



## Summary of Ruth

### Chapter One

During the time when the Judges ruled Israel there was a famine and Elimelech, his wife Naomi and their two sons migrated east across the Jordan to the land of Moab where there was food. Whilst there, Elimelech died and his two sons married local women but some time later the two sons died as well leaving Naomi without any men folk in her family.

Naomi and her daughters in law commenced the journey back towards Judah but Naomi realised the two women would have more of a future in their own country and gave them permission to return. One did but Ruth would not leave Naomi, saying that she wanted to stay with her until death. Naomi relented and the two women returned to Bethlehem.

### Chapter Two

This chapter introduces Boaz, a relative of Naomi's late husband. He was a wealthy land owner and Ruth suggested that she should go to one of his fields to glean what was left by the harvesters. When Boaz arrived in the field he noticed Ruth and instructed his own workers to allow Ruth to work unmolested and to take her meal break with them, thus protecting her from any abuse or harm from the young men who worked for him. After a long day in the field Ruth returned to Naomi with the food she had gathered and informed her of the kindness that Boaz had shown towards Ruth.

### Chapter Three

Naomi hatches a plan to bring Ruth to closer attention to Boaz. He would be at the threshing floor all evening, would dine there and then sleep on the floor. Ruth was instructed to prepare herself in her best clothes and perfume, go to Boaz but not be seen by him until he was asleep. She was then to go under the covers and sleep at his feet, a sign of great respect and loyalty.

When Boaz awoke at midnight he was startled to find a woman in his bed but when he realised it was Ruth he understood the worthiness of her actions, that they were not promiscuous and that, as a close relative, though not the closest, there was a course of action he must take.

He instructed her to stay with him until morning but to leave without being seen. As a parting gift he gave her a generous amount of barley to sustain her and Naomi. On returning home, Ruth recounted to Naomi all that had happened and that Boaz had said he would resolve the matter.

#### **Chapter Four**

Boaz met with the closer relative of Elimelech and Naomi and, in the presence of ten elders, outlined the case of Naomi and the man's position as kinsman-redeemer. Boaz states that if the man wants to redeem Elimelech's name then he should do so. The man agreed. Boaz then went on to point out that by doing so the redeemer would also inherit Ruth the Moabite as a wife. At this the man declined as it would impact on his own inheritance rights. Therefore, he offered the right to Boaz to act as redeemer.

According to the custom, the transaction to become the redeemer was undertaken in the presence of the elders. Boaz promised to take care of Naomi and to marry Ruth in order to have children to take on the name of Elimelech. The people present called for God's blessing on what was to come. So Boaz and Ruth were wed. They had a son Obed from whom, according to the given genealogy, King David would come.