EDIFIED EDITION

Ruth

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

4	85	Old	8
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

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Edified Edition (EDE): a modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek, in everyday British English. www.edifiededition.com

Numbered notes follow each chapter.

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Chapter 1

Ruth 1 tells how Naomi comes home to Bethlehem with nothing. In a time of famine Elimelech takes his wife and two sons to live in Moab, and over ten years he and both sons die, leaving Naomi with two Moabite daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. When Naomi sets out for home she urges them to go back to their own families. Orpah does, but Ruth refuses to leave her, binding herself to Naomi's people and Naomi's God. The two women reach Bethlehem as the barley harvest begins, and Naomi asks to be called Mara, "bitter".

[1]Back in the time when the judges governed, a famine came over the land. A man from Bethlehem in Judah set out to live as a foreigner in the open country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

[2]The man was called Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and his two sons Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They reached the country of Moab and settled there.

[3]Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left behind with her two sons.

[4]They took Moabite wives, one named Orpah and the other Ruth, and they lived there about ten years.

[5]Then Mahlon and Chilion died too, both of them, and the woman was left bereft of her two boys and of her husband.

[6]So she set out with her daughters-in-law to go back from the country of Moab, because she had heard there that the LORD had turned His attention to His people and given them bread.

[7]She left the place where she had been living, her two daughters-in-law with her, and they took the road back to the land of Judah.

[8]But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, turn back, each to her mother's house. May the LORD show you loyal kindness, just as you have shown it to the dead and to me.

[9]May the LORD grant that you find a place of rest, each of you in the home of a husband." She kissed them goodbye, and they broke into loud weeping.

[10]They told her, "No, we will return with you to your people."

11 Naomi answered, “Go back, my daughters. Why
come with me? Have I any more sons inside me
who could become your husbands?
12 Turn back, my daughters, go on your way. I am
too old to belong to a husband. Suppose I said, ‘I
still have hope’; suppose I even had a husband
tonight and bore sons:
13 would you wait for them to grow up? Would you
hold yourselves back from marrying for their
sake? No, my daughters. My life is far more bitter
than yours, for the hand of the LORD has gone out
against me.”
14 Again they raised their voices and wept. Orpah
kissed her mother-in-law farewell, but Ruth held
fast to her.
15 Naomi said, “See, your sister-in-law has turned
back to her people and to her gods. Turn back and
follow her.”
16 But Ruth said, “Don’t plead with me to abandon
you, to turn back and stop following you.
Wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you
spend the night, I will spend the night. Your
people are my people, and your God is my God.
17 Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be
buried. May the LORD deal with me severely, and
more severely still, if anything but death
separates me from you.”
18 When Naomi saw that Ruth’s mind was firmly
made up to go with her, she said no more to her
about it.
19 The two of them travelled on until they reached
Bethlehem. As they came into Bethlehem, the
whole town was buzzing about them, and the
women asked, “Is this really Naomi?”
20 “Do not call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me
Mara[1], because the Almighty has dealt very
bitterly with me.
21 I was full when I left, and the LORD has brought
me home empty. Why call me Naomi, when the
LORD has testified against me and the Almighty
has done me harm?”
22 So Naomi came back, and with her Ruth the
Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who had returned
with her from the country of Moab. They arrived
in Bethlehem just as the barley harvest was
beginning.

1 Hebrew: נָעֳמִי (Naomi) means ‘pleasant’; מָרָא (Mara) means ‘bitter’. Naomi renames herself to match what has happened to her.

Chapter 2

Ruth 2 tells how Ruth meets Boaz, a wealthy kinsman of Naomi’s late husband. Ruth goes out to glean, and “as chance would have it” she works in Boaz’s field. Boaz has heard of her loyalty to Naomi; he protects her, feeds her and quietly tells his men to leave extra grain for her. When Ruth comes home with an ephah of barley, Naomi blesses the LORD and tells her that Boaz is one of their family redeemers. Ruth gleans in his fields until the end of the harvest.

1 Naomi had a kinsman through her husband, a
prominent and wealthy man from the family of
Elimelech. His name was Boaz.
2 Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go out
to the fields, please, and glean among the ears of
grain behind whoever looks kindly on me.” “Go,
my daughter,” Naomi told her.
3 So off she went, and she came and gleaned in the
field behind the reapers. And as chance would
have it, she happened on the strip of field that
belonged to Boaz, of Elimelech’s family.
4 And look, Boaz came out from Bethlehem. “The
LORD be with you,” he said to the reapers, and
they replied, “The LORD bless you.”
5 Boaz asked the young man in charge of the
reapers, “Whose is that young woman?”
6 The young man in charge of the reapers
answered, “She is a young Moabite woman, the
one who came back with Naomi from the country
of Moab.
7 She asked, ‘May I glean, please, and gather
among the sheaves behind the reapers?’ So she
came, and she has been on her feet from early
morning until now, apart from resting a little while
in the shelter.”
8 Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen to me, my daughter.
Don’t go to glean in any other field, and don’t
move on from this one. Keep close to my young
women here.

9 Keep your eyes on the field they are reaping and
walk behind them. I have ordered the young men
not to touch you, haven't I? When you are thirsty,
go to the jars and drink some of what the young
men have drawn."
10 She fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and
said to him, "Why have you been so kind as to
take notice[1] of me, when I am a foreigner?"
11 Boaz answered her, "I have heard the full story
of everything you have done for your mother-in-
law since your husband died: how you left your
father and your mother and the land where you
were born, and came to a people you had never
known before.
12 May the LORD repay what you have done, and
may your wages be paid in full by the LORD, the
God of Israel, under whose wings you have come
to shelter."
13 She said, "My lord, may I go on finding favour
with you, for you have comforted me and spoken
to the heart of your servant, though I am not even
one of your servants."
14 When it was time to eat, Boaz said to her, "Come
over here. Eat some of the bread and dip your
piece in the sour wine." So she sat beside the
reapers, and he handed her roasted grain. She ate
until she was satisfied, and had some left over.
15 When she got up to glean, Boaz instructed his
young men, "Let her glean even among the
sheaves, and do not shame her.
16 Pull out some stalks from the bundles on
purpose and leave them for her to glean, and don't
scold her."
17 So she gleaned in the field until evening, then
beat out what she had gleaned, and it came to
about an ephah[2] of barley.
18 She picked it up and went into the town, and her
mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. Ruth
also brought out what she had saved after eating
her fill, and gave it to her.
19 Her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you
glean today? Where have you been working?
Blessed be the man who took notice of you!" So
she told her mother-in-law whose field she had
worked in. "The man I worked beside today is
called Boaz," she said.
20 Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be
blessed by the LORD, who has not withdrawn His
loyal kindness from the living or the dead!" Then
Naomi told her, "The man is close kin to us. He is
one of our family redeemers[3]."
21 Ruth the Moabite said, "What is more, he told
me, 'Keep close to my young men until they have
finished all my harvest.'"
22 Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is
best, my daughter, that you go out with his young
women, so that no one troubles you in another
field."
23 So she kept close to Boaz's young women,
gleaning until the barley harvest and the wheat
harvest were over. And she lived with her mother-
in-law.

1 Hebrew: לְהַכִּירֵנִי (lehakkireni), 'to take notice of me', and נָכְרִיָּה (nokhriyah), 'foreigner', sound alike: Ruth marvels that the one who should be overlooked has been noticed.

2 An ephah was a dry measure of roughly 20 litres. As barley, this was enough food for many days: a remarkable day's gleaning.

3 Hebrew: גֹּאֵל (go'el), 'redeemer'. The close relative whose duty was to buy back family land that had been sold and to keep a dead man's family line alive (Leviticus 25:25; Deuteronomy 25:5–6).

Chapter 3

Ruth 3 tells of Naomi's bold plan to secure Ruth's future. At Naomi's direction Ruth goes to the threshing floor at night, uncovers the sleeping Boaz's feet and lies down. When he wakes, she asks him to spread his wing over her, because he is a family redeemer: a request for marriage and protection. Boaz praises her loyal kindness and promises to act, but tells her there is a closer redeemer who must be given the first right. He sends her home before dawn with six measures of barley for Naomi.

1 Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My
daughter, should I not look for a resting place for
you, where all will be well with you?
2 Now, isn't Boaz our kinsman, the man whose
young women you were with? Tonight he is
winnowing barley at the threshing floor.

3 So bathe, anoint yourself with oil, put on your
cloak, and go down to the threshing floor. But do
not let the man know you are there until he has
finished eating and drinking.
4 When he lies down, mark the spot where he is
lying. Then go in, uncover his feet and lie down,
and he will tell you what you are to do."
5 Ruth answered her, "Everything you tell me, I
will do."
6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did
exactly as her mother-in-law had instructed her.
7 Boaz ate and drank, and his heart was content,
and he went to lie down at the edge of the heap of
grain. Then she came softly, uncovered his feet
and lay down.
8 At midnight the man woke with a start and
turned over, and there lying at his feet was a
woman!
9 "Who are you?" he said. She answered, "I am
Ruth, your servant. Spread your wing[1] over your
servant, for you are a family redeemer."
10 He said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my
daughter. This latest act of loyal kindness is
greater than the first, because you have not gone
after young men, poor or rich.
11 Now, my daughter, do not be afraid. I will do for
you all that you ask, for everyone at the gate of my
town knows that you are a woman of real worth.
12 It is true that I am a family redeemer, but there
is a redeemer closer in kin than I am.
13 Stay here tonight. In the morning, if he will
redeem you, well and good; let him redeem. But if
he does not want to redeem you, then as the
LORD lives, I will redeem you myself. Lie down
until the morning."
14 So she lay at his feet until morning, and got up
before anyone could recognise another. For he had
said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to
the threshing floor."
15 He said, "Bring the shawl you are wearing and
hold it open." She held it, and he measured out six
measures of barley and put it on her. Then he
went into the town.
16 When she came to her mother-in-law, Naomi
asked, "How are things with you, my daughter?"
And she told her all that the man had done for her.
17 She added, "He gave me these six measures of
barley. 'You are not to go back to your mother-in-
law with nothing,' he told me."
18 Naomi said, "Sit still, my daughter, until you
learn how the matter turns out. The man will not
rest until he has settled it today."

1 Hebrew: וּפָרַשְׂתָּ כְנָפֶךָ (uferasta khenafekha), 'spread your wing', meaning the corner of a garment. It was a way of asking for marriage and protection, and it echoes Boaz's own blessing in 2:12: Ruth asks him to be the answer to his prayer that she find shelter under the LORD's wings.

Chapter 4

> *Ruth 4 brings the story to its happy ending. At the town gate, before ten elders, Boaz offers the closer redeemer Elimelech's land, but when he learns that taking the land means taking Ruth as wife to keep the dead man's name alive, the man gives up his right with the sign of the sandal. Boaz redeems the land and marries Ruth, and the LORD gives them a son, Obed. The women of Bethlehem bless the LORD for giving Naomi a redeemer and declare Ruth worth more to her than seven sons. A short genealogy ends the book: Obed is the grandfather of King David.*

1 Boaz, meanwhile, had gone up to the gate and
sat down there, and look, the redeemer Boaz had
spoken of came past. Boaz said, "Turn aside,
friend, and sit down here." So he turned aside and
sat down.
2 Then Boaz took ten men from among the elders
of the town and said, "Sit down here." And they
sat down.
3 He said to the redeemer, "Naomi, who has come
back from the country of Moab, is selling the strip
of land that belonged to our kinsman Elimelech.
4 I thought I ought to let you know and say, 'Buy it
here, in front of those sitting here and the elders
of my people.' If you are going to redeem it, then
redeem it. If not, tell me, so that I know, because
no one but you has the right to redeem it, and I
am next after you." "I will redeem it," he said.
5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field
from Naomi, you also acquire[1] Ruth the Moabite,

the dead man’s widow, to keep the dead man’s name alive on his inheritance.”

6 The redeemer said, “Then I cannot redeem it for myself, or I would ruin my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption for yourself, because I cannot redeem it.”

7 In former times in Israel, this was the custom for redeeming and exchanging, to confirm any matter: a man pulled off his sandal[2] and gave it to the other. This was how agreements were witnessed in Israel.

8 So the redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself,” and he pulled off his sandal.

9 Then Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, “Today you are my witnesses: I have bought from Naomi the whole estate of Elimelech, Chilion and Mahlon.

10 I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, to be my wife, to keep the dead man’s name alive on his inheritance, so that his name will not be cut off from among his brothers or from the gate of his home town. You are witnesses today.”

11 All the people at the gate, and the elders, said, “We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built up the house of Israel. May you prosper in Ephrathah and make a name in Bethlehem.

12 And through the children the LORD gives you by this young woman, may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”

13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. He went in to her, and the LORD let her conceive, and she gave birth to a son.

14 The women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you today without a redeemer! May his name be renowned in Israel.

15 He will bring your life back to you and take care of you in your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you has borne him, and she is worth more to you than seven sons.”

16 Naomi took the child, laid him on her lap, and became his nurse.

17 The neighbouring women gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi!” They called him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

18 These are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron,

19 Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab,

20 Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon,

21 Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed,

22 and Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.

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1 The written Hebrew text (ketiv) has ‘I acquire’; the traditional reading (qere), followed here, is ‘you acquire’. With ‘I’, Boaz would be announcing his own intention to marry Ruth whatever the redeemer decides.

2 Hebrew: נַעַל (na’al), ‘sandal’. Handing over a sandal was the token that a right to walk on and own land had passed to someone else (compare Deuteronomy 25:9–10).