



# Lesson 91

## Ruth Meets Boaz

### Story Elements

- **Text:** Ruth 1:19-2:23
- **Setting:** circa 1100 B.C. in Bethlehem
- **Main Characters:** God, Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi
- **Plot:** Naomi.

- **Key word(s):** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Climax:** *Ruth 2:5* Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this?

### From Beautiful to Bitter

1. (1:19) Upon returning to Bethlehem, the whole city was astir with news that Naomi was back from Moab.
  - a. *Is this Naomi?* The townspeople were shocked, not only by Naomi's return, but also by her \_\_\_\_\_. Evidently, ten years of struggle and tragedy had taken their toll on her countenance.
  - b. (1:20) *Call me not Naomi, call me Mara.* Her sufferings had caused her to feel like her name should be changed from Naomi, which means beautiful, to Mara, which means bitter.

APPLICATION → Naomi was bitter in the sense that her life had soured because of her family's departure from God's revealed will and the ensuing family deaths that she interpreted as God's angry providence. But Naomi was not bitter *against* God. This is important. Though our lives be embittered under God's chastisement, our hearts should remain \_\_\_\_\_ as we trust in God's holy wisdom and faithful love. We can see such a disposition in Naomi's imploring of the LORD for blessing. (cf. 1:8,9; 2:20)

### From Moab's Country to Bethlehem's Fields

2. (1:22-2:3) Having resettled in Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest<sup>1</sup> (cf. 1:22), Ruth seeks out a means to provide food for her and Naomi.
  - a. Ruth hoped to find a generous landowner that would allow her to glean after the \_\_\_\_\_. "The right of gleaning was conferred by a positive law on the widow, the poor, and the stranger (see on Le 19:9 and De 24:19). But liberty to glean *behind the reapers* [Ru 2:3] was not a right that could be claimed; it was a privilege granted or refused according to the good will or favor of the owner."<sup>2</sup>
  - b. It so happened that Ruth was generously allowed to glean in the field of Boaz, who was a wealthy man and a kinsman of Naomi's husband.

APPLICATION → Matthew Henry notes, "God wisely orders small events; and those that seem altogether contingent serve his own \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ of his people. Many a great affair is brought about by a little turn, which seemed fortuitous to us, but was directed by Providence with design."<sup>3</sup>

3. (2:4-7) Coming from town to check on the progress of the harvest, Boaz took notice of Ruth and inquired of her with his foreman, who said, *It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab.*
  - a. (2:8-9) Boaz told Ruth to stay in his field for all her gleaning activities. He also provided her with victuals and guaranteed her \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. (2:10) Ruth was humbled by Boaz's care and generosity.

<sup>1</sup> On our calendar, this would be near the end of March.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 174.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 376.

