusites, and a Levite from the north passed the city by in scorn and fear. He would rather spend the night in a nearby hamlet of Benjamin than to risk his life and reputation by stopping in the wicked city of the Canaanites. Although this Levite met a terrible fate at the hand of wicked Israelites, his attitude nevertheless reflects the disdain which the men of the time felt for the city now known as the Holy City.

When David took Jerusalem from the Jebusites, he made it his capital. From this central location, he ruled for thirty-three years of his life, and in it he firmly established the throne of Solomon, his heir and successor. With pride, the people came to refer to Jerusalem as the City of David. Bethlehem, Ruth's adopted home, was the home of David. Centuries later, wise men from the East journeyed through the streets of the town in search of Him whom they called the king of the Jews. Bringing treasures and gifts of distinction, these strange visitors symbolize the adoration of wise men of all ages from all countries.

On the hills where David must have practiced the use of his sling, shepherds sat as they heard the angels sing. The Son of God was born where Ruth gave birth to Obed.

The history of these three books—Joshua, Judges, and Ruth—is only a brief part of the total account of God's dealings with men. It is a part of His Story, the story of redemption. The love story of Ruth couched in the setting of the time when Israel had no king is but a dim reflection of the love story of God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

In similar fashion, the story of Joshua's leading the people into the Promised Land of Canaan is typical of the great Saviour who will eventually lead His people into the promised land of heaven. The story of Joshua is so suggestive of the final triumphal entry of God's people into

EPILOGUE

eternal rest that the pages of the book of Hebrews are in part a rather full exposition of this analogy. In fact, the translators of the King James Version use the names of Jesus and Joshua interchangeably in Hebrews 4:8. The Authorized Version reads as follows: "For if Jesus had given them rest, God would not speak later of another day." The American Standard Version changes the word *Jesus* to *Joshua*. Joshua's name in Greek is the same as the Greek for the English name, Jesus. Joshua gave the people of Israel rest by leading them into the land of Canaan. Jesus will give His faithful followers rest when He comes back to welcome them into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

All through these historical books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth the modern-day reader is constantly finding issues which are relevant to his own times. Answers to some of his problems are found in his reflections over the causes and results of events recorded in this part of the Bible. At the same time, his eyes are lifted over the horizon of the hills of Judea to see the coming of the Christ. Even beyond these hills, his vision is directed to anticipate the time when the son of David comes again. The end of the story of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth has not yet been written.

STUDIES IN JOSHUA-JUDGES-RUTH

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