

HOW COULD SHE KNOW?
by Martha Christine White

She turned away from the fresh grave. Only by forcing herself was she able to move one foot ahead of the other, taking the steps that would lead her away. Away from him...forever.

She felt the others watching her. They were nice, but how could they possibly understand? Could they know what grief it was to lose your husband...your young husband? She had often wondered if she would be able to bear it when they were old and gray, but she had never thought - never guessed - that it might happen like this. Then the unthinkable had happened and there was no time to prepare. Really, it wasn't as if something had happened so much as it was that everything had ceased to happen. Everything for her, at least. For he had ceased to be and only the mound of dirt would prove that he had been. And where was he now...?

"No, no, you must not think; not that, anyway." One part of her mind had taken over, mercifully, and was directing her to action...Concentrate on what you are doing. Bend down. Scoop up dirt. (The others each had a handful of dirt.) Fling it on the grave. (The others had flung theirs on the mound as they passed by, in customary ritual.) Now, throw the dirt. (The ritual goes on, and life goes on...somewhere.) But she could not throw the dirt. It sifted to the ground through her limp fingers and she turned away.

Where to go now? What to do? Go home? Stay with her husband's people until the shock passed? All of a sudden she knew only that it mattered terribly that no one touch her right hand; some of the dirt was still clinging to it.

In the future the shock would pass, but not the hurt. In the future she would have a decision to make and would choose to go God's way, to the best of her knowledge. There would be surprises and even joy; but now there was just hurt.

How could she know that at that very moment a godly man was busy prospering his business and would one day share his wealth with her as her God-given husband? How could she know that she would be blessed with children and children's children? That throughout the world her name would become a symbol of purity and devoted love and would be given fondly to many daughters? Or, most astounding of all, that she would be one of the only two Gentiles in the distinguished line of the Messiah?

Ruth - an ancestor of Christ because her husband died and she later married a Jew named Boaz.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face..."

ORDINARY PEOPLE
RUTH
Chapter 1

There may have been times when to you it seemed that the best in life had come...and gone! *It's always an encouragement* to see from Scripture how God takes Ordinary

People (who are also Real People) and uses even the hardest of circumstances to provide for their needs as He is bringing salvation to the world. And by observing these people we catch a glimpse of how we, too, can depend on Him.

Read the book of Ruth at one sitting. Do this two times. 1) ____ 2) ____

1. List the people who are mentioned in this book and tell who each one was.

Re-read Ruth 1:1-5.

2. In your own words, list the events that take place in these verses.

3. What can you tell about:

a. where Moab was in relationship to Bethlehem? (Check the map in your Bible.)

b. what the people of Moab were like? (Read Judges 3:12-30 or a Bible dictionary.)

Read Ruth 1:6-14.

4. What two circumstances prompted Naomi to move back to Bethlehem? (One is in verses 1-5.)

5. a. In verse 6 what observations did the unbelieving Moabites make about God and His people?

b. What application does this have for you today?

6. What kind of a relationship would you say Naomi had with her daughters-in-law?

7. Why did she try to persuade them to leave her?

8. In verses 11-13 Naomi is referring to an Israelite law governing family life. Read Deuteronomy 25:5-10 and explain this law.

After this explanation is made Orpah kisses Naomi good-bye and returns but Ruth clings to Naomi.

Read Ruth 1:15-18.

9. What new element does Naomi introduce here and what kind of response does Ruth make?

Read Ruth 1:19-22.

10. What happens in these verses?

11. a. Compare what Naomi says of her situation with Ruth 1:1. Was she accurate in her remarks? Explain.

b. Do you ever do the same? When?

12. As you think back over this chapter what was Ruth turning from, what was she turning to, and why?

13. How can you apply this to your life today? Please be specific.

14. Give your idea of what Ruth was like from what you've observed in Chapter 1.

15. Please complete this sentence: As a result of studying this first chapter of Ruth I am asking God to -

Carolyn Roper (original 1981; revised 1991)