

THE STORY OF PETER And THE STORY OF RUTH

Aunt Hattie's Bible Stories

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by

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

RUTH ANSWERS A QUESTION

NAOMI had been away many years and had returned without anything. She was entitled to the inheritance of property left by her husband, Elimelech, when he went away. Under the law of Moses the way to gain this inheritance was to ask the nearest relative to redeem it or to buy it back. Then this nearest relative was to take his dead brother's wife as his wife and rear children in the brother's name.

Back in those days the parents helped to choose life companions for their children. Naomi thought it was time Ruth had a husband to care for her and to protect her. She also desired that children should be born in the name of her husband and son.

We have to know these ancient customs to understand the plans that Naomi made for Ruth, her daughter-in-law.

When night came during threshing season it was the custom for someone to sleep upon the threshing-floor, to serve as caretaker over the wheat. Naomi, learned that on a certain night Boaz was to guard the grain, so she told Ruth to put on her very best and go down to the threshing-floor, but not to let Boaz know she was there. When he lay down for the night, after he had eaten his supper, Ruth was to lie at his feet.

Ruth did as Naomi told her, and when Boaz awakened in the night and found that she was there, he asked why she had come. She explained that it was because she was his nearest relative. Boaz knew what that meant—it was his place to redeem or buy back Elimelech's property.

Boaz was pleased that Ruth had come to him, and he asked God to bless her. He was glad that she had not gone to the younger men. The fact that she had put the situation before him showed that she was a pure and virtuous woman.

Boaz agreed that he was a near relative, but that he knew of a man who was even nearer than he was. How honorable Boaz was in his dealings! He told her to wait until morning when he would see what could be done.

Early in the morning, when she arose to go, Boaz filled her shawl with grain.

Hearing Ruth's experience with Boaz, Naomi told her to wait until the matter was settled. Naomi said: "The man will not rest until he has finished the thing this day." Boaz was known for promptness.

~ end of chapter 18 ~

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