

The Book of Ruth 3 Chapter 2

Read Ruth, chapter 2:-

Note especially verse 12. Ruth had made a commitment to the Lord God of Israel (chapter 1, verse 16). Here we see it recognised by Boaz, the kinsman of Naomi's husband Elimelech. A reminder that the inheritance laws in Deuteronomy chapter 25, verses 5 - 10 are essential background to the Book of Ruth. The "next of kin" of the deceased had the responsibility of "kinsman – redeemer" (Hebrew "*go-el*"). His was the duty to buy back (redeem) into the family line, the title of any land previously sold. See Leviticus chapter 25, verses 25 – 28. It seems that the only asset Naomi possessed was the "*parcel of land belonging to Elimelech*" (chapter 4, verse 3 – more about this when we look at that passage).

Ruth gleanes in the fields of Boaz - Chapter 2, verses 1 – 16

Verses 1 – 7:- In verse 1, the phrase "*a man of wealth*" is the same as in Judges 6, verse 12 where it is translated "*mighty man of valour*". Boaz was a person of high standing in the community!

Notice that it is Ruth who takes the initiative in verse 2 and that she "*happened*" to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz. The open-field system depended on landmarks to show the boundaries between one ownership and another. For an individual like Ruth, coming to exercise her right as a needy individual, (Leviticus 19, verses 9 – 10) it would be easy to move from one "field" to another. Here we have the providence of the Lord God leading the way and introducing her to Boaz.

Verses 8 – 16:- Introduced to Ruth, Boaz makes provision for her to be cared for and guarded – verses 9 and 14. He makes sure she obtains extra gleanings – verse 15. Boaz had obviously heard all the gossip about Naomi and Ruth and begins to take on the role of kinsman – verse 11 is key! He not only provides for Ruth's immediate needs but prays for her as well! - verse 12. The words remind us of Psalm 17, verse 8 and the words of our Lord Jesus regarding Jerusalem in Matthew chapter 23, verse 37.

Ruth regarded herself as inferior to the girls who worked for Boaz – verses 10 and 13. In his generosity, the attitude of Boaz to this poor foreigner was that of a true follower of the Lord God of Israel - verses 14 - 16. The One who cared for and provided for His people in their every need.

Ruth returns to Naomi – Chapter 2, verses 17 - 22

Verse 17 - 18:- The amount of barley gleaned by Ruth was about 22 litres dry measure. With the extra food given by Boaz the two women had provision enough for 6 or 7 days – far more than a normal day's gleanings could possibly provide!

Verses 19 - 20:- Naomi realised that the amount of grain Ruth brought home was far more than usual and that she must have had help - "*Blessed be the man that took notice of you.*" The kindness shown by Boaz was not only towards Naomi and Ruth but also towards Naomi's husband and sons. The family line was being respected and its needs met by one of the nearest relatives.

Provision made for the short term future – Chapter 2, verse 21 – 23

Naomi encourages Ruth to take up the offer of Boaz and stay with the other girls where she would be safe and provided with her daily needs. She kept working in the fields of Boaz throughout the harvest season which lasted from late April (barley) to mid June (wheat).

Throughout this chapter there is an emphasis on the "foreignness" of Ruth. It comes in verses 2; 6; 10; 11; 12; 13; and here in verse 21. Read Leviticus chapter 19, verse 33 and Deuteronomy chapter 24, verses 17 – 19. Boaz would know these verses which extend the love and care of the Lord God to strangers and sojourners. The writer of the Book of Ruth makes it clear that in the family tree of the great King David is a Moabitess! This emphasis on racial inclusion is carried over into the Gospel of Matthew chapter 1, in the family tree of the Lord Jesus Christ.