

Day 261 - MONDAY: October 16th

Ruth 2

Ruth 2:1-23 NKJV

There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz. So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered him, "The LORD bless you!" Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house." Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn." So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose

wings you have come for refuge." Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants." Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back. And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her." So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied. And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz." Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!" And Naomi said to her, "This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives." Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also said to me, 'You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.' " And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field." So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "After all of the calamity of chapter 1, Naomi and Ruth begin to settle back into Israel. Without husbands to help provide for them, Naomi and Ruth utilize the legal provisions God gave to Israel for the poor and widows (see Leviticus 19:9-10; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19). Ruth seeks permission from Naomi to gather grain

in the fields being harvested. Her "reference to whoever is kind enough to let her glean (the meaning of 'in whose eyes I find favor') reminds us that not everyone followed the Law!" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verses 2:2-3). With Naomi's blessing, Ruth "happens" upon the field of Boaz, a kinsman of Naomi's deceased husband Elimelech (Ruth 2:1, 3). She, of course, didn't intend this, not even knowing about Boaz or any connection with him. But it wasn't random chance. God was behind it, as Naomi later recognizes (verse 20).

Interestingly, "about a mile east of Bethlehem is a field, called 'Field of Boaz,' where, tradition says, Ruth gleaned. Adjoining is the 'Shepherd's Field,' where, tradition says, the angels announced the birth of Jesus. According to these traditions, the scene of Ruth's romance with Boaz, which led to the formation of the family that was to produce Christ, was chosen of God, 1100 [or more] years later, as the place for the heavenly announcement of Christ's arrival" (*Halley's Bible Handbook*, note on chapter 2).

In this field Ruth labored. Indeed, her harvesting would have been hard work—using a sickle to glean the corners of the field and picking through the field for any grain the harvesters had dropped. Ruth caught the attention of the servants because of her hard work, staying in the field from morning through the heat of the day—not even stopping long to rest "in the house" (verse 7), which was probably a tent or canopy to provide some shade in the field. Ruth has thus established a good reputation for herself. "In a small community the story of Ruth and Naomi would be common knowledge, the focus of much conversation (cf. v. 11). Now events showed Ruth hardworking (v. 7), respectful (v. 10), modest, and grateful (v. 13). The reputation we earn opens—or closes—the door of opportunity" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verses 6, 10-11, 13). Indeed, Ruth's having sown seeds of good character

was allowing her to "reap a harvest" of great reward (compare Galatians 6:7).

Boaz fulfills the instruction God had given Israel to not treat strangers or foreigners differently under the law, and even instructs Ruth to stay and glean in his fields for her protection. This and Naomi's words at the end of the chapter show that safety was a concern for a lone woman during this period. "Again we sense that Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz live in an oasis of peace in a turbulent, sinful society" (note on Ruth 2:9, 22). Ruth was apparently in danger of being molested while she worked in the fields. Among Boaz's many kindnesses, he personally warned his workers that Ruth was not to be touched.

In verse 12, "Boaz blesses Ruth, in a statement which may be taken as a prayer.... Boaz believes that Ruth deserves the best for her piety and choice of Israel's God, and is convinced that a just God will see that she is well rewarded. Boaz, who utters this prayer, is the means by which it is answered" (note on verse 12). Boaz goes so far as to provide food for Ruth while she works, instructs his workers not to rebuke and shame her if she works among the already harvested sheaves and even tells them to purposely drop some of the harvest for her to gather.

It is interesting to note that Boaz did not just give her the grain. He "exhibited the highest form of charity by giving in secret so as not to shame the recipient" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verse 17). Perhaps there is even a spiritual lesson in what happened. While God undoubtedly led Ruth to Boaz's field, and may have even laid it upon Boaz to be so generous to her, Ruth herself had to put forth the necessary work to reap the blessings. Thus, despite the fact that it was a gift, she still had to work. And work she did all day long, gathering an ephah of barley (verse 17). As an ephah equates to about 65 percent of a modern bushel and a bushel of barley weighs about 48 pounds, Ruth gathered about 31 pounds of barley.

This was far more than typical gleaning could bring in, and Naomi immediately recognizes that someone must have helped Ruth out (verse 19). When Ruth tells her about Boaz, Naomi is overjoyed—realizing that he, as a close relative of Elimelech, could redeem the family name and inheritance. And surely, she reasoned, this development was from God (verse 20). So God had not abandoned her after all. He had accepted Ruth and would take care of the both of them. After utter despair, Naomi now trusted God to see them through.

Ruth continues gleaning through the barley and then the wheat harvest (verse 23).” [END]

Verse 15 – The Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “This was a privilege; for no person should glean till the sheaves were all bound, and the shocks set up.”

John Gill states: “pointing to a particular spot where might be the best ears of corn, and where more of them had fallen:”

Verse 17 – Regarding the amount of grain that Ruth gathered, John Gill’s commentary states: “Ruth got enough in one day, for herself and her mother-in-law, which would last five days at least. This was a great deal for one woman to pick up, ear by ear, in one day; and must be accounted for, not only by her diligence and industry, but by the favour shown her by the reapers, under the direction of Boaz, who suffered her to glean among the sheaves, and let fall handfuls for her to pick up.” [END]

Verse 23 – The barley harvest began around the Days of Unleavened Bread and the wheat harvest began around Pentecost, so we have somewhere around 2 to 3 months of time occurring for these harvests.