

The Book of Ruth

LESSON 5

Introduction and Chapter 2:1-3

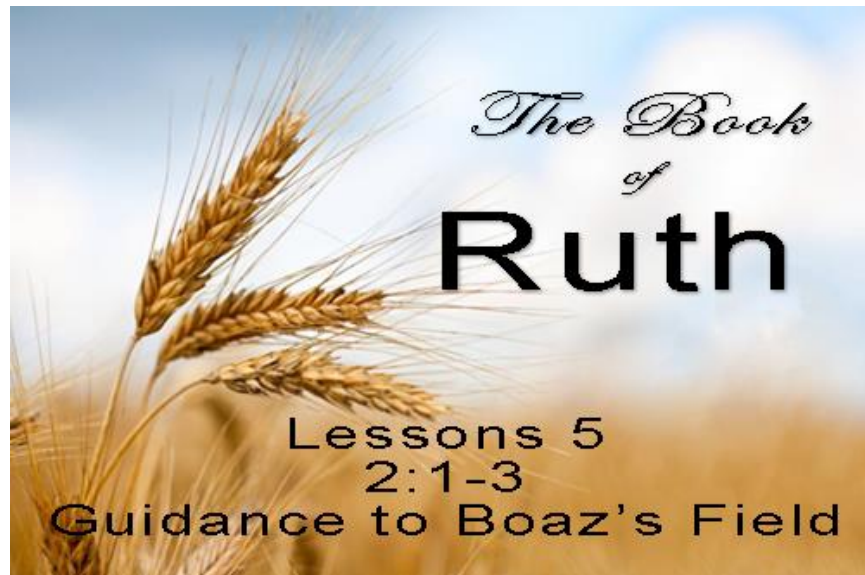
"Ruth's Reaping"

Guidance to Boaz's Field

Chapter 2:1-3

"Ruth's Reaping" (Ruth's Guidance to Boaz's Field)

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LAST WEEK:

We introduced the major characters of the Book of Ruth and their journey from Israel to Moab. Here's our outline and text for what we covered.

Ruth's Reception 1:19-22

A. Sojourn: 1:19a So they both went until they came to Bethlehem.

B. Surprise: 1:19b And it came about when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was stirred because of them, and the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

C. Sorrow: 1:20a And she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara,

D. Situation: 1:20b for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.

E. Sorry: 1:21-22 "I went out full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?" 22 So Naomi returned, and with her Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, who returned from the land of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Moving from chapter 1, Naomi and Ruth return to Judah and the city of Bethlehem. The people of the city are amazed at the change in this once beautiful, and joyful lady. Once she had a husband and sons – and now she returns with just a Moabite daughter-in-law, and Naomi says she is bitter and empty.

Parallel 1 – The nation of Israel returns to God from idolatry. The nation is standing at the threshold of grace, in the time between repentance and receiving the joys and fulfillment of being totally back in fellowship.

Parallel 2 – When the believer returns, following God's discipline, to fellowship through confession there can be bitterness. Some believers only get this far – they end their outward waywardness but are still bitter with God because what they wanted did not fit into God's plan for them.

In Chapter 2 Ruth will be introduced to her **Kinsman-Redeemer** and Naomi will work hard at making sure that Ruth does all the right things in meeting him.

LESSON 5 - RUTH'S REAPING**LESSON 05****The Book of Ruth – CH-2:1-3
"Guidance To Boaz's Field"**

Now we will be moving from Chapter 1 and entering Chapter 2 and the first three verses.

We've mentioned the importance of the fact that the pattern of the book reflects the pattern of Israel's (via the Tribe of Judah) relationship with The LORD God. We've also learned that the story was not made up to do that but was chosen by its author because it so closely followed what God did with the nation of Israel during the times of the Judges. It shows the LORD God as the one who so loves His people that He always attempts to lead them to repentance and restoration in their relationship to Him. This pattern can be demonstrated through all ages with His relationship to His people – including us today.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Chapter 2 introduces us to the central theme of the book, which is Redemption through a Kinsman-Redeemer.

Here in this study, we will be introduced to the Kinsman-Redeemer concept as it applies to Naomi, and learn why she disqualifies herself and passes the opportunity down to her daughter-in-law Ruth. The writer gives away the plan, but it seems both Naomi and Ruth are pretty much unaware of the events that will pull the story of redemption through the Kinsman-Redeemer together.

THE VISUALIZED TEXT (NASB)

II. Ruth's Reaping – 1:1-23

A. Guidance to Boaz's Field – 2:1-3

1. Boaz – 2:1

Now

Naomi

had a relative

on her husband's side,

a man of standing

from the clan of Elimelech,

whose name was Boaz.

Brief Commentary on Ruth 2:1

The word **now** introduces a change in direction. The book so far has been about waywardness, chastisement, and then repentance. Now we move along to that time when, after they have been disciplined, we are introduced to a deeper relationship with God.

Naomi has returned to Bethlehem after the deaths of her husband, Elimelech, and her two married sons. She has returned alone with Ruth, the Moabite wife of her late older son Mahlon.

Naomi still has a relationship with her husband's family and is mindful of the rite of **Levirate marriage**. We already know that she does not see herself as qualifying for the rite, because of her advanced age, but she sees that Ruth does.

Ruth, if she could be married and have children, would be able to continue not only Mahlon's family line but Elimelech's as well. The story introduces us to Boaz, a man who is wealthy and unmarried and a close relative of Elimelech's.

About the faithfulness of Boaz

1. Faithful - In spite of war and famine – still master of considerable wealth

2. Faithful – stayed in Bethlehem, Judah
3. Faithful – member of Elimelech’s family
4. Faithful – to Israel
5. Faithful – to God
- 6. Faithful – to the Abrahamic line – a point in the book, both physical and spiritual**

In these first words nothing is said about a Kingman-Redeemer or a Levirate marriage. All we’re told, so far, is that there is in Bethlehem a man named Boaz and he is a relative.

Ruth 2:2, “Let Me Go”

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.”

Brief Commentary on Ruth 2:2

This paragraph begins with the word “And.” So it is a continuation of thought with verse 1. Naomi has a male relative who is of standing and a physical descendant of the line of her late husband Elimelech. Earlier, we’ve talked about the Levirate Marriage law and the importance of a kinsman-redeemer, but it hasn’t been mentioned in the text yet. This is the first “hint” of what’s ahead.

Ruth is referred to as “the Moabite.” This is important on a couple of levels. First, we are to recognize that this story, about God’s redemptive plans, includes Gentiles – even at this most important level in the genealogy of King David, and the Son of God, Jesus. Second, here we have this “stranger”, a woman, who is going to attempt to support herself and her elderly mother-in-law by gathering left-over grain out in fields that other people own. This woman is from the very culture that brought God’s discipline upon

Israel (famine), and it is here that Ruth is attempting to find acceptance and provision.

It is harvest time and Ruth is aware of the Jewish law called "The Right of the Poor." God considers that the crops are a gift from Him to all His children, the Jew first, and then the stranger (Gentile). He also considers that the owners of land are merely stewards of that land and the harvests from the land. God even put in place laws about the return of land that was sold (usually because of poverty) to another... reverted back to the original owners once every fifty years. This time was called the year of Jubilee.

Ruth says "Please let me go..." Her heart is still full of love and service for Naomi. She knows that Naomi is older and work in the fields would be a great burden for her, so she wants to go in her stead. Without a rightful place in the community (a married place) they need the food that can be legally gleaned from the fields in order to keep themselves fed.

Ruth also seems to know the dangers of the fields. Even back then a lone woman was at risk, especially among those (men) who were out in the fields work or gleaning for a free meal.

There is a small but interesting wordplay here in that the word for reapers, later in the text, literally means "those who follow along behind," and Ruth is asking to "follow along behind" one in whose sight she may find favor." Finding favor will at least offer her protection while she is in the field. This one, or ones, could be male or female. She is also hoping that the owner of said field will find her presence acceptable. Not every farmer idealized "The Right of the Poor" law for re-gleaning their fields for free.

Naomi gratefully says "Go, my daughter," for she no longer refers to Ruth as "my daughter-in-law," but now Ruth has become "my daughter." Naomi and Ruth have become much closer through their time of trials and travels.

Returning to the Lord in repentance is often a difficult task whether it be a nation or an individual. We are glimpsing into that period of

time when the one bringing repentance is introduced to The Lord God in a new way. After chastisement we expect more chastisement when we come face to face with God, but like the father in the Prodigal Son story, God is waiting patiently and gracefully for our **willing** return, ready to heap treasures upon us for returning.

Ruth 2:3 – “Go, My Daughter”

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.**

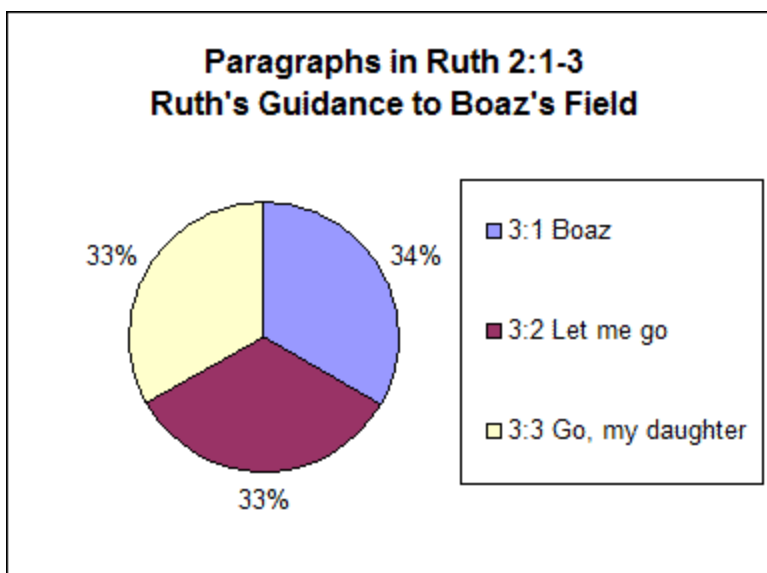
Brief Commentary on Ruth 2:3

Ruth goes and does. That is an enormous statement of obedience. A foreign, unmarried, woman travels to the workplace where there are Hebrew men and women who have worked with each other for years and humbles herself to "glean" after the workers.

Then she "happens" to work in the field of Boaz. There is nothing in the text that indicates that she might have searched and found his field. It merely states that she "happened" to wind up gleaning there. Our God does not believe in happenstance. If you seek Him, He will find you – He will make your ways straight to Him. Ruth goes seeking fulfillment for her and Naomi, and in the process God will provide Himself a redeemer and the field of Boaz finds her.

Are you repentant as a believer having turned from sin – have you sought after Him? If you have, He knows where you are and He will come to you and welcome you with open arms.

Ruth 2:1-3 "Guidance to Boaz's Field" Paragraph Verse Percentage Chart



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Jeremiah 18:15

"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path."

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