

Ruth 3

Verses 1 – 5

Then her mother-in-law Naomi said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may go well for you? ² Now then, is Boaz not our relative, with whose young women you were? Behold, he is winnowing barley at the threshing floor tonight. ³ Wash yourself therefore, and anoint yourself, and put on your *best* clothes, and go down to the threshing floor; *but* do not reveal yourself to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ And it shall be when he lies down, that you shall take notice of the place where he lies, and you shall go and uncover his feet and lie down; then he will tell you what you should do.” ⁵ And she said to her, “All that you say I will do.”

¹ Then her mother-in-law Naomi said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may go well for you?”

Naomi wanted Ruth to have a full life, a husband, kids and security. Naomi wanted this for her before they left Moab.

See Ruth 1:8-9

⁸ But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go, return each of you to your mother’s house. May the LORD deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹ May the LORD grant that you may find a place of rest, each one in the house of her husband.” Then she kissed them, and they raised their voices and wept.

² Behold, he is winnowing barley at the threshing floor tonight.

The term winnowing means separating the grain (seeds) from the chaff (stems and leaves) of the plant.

This was done by pouring the seeds and chaff from a contained onto a clean surface so a nice breeze could carry the chaff away from the grain (seeds).

Barley looks very similar to wheat.

See pics 305 and 310

305 Barley



310 Wheat



The grain looks quite similar also. See pic 315 and 320

Barley



Wheat



There are three processes used to turn barley into flour and other products.

1. Threshing (beating the stalks) separates the seeds from the rest of the barley plant
2. Winnowing is the process of separating the seeds from the chaff (other plant parts).
3. Dry milling removes the outer fibrous materials from the grain (seeds).

³Wash yourself therefore, and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes, and go down to the threshing floor; but do not reveal yourself to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ And it shall be when he lies down, that you shall take notice of the place where he lies, and you shall go and uncover his feet and lie down; then he will tell you what you should do.

Naomi tells Ruth to put on her best clothes, and her favorite perfume.

She also advised her not to present herself to Boaz until after he had eaten his dinner and lain down for the night.

Even though this was an innocent event, if others had seen this it could have reflected poorly on Boaz and Ruth, so Ruth was taking some risk in doing this.

Verses 6 – 13

⁶So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law had commanded her. ⁷When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came secretly, and uncovered his feet and lay down. ⁸And it happened in the middle of the night that the man was startled and bent forward; and behold, a woman was lying at his feet. ⁹So he said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth your slave. Now spread your garment over your slave, for you are a redeemer.” ¹⁰Then he said, “May you be blessed of the Lord, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first, by not going after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹So now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you say, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence. ¹²But now, although it is true that I am a redeemer, yet there is also a redeemer more closely related than I. ¹³Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as the Lord lives. Lie down until morning.”

⁸ And it happened in the middle of the night that the man was startled and bent forward; and behold, a woman was lying at his feet. ⁹ So he said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth your slave.

The fact that Boaz was surprised by her presence and didn't even know who she was indicates that nothing unseemly was going on in this unusual situation.

¹⁰ Then he said, “May you be blessed of the Lord, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first, by not going after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹ So now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you say, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence.

Ruth was somewhat younger than Boaz and could have sought the companionship of men her own age but she chose to be with Boaz.

Even though Ruth was a Moabite she had accepted the Lord as her God and shown herself to be a person of high character and this was well known in the Jewish community.

¹² But now, although it is true that I am a redeemer, yet there is also a redeemer more closely related than I.

Since the other man was a closer relative Boaz had to see if he was willing to take her as a wife.

Verses 14 – 18

¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until morning, and got up before one person could recognize another; and he said, “Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” ¹⁵ Again he said, “Give me the shawl that is on you and hold it.” So she held it, and he measured six *measures* of barley and laid *it* on her. Then she went into the city. ¹⁶ When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “How did it go, my daughter?” And she told her all that the man had done for her. ¹⁷ She also said, “These six *measures* of barley he gave to me, for he said, ‘Do not go to your mother-in-law empty-handed.’” ¹⁸ Then she said, “Wait, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out; for the man will not rest until he has settled it today.”

¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until morning, and got up before one person could recognize another; and he said, “Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.”

While both Boaz and Ruth had not done anything improper there was the consideration that her reputation might be harmed. Perhaps that should have been considered when she decided to lay by his feet or when Boaz woke up during the night.

However, they showed wisdom in her leaving before anyone woke up and saw them together.

¹⁷ She also said, “These six *measures* of barley he gave to me, for he said, ‘Do not go to your mother-in-law empty-handed.

It seems likely that Boaz recognized that Naomi had counseled Ruth concerning her actions that night and rewarded her accordingly.

It is possible that Boaz was reluctant to marry Ruth because of the age difference and Naomi forced the issue by having Ruth approach Boaz in this way.