

23. Naomi

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there. Now Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband...

When she heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show kindness to you, as you have shown to your dead and to me..."

At this they went again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-by, but Ruth clung to her ... So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

"Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."

So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning...

Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, from the clan of Elimelech, a man of standing, whose name was Boaz...

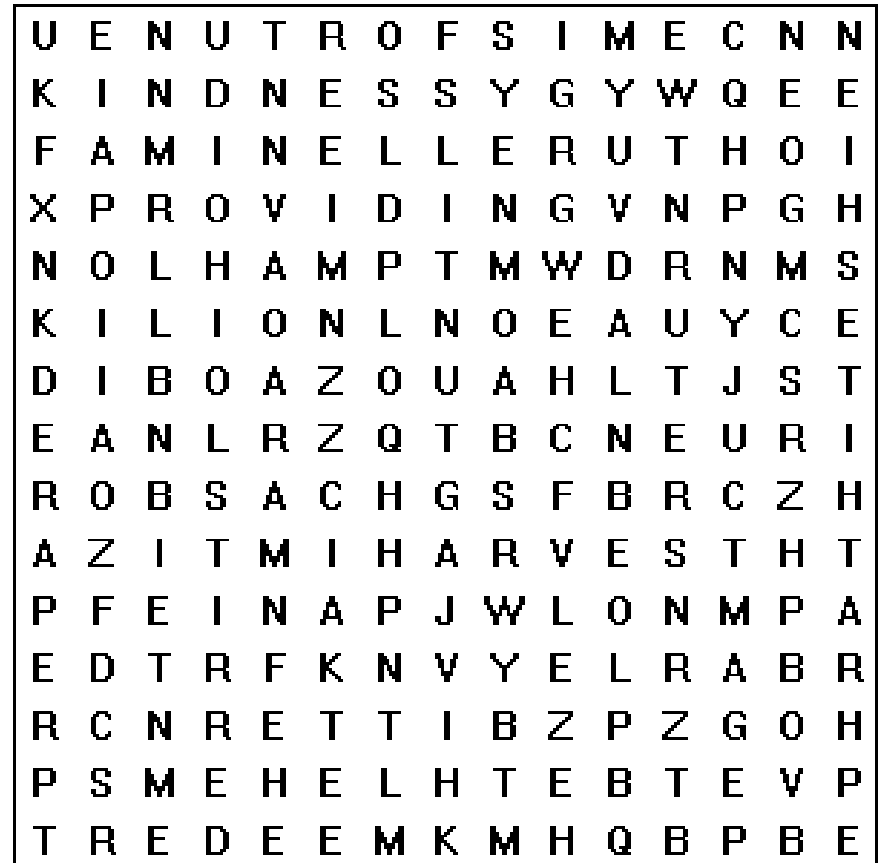
Boaz replied, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before.

"The LORD bless him!" Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead." She added, "That man is our close relative; he is one of our kinsman-redeemers."

One day Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not try to find a home for you, where you will be well provided for?"

Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to redeem, good; let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the LORD lives I will do it. Lie here until morning." ... When Ruth came to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, "How did it go, my daughter?" ... Then she told her everything Boaz had done for her and added, "He gave me these six measures of barley, saying, 'Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'"

(Ruth 1:1-8, 14, 19-22; 2:1, 11, 20; 3:1, 13, 16-17 NIV)



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BARLEY	HARVEST	OPRAH
BETHLEHEM	JUDGES	PREPARED
BITTER	KILION	PROVIDING
BOAZ	KINDNESS	REDEEM
CLUNG	KINSMAN	RETURN
DEATH	MAHLON	RUTH
ELIMELECH	MARA	STIRRED
EMPTY	MISFORTUNE	SURELY
EPHRATHITES	MOAB	UNTIL
FAMINE	NAOMI	WEPT