

# SEALED WITH A SANDAL



Naomi and Ruth had walked a long, long way. They were so tired. They had no home, no food and no money. Here in Bethlehem, it was harvest time. The men and women were busy in the fields cutting down the barley and gathering it into the barns.

Naomi and Ruth were hungry. Their mouths watered at the thought of eating some fresh, hot barley bread. But how were they going to buy any? Their purses were empty.

Ruth said to Naomi, **'I'll go into the fields and pick up the grains of barley that have fallen at the edges, if the farmer will let me.'**

So Ruth went all along the edges of the field picking up the grains of barley that had fallen to the ground. Soon she had collected enough to make some barley loaves for her and Naomi to eat.

Boaz, the farmer who owned the field, noticed Ruth and when he heard her sad story, he felt sorry for her. So sorry that he made sure his workers dropped grain for her to find.

When Ruth got home that night she told Naomi how kind Boaz had been. Naomi was pleased and surprised.

**'Boaz is a distant relative,'** she said.

When the harvest was over, Naomi was worried.

**'How are we going to get food to eat now?'** she said to Ruth. **'Perhaps, if you speak to Boaz he might take care of us. It says in our law that the men in our family should take care of widows like us.'** Ruth was very nervous but she trusted Naomi and did what she said.

Naomi waited anxiously for Ruth to come back. **'What did Boaz say?'** she asked.

**'He said he would take care of us,'** replied Ruth, **'and look, he gave us all this grain so we won't go hungry.'** Naomi took the grain. **'What a good man he is. I'm sure he'll find a way to help us.'**

Naomi was right. Boaz did want to help. In fact he liked Ruth so much he wanted

to marry her, but there was a problem. There was another man who was a closer relative to Naomi than Boaz. Boaz would need to have a meeting with him.

The next day Boaz went to the town gate and waited for him to pass by.

Boaz spotted him and called out, **‘come and sit with me. I have an important matter to discuss with you. Naomi has come back to live here with her daughter-in-law Ruth. Both their husbands are dead. Are you willing to take care of them?’**

**‘No, thanks,’** he answered, **‘but if you want to you can look after them.’**

**‘Give me your sandal, then,’** said Boaz; for that was the way they sealed a deal in Bethlehem. The man took off his sandal and handed it to Boaz. As he hopped away Boaz rushed off to find Ruth to ask her to marry him.

Naomi was so happy! Her beloved Ruth was to marry Boaz. Now she knew that she and Ruth would have a home, food and be taken care of. Naomi had a big smile on her face as she said a prayer,

**‘Thank you God for taking care of us so well. Thank you for kind and generous people.’**

