

Ruth 2

Verse 1 - 7

Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. ² And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Please let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after one in whose sight I may find favor.” And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.” ³ So she departed and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. ⁴ Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, “May the Lord be with you.” And they said to him, “May the Lord bless you.” ⁵ Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman is this?” ⁶ The servant in charge of the reapers replied, “She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the land of Moab. ⁷ And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ Thus she came and has remained from the morning until now; she has been sitting in the house for a little while.”

Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

The meaning of the name Boaz is “in him is strength”.

His name was assigned to the left pillar in the Temple of Solomon.

See 1 Kings 7:21

²¹ And he set up the pillars at the porch of the main room: he set up the right pillar and named it Jachin, and he set up the left pillar and named it Boaz.

² And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Please let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after one in whose sight I may find favor.”

Landowners were not allowed to reap their fields to the very edges, nor could they send the reapers a second time into the same field. The purpose of this was to allow the poor an opportunity to provide for themselves.

See Leviticus 19:9-10 and Deuteronomy 24:19-22

Leviticus 19:9-10

⁹ ‘Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the Lord your God.

Deuteronomy 24:19-22

¹⁹ “When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you are not to go back to get it; it shall belong to the stranger, the orphan, and to the widow, in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ When you beat *the olives* off your olive tree, you are not to search through the branches again; *that* shall be *left* for the stranger, the orphan, and for the widow.

²¹ “When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you are not to go over it again; *that* shall be *left* for the stranger, the orphan, and the widow. ²² And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing.

³ So she departed and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

Ruth coming to that particular place to glean led to her meeting Boaz. Some may think this happened by chance but for others this was the providence of God.

⁵ Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman is this?” ⁶ The servant in charge of the reapers replied, “She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the land of Moab.

Right away we see that Ruth caught the attention of Boaz.

At this point, a number of commentators mention that Boaz was not married but that is based on a misinterpretation of Deut. 25:5.

We will look into this matter a little later on in the book but for now it should be said that the text is silent about his marital status.

⁷ And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ Thus she came and has remained from the morning until now; she has been sitting in the house for a little while.”

The overseer was careful to point out that Ruth had received his permission and then mentions that she had been working all day but was now taking a well-deserved break.

The servant was impressed with her but he may have also picked up on the interest that Boaz showed and wanted to inform him of her good character.

Verse 8 - 13

Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but stay here with my maids. ⁹ Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Indeed, I have commanded the servants not to touch you. When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the servants draw.” ¹⁰ Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?” ¹¹ Boaz replied to her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know. ¹² May the Lord reward your work, and your wages be full from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge.” ¹³ Then she said, “I have found favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and indeed have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.”

This section needs no explanation but perhaps a brief comment is warranted.

Boaz was already informed of the noble character of Naomi's daughter-in-law. He also knew the potential danger that threatened a young woman in the harvest fields. So he advised her concerning the following matters:

1. He instructed her to glean in his field and in no other field.
2. He commanded the young men among his laborers not to touch her.
3. He told her to remain near his own maidens and to do her gleaning, following them.
4. He gave her the right to drink from the water jars that were provided.

Verse 14 -16

At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.” So she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left. ¹⁵ When she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not insult her. ¹⁶ Also you shall purposely pull out for her *some grain* from the bundles and leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.”

At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.” So she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left.

There is no doubt that Boaz was showing Ruth some special attention because he had a fondness for her but he was also giving the relationship time to grow. He was a man of character and waited for Ruth to see him as more than just a friendly relative of Naomi.

Verse 17 - 23

So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. ¹⁸ She took *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also took *it* out and gave Naomi what she had left after she was satisfied. ¹⁹ Her mother-in-law then said to her, “Where did you glean today and where did you work? May he who took notice of you be blessed.” So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, “The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz.” ²⁰ Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed of the Lord who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead.” Again Naomi said to her, “The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives.” ²¹ Then Ruth the Moabite said, “Furthermore, he said to me, ‘You should stay close to my servants until they have finished all my harvest.’” ²² Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maids, so that *others* do not fall upon you in another field.” ²³ So she stayed close by the maids of Boaz in order to glean until the end of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

Ruth gleaned about a bushel and a half. This was a large amount for a gleaner to gather in a single day.

¹⁹ Her mother-in-law then said to her, “Where did you glean today and where did you work? May he who took notice of you be blessed.” So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, “The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz.”

When Naomi saw how much Ruth had gleaned she knew that someone must have provided a good place for her to work.

Again Naomi said to her, “The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives.”

This was good news financially for both of the women but it also provided an additional possibility for Ruth who was still young enough to remarry.

²³ So she stayed close by the maids of Boaz in order to glean until the end of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

The harvest could last for 2 months which would provide a steady income for Ruth and Naomi. It also provided an opportunity for Boaz and Ruth to see each other on a daily basis.