

YOUTH



LEVEL 4

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 10



Ruth—A Virtuous Woman

RUTH—A VIRTUOUS WOMAN

During the time of the Judges, there was a famine in the land of Israel. Also at that time, a man named Elimelech lived in the town of Bethlehem with his wife, Naomi, and two sons. He and his family decided to move to the land of Moab until the drought was over.

While they were in Moab, Elimelech died. His two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, both married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, the other a woman named Ruth (Ruth 1:1-4).

Ruth was a Moabite whose family history included Lot, the nephew of Abraham. You may remember the story of Abraham and Lot from earlier lessons.

RUTH RETURNS WITH NAOMI

Several years later, both of Naomi's sons died. Life became difficult for the young women and their mother-in-law. Then, when news came that the famine had ended in Israel, Naomi decided to

return to her home in Bethlehem (Ruth 1:5-6).

Ruth and Orpah also wanted to leave with Naomi. But Naomi wanted them to stay in Moab. They were both still young and Naomi thought they should stay and remarry men from their own nation.

Orpah finally agreed with Naomi and turned back. Ruth, however, wanted to stay with Naomi.

“Intreat me not to _____ thee, or to _____ from following after _____: for whither _____, I _____; and where thou _____, I _____: thy _____ shall be _____, and thy _____ my _____” (Ruth 1:16).

Naomi was very pleased by these words. She knew that Ruth would not change her mind. So together they journeyed on.

Naomi was happy to see familiar faces as she and Ruth entered Bethlehem. It was not long before many of the townspeople had gath-



ered around to welcome her home. Many were happy to see that she had returned.

After arriving in Bethlehem, Ruth reminded Naomi that it was harvest time in Israel. She had watched other women gleaning barley in the fields and decided to join them the next morning (Ruth 1:22; 2:2).

Gleaning was the gathering of produce left behind by the harvesters. It was not considered stealing. One of the laws given to the Israelites by God allowed the widows and poor to have what the harvesters left on the ground. And since Ruth was a widow, she could glean in the fields (Leviticus 19:9; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19).



RUTH MEETS BOAZ

The next morning, Ruth took a large bag and went to a field where barley was being harvested. After receiving permission, Ruth took a place well behind the harvesters.

Later in the day, Boaz, the owner of the field, came to where the harvesters were working.

“God be with you,” he called to them.

“May God bless you,” they answered back.

As Boaz went past Ruth, he realized that he had never seen her before.

“Who is that young woman?” Boaz asked a servant.

“She is the Moabite woman who returned here with Naomi, the widow of Elimelech,” he explained. “She came early this morning asking permission to glean.”

Ruth looked up to see Boaz walking toward her.

“If you need to glean,” Boaz told Ruth, “please stay here in my fields close to my women servants. I have instructed my men to treat you with the greatest respect.”

Ruth was so overwhelmed by Boaz’s kindness that she fell on her knees and bowed her head to the ground.

“Why are you being so kind to



me?" Ruth humbly asked. "I am just a stranger in your land."

"I have heard how well you have served your mother-in-law," Boaz answered. "She has told many people how you have willingly left your country to come and care for her. May God reward you for what you have done and protect you for trusting in Him to guide you."

Ruth thanked Boaz and joined the other workers during their noon meal.

After the meal, Ruth quickly took her place behind the harvesters. Unknown to her, Boaz had instructed his workers that Ruth should receive special privileges.

"Let her glean where she wishes," Boaz told his servants. "And do not be angry if she follows you closely. I also want you to leave a little extra on the ground for her."

Later that evening, Ruth beat out the grains on the threshing floor. To her delight, it yielded about a bushel of fine barley. That would be enough to make many loaves of bread. When she arrived home, Naomi was surprised to see so much grain (Ruth 2:3-18).

"The field where I gleaned today is owned by a man named Boaz," Ruth told Naomi.

"I know who Boaz is!" Naomi

exclaimed excitedly. "He is a close relative of my dead husband. He is a man who respects God. You will do well to glean only in his fields."

Do You Remember?

1. Why did Elimelech and his family move to the land of Moab? _____
_____.
2. Who was Elimelech's wife? _____.
3. Ruth's family history included _____, the _____ of Abraham.
4. What did Ruth do shortly after arriving in Bethlehem? _____
_____.
5. Ruth gleaned in the field of a man named _____.
6. What did Boaz instruct his servants to do for Ruth? _____
_____.
7. Boaz was a man who respected _____.

NAOMI HAS A PLAN

Ruth had much to tell Naomi after each day's gleaning. Soon Naomi could see that a close friendship was developing between Ruth and Boaz.

"You know I want the best for you," Naomi said to Ruth. "I can

see that Boaz cares deeply for you. Tonight you must put on your best perfume and your nicest clothes and go to the threshing floor. Boaz will be working there. Wait until he is asleep and then quietly go in and lie at his feet.”

Naomi knew about the Israelite custom concerning widows. The nearest male relative of a dead husband was to marry the widow if she had no children.

Ruth agreed to follow Naomi’s advice. Later that evening, Ruth went to the threshing floor. Quietly

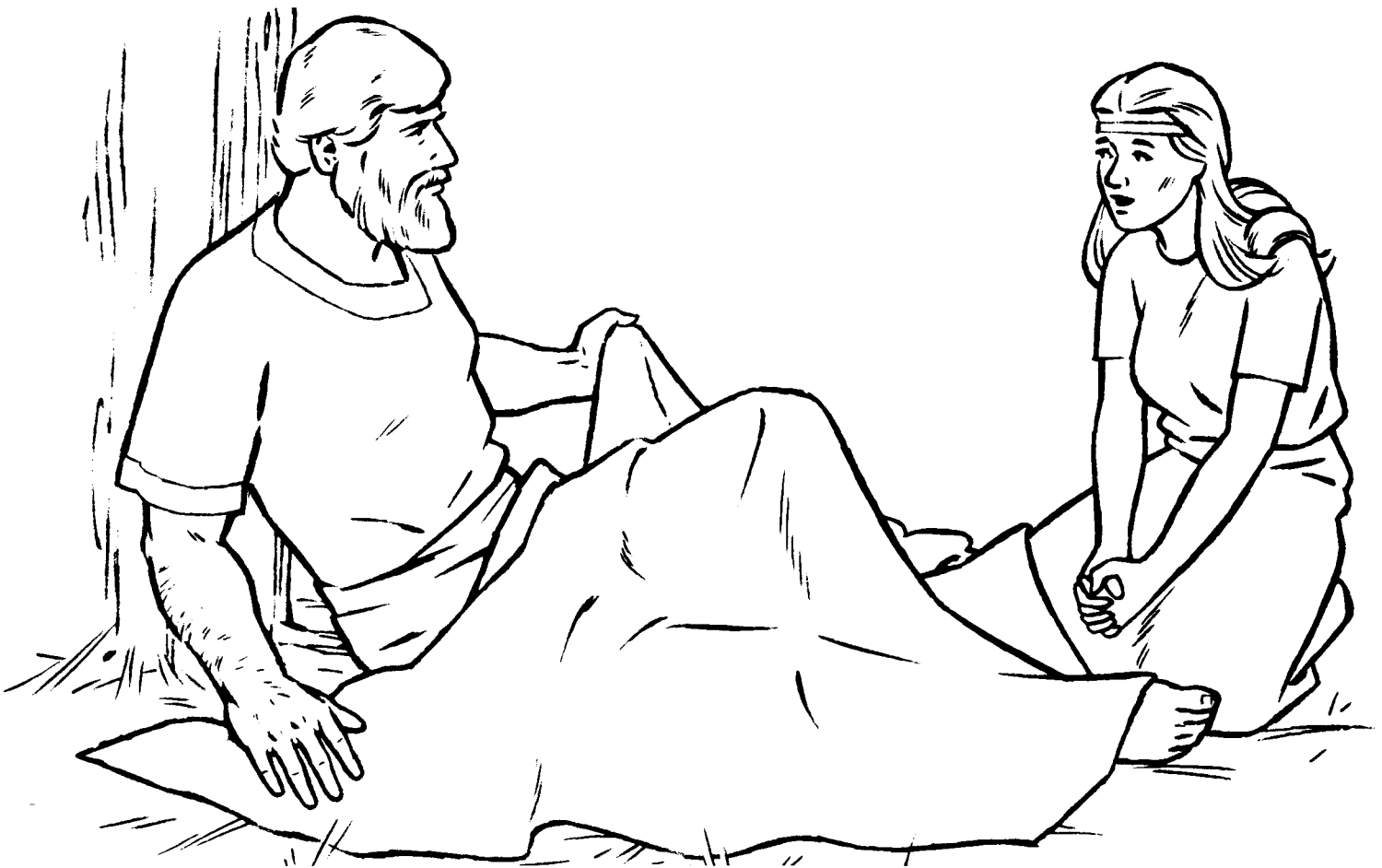
she peered inside and noticed that Boaz was just finishing his evening meal.

She watched as he stretched out on the straw-covered floor to sleep. She waited a short while until she was sure that he had fallen asleep. Then she quietly slipped inside, lifted the blanket from his feet and carefully lay down.

At midnight, Boaz suddenly awoke. Feeling someone was at his feet, he quickly sat up.

“Who are you?” he blurted.

“I am Ruth,” she replied ner-



vously. "I understand that you may marry me since you are a close relative of my dead husband."

And Boaz replied: "_____ be thou of the _____, my daughter: for thou hast shewed _____ in the _____ than at the _____, inasmuch as thou followedst not _____, whether _____ or _____.

"And now, my daughter, _____; I will do to thee _____ that thou _____: for _____ the city of my people doth _____ that thou art a _____" (Ruth 3:10-11).

Ruth was happy to hear these words from Boaz. "However," Boaz added, "there is a man who is a closer relative than I."

Ruth became worried to learn that Boaz was not her closest relative. But he assured her that he would take care of the problem the next day. So she lay at his feet until morning.

Ruth awoke and prepared to leave before sunrise. But before she left, Boaz asked her to hold out her veil. He then filled it with grain as a gift for her and Naomi.

Ruth quickly ran home to Naomi, showed her the grain and told her everything that had happened. Naomi assured Ruth that Boaz would no doubt solve

the problem that very day (Ruth 3:14-18).

BOAZ MAKES A DEAL

Early in the morning, Boaz went to the main gate of the city where much of the town business was



conducted. There he hoped to find the other man who was closely related to Ruth.

Before long, the man came and Boaz greeted him. "I have some important news for you!" Boaz said. "Wait here until I return."

Boaz returned shortly with 10 of the leading men from the city. It was a custom to have several people witness a business agreement.

"Elimelech's widow, Naomi, has a piece of land to sell," explained Boaz. "And since you are the clos-



est relative, you should have the first choice to buy it. But if you prefer not to, then I would like to buy it.”

“I will buy it!” the man said without hesitation.

“But I must also tell you,” added Boaz. “The sale of the land includes marriage to Ruth, Elimelech’s daughter-in-law, and having a family by her!”

The man’s excitement gave way to disappointment. “Then I cannot afford to buy it,” he sadly told Boaz. “I do not have the money to buy the land and support a wife and child, too.”

Boaz received just the reaction he hoped for. The man slipped off his shoe and handed it to Boaz. This showed that the nearest relative would pass on the responsibility to the next closest relative. In this case, it would be Boaz (Ruth 4:8).

Boaz then restated the agreement to the man and the witnesses. “We are witnesses to this agreement,” they said. “May your wife be as Rachel and Leah.”

Boaz hurried to tell Ruth the good news. They were both happy that God so wonderfully blessed them.

The story of Ruth teaches us an important lesson—the lesson of loyalty. Ruth was a young woman



BOAZ

RUTH

OBED

JESSE

when she willingly left Moab and her family. Her love for her mother-in-law and God's way of life was important to her.

Because of her loyalty and obedience to God, she was blessed with a wonderful marriage to Boaz. They were also blessed with a son they named Obed. Later, Obed married and had a son named Jesse, the father of King David (Ruth 4:13-22).

In our next lesson, we will learn about the prophet Samuel.

Do You Remember?

1. Why did Ruth go to the threshing floor while Boaz was asleep?

2. Was Boaz the closest relative to Ruth? _____
3. What did Boaz give Ruth to take home with her to Naomi?

4. Where did Boaz go the next morning? _____
5. Why did Boaz bring 10 of the leading men of the city to the main gate? _____
6. Who was the son of Boaz and Ruth? _____
7. Who was the great-grandson of Boaz and Ruth? _____

DAVID

FOUNDER: HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG (1892-1986)

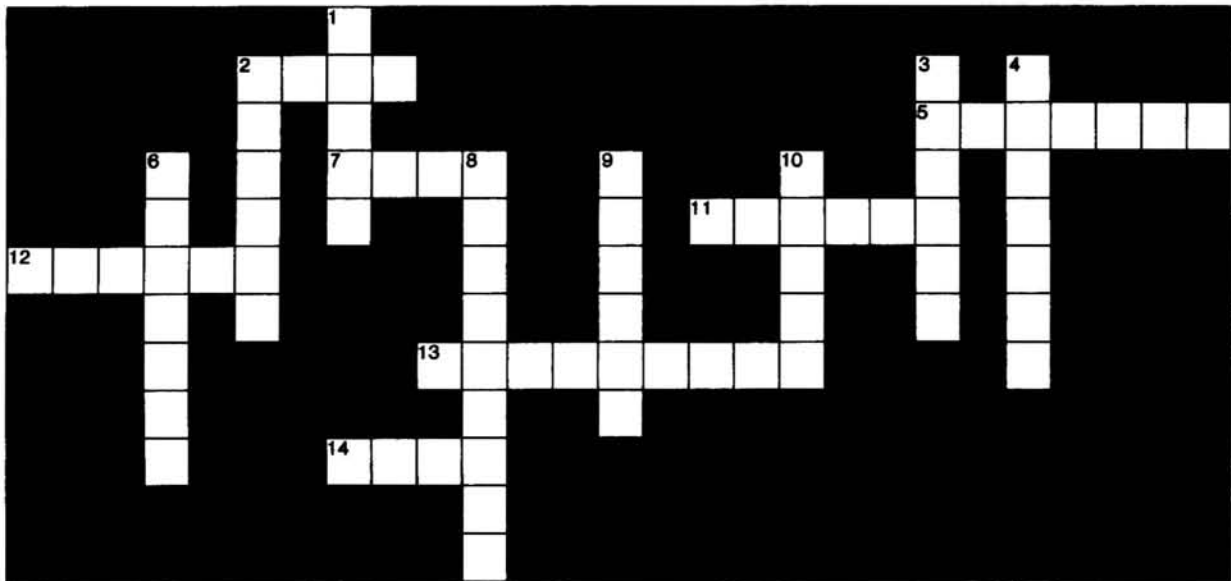
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BIBLE MEMORY

Psalm 133:1-3

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

2. Ruth's second husband.
5. Lot's uncle.
7. Ruth was from the land of ____.
11. Naomi's native land.
12. Lack of food.
13. Naomi's husband.
14. She was a virtuous woman.

DOWN

1. Ruth's mother-in-law.
2. Grain.
3. Ruth's first husband.
4. Long period without rain.
6. Orpah's husband.
8. Town where Naomi lived.
9. Those who ruled in Israel.
10. Ruth's sister-in-law.