



# Ruth

STUDY GUIDE

CROSS  
culture



# AN EMPTY RETURN

## Context

The book of Ruth begins with several tragic events that befall a family hailing from Bethlehem (meaning “house of bread”) – a town in the Promised Land in Israel. Firstly, and ironically, a famine forced Elimelech, Naomi and their two sons to leave Bethlehem and sojourn – staying as temporary residents – in the country of Moab.

1. How were the relations between Israel and Moab? See Numbers 25:1–3; Joshua 24:9–10 and Judges 3:12–14.

Within a decade, a series of deaths in the family eventually left Naomi behind with her two Moabite daughters-in-law in the foreign land.

## Observation

2. God historically forbade Israelites from intermarrying people from certain nations (although there was no explicit prohibition against marrying Moabites). What was the purpose of such a commandment? See Deuteronomy 7:1–6.

Naomi was an alien and a childless widow in a foreign land. Since her late husband had no living brothers, her future back home in Israel was also uncertain (Deuteronomy 25:5–6). However, her relationship with her two daughters-in-law was different from expectations.

3. Based on verses 6 to 14, how did Naomi treated Ruth and Orpah (and vice versa) throughout the years?

### **Meaning**

4. Verse 15 indicates a link between where one stays and one's religion. What was the significance of Ruth's determination to stay with Naomi (verses 16–17)?
5. How did God show Naomi kindness and love through Ruth, despite Naomi believing otherwise about Him?

### **Application**

In her pleas to her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab, Naomi bitterly said that the hand of the Lord had gone out against her (verses 13, 20 and 21). Similarly, when trials and tribulations hit us, we often wonder where God is amidst our despair.

6. Share about a time when God brought you back to Him through sadness or emptiness.
7. In what ways can we be like Ruth for those around us who are hurting?

# A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

## Context

After the disaster of famine in Bethlehem and tragedy of being widowed in Moab, Ruth insisted on following Naomi back to Bethlehem.

*"Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay.  
Your people will be my people and your God my God."*

Ruth, a Moabite woman, pledged allegiance to Naomi's God of Israel. Their fate continued to unfold as they relocated from Moab back to Bethlehem.

## Observation

1. What "coincidences" happened? How did Ruth place herself in the path of God's providence (verses 1–7)?
2. What did Boaz provide for Ruth (verses 8–18)? What does this indicate about his character?
3. From what Naomi said about Boaz (verses 19–23), what might this indicate about his future role in the narrative?



# A DARING PLAN

## Context

Through God's providence, Naomi and Ruth met their kinsman redeemer Boaz, who provided for and met their immediate needs kindly, graciously and generously.

Under the Jewish law, the kinsman redeemer had duties and responsibilities – to redeem a sold property, marry a widowed wife and pay off an owing debt. And so, Naomi guided Ruth to remind Boaz that he was their kinsman redeemer.

## Observation

1. What deliberate and intentional actions did Naomi tell Ruth to do (verses 1–6)? And to what ends?
2. When Ruth asked Boaz to “spread his wings” (verse 9), what exactly was Ruth asking of him? How did Boaz respond (verses 7–15)?
3. Ruth had said and done everything that was appropriate. What did she have to do next (verses 16–18)?

## **Meaning**

4. How did Boaz's actions reflect the character of the God he worshipped, who was behind everything that was happening?

## **Application**

5. How can we express faith today through deliberate and intentional actions?
6. What would it look like to cast ourselves entirely on Jesus for protection and security?
7. How can we encourage one another to patiently wait upon Jesus to fulfil the promises in His Word?





## Meaning

4. The people at the gate and the elders pronounced a blessing upon Ruth (verses 11–12). What was the meaning of their reference to Rachel and Leah, as well as Perez and Tamar? See Genesis 29:31–30:32 and 38:6–29.
5. How did Naomi's attitude change throughout the book of Ruth?
6. What was the significance of Ruth's son becoming the grandfather of King David?

## Application

7. How do Boaz's actions (verses 1–11) make you wonder of him? What does this show about the generosity of what Jesus our Redeemer has done for us?
8. How does Boaz's kindness and love for Ruth spur you on to show God's loving-kindness to others?
9. Reflect on the book of Ruth as a whole. How does it help you to trust God's kindness with confidence, even in the smallest details of your life?