

## 4<sup>th</sup> Reading:

## Ruth's Faithfulness to God

Adapted from Chabad.org's "The Story of Ruth in the Bible."

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/111916/jewish/The-Story-of-Ruth-in-the-Bible.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/111916/jewish/The-Story-of-Ruth-in-the-Bible.htm)

Frances: There was a certain man in Judah named Elimelech. He was a wealthy merchant who was not used to hunger and poverty, and so he thought he could escape from the misery by moving elsewhere. He therefore took his wife, Naomi, and their two sons, and went to live in Moab.

Ruth was a Moabite princess who came to know this family and admire their laws and customs. When one of the sons asked her to marry him, she was happy and proud to accept.

After some time, Elimelech and his two sons died, and Naomi was left, a poor widow, not knowing what to do or whither to turn. She therefore said to Ruth and to her other daughter-in-law, Orpah:

"My daughters, I must go away, and I have decided to return to my hometown, to Bethlehem. Take my advice and go back to your parents' homes. Your husbands are dead, and perhaps you may find other men to marry you.

Orpah looked sad, kissed her mother-in-law, and bade her goodbye. But Ruth clung tearfully to Naomi and begged her to allow her to go with her. With these touching words she implored her, saying:

"Don't ask me to leave you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you stay, I will stay; you people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God."

It was harvest time as Ruth and Naomi came to the land of Judah. They were both worn out from their journey, and Ruth prevailed upon Naomi to rest, while she herself would go out into the fields of Bethlehem and see what she could find to sustain them from hunger.

Ruth entered a field where many men were busy cutting barley, others were binding it into sheaves, while others were piling them onto wagons and carting them away.

Ruth went into the field and sat down for a while to rest and to see what luck she might have here. Suddenly she was startled to hear a voice saying to her, kindly and gently: "God be with you, stranger! Come along into the field. Do not be bashful. Gather some ears of corn and satisfy your hunger!"

It was Boaz himself, the owner of the field, who said this.

Ruth thanked him and plucked some ears of grain. She then was going to depart, when the same kind voice urged her to stay awhile and gather *pe'ah*.

"What is *pe'ah*?" asked Ruth.

"Our [Torah](#) tells us that when the owner of a field has his grain cut, he is not to cut the corners of the field, but to leave them for the poor, the needy and the stranger to come and reap for themselves," answered Boaz.

And so she stayed and cut the corn from a corner of the field, and was then again about to go away.

“You do not need to go yet,” urged Boaz. “Why not stay and benefit from *leket* (gleanings)?”

“What does *leket* mean?” again asked Ruth.

“According to our law, if a reaper misses some grain with his scythe, or drops some, he is not allowed to go back to gather that grain, and this must be left for the poor and the stranger,” explained Boaz patiently to Ruth. He was finding her more and more attractive, and thought he had never seen such a noble-looking lady.

When she gathered a whole basketful, she went up to Boaz, thanked him very sincerely for his kindness, and got ready to depart.

“There is no need for you to go yet,” coaxed Boaz. “There is still *shikebab* (forgotten sheaves) which you can take.”

“When the owner of a field is taking his load of grain to his granaries, it is possible that he may have forgotten some sheaves in the field. Well the Torah forbids him to go back and get them; he must leave these forgotten sheaves for the poor, the widow, the orphan and the stranger.”

Ruth had gathered almost more than she could carry. She and Naomi were now well provided for some time. She again thanked Boaz, who made her promise to come again.

Ruth was full of excitement as she hastened to her mother-in-law and related all that had happened to her in the fields of Boaz. Naomi was happy that Ruth had been so successful and had found favor in the eyes of Boaz, the wealthy landowner. And so, when Boaz asked her to marry him, Naomi urged her to do so.

Now Ruth was unexpectedly rewarded with wealth and happiness. She and Boaz were blessed with children who became famous in history. She lived long enough to see her great-grandson David, who became God’s anointed and beloved king of all the Jewish people.