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Ruth 2

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Ruth 2.

Topics.

- Ruth gleans in a part of the field of Boaz of the clan of Elimelech.
 - From early morning Ruth gleans in the field of Boaz.
 - Boaz tells Ruth he has charged his young men not to touch her.
 - The LORD repay you and a full reward be given you by the LORD.
 - Boaz invites Ruth to dip her bread in wine and eat with the reapers.
 - Ruth takes an Ephah of barley to her mother-in-law in Bethlehem.
 - The LORD's kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!
 - Ruth gleaned in Boaz field until to end of barley and wheat harvests.
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INTRODUCTION: the book of Ruth (an ancestor of Christ) tells the story of a young Moabite widow who, out of love for Naomi, her widowed Israelite mother-in-law, abandons her own culture, declaring, "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God" (1:16). In the days of the judges, Elimelech and Naomi with their sons Mahlon and Chilion left Bethlehem Judah because of famine and went to Moab. Mahlon and Chilion marry Moabite woman, Orpah and Ruth. After ten years Naomi's husband and her two sons died. Naomi leaves the land of Moab with Ruth and returned to Bethlehem Judah. On arriving, she refers to herself as Mara because she felt the LORD had dealt bitterly with her. The good character of Ruth captures the attention of Boaz, a close relative of her deceased husband. Boaz fulfils the role of kinsman-redeemer and takes Ruth as his wife. Ruth serves as a wonderful example of God's providential care of His people, and of His willingness to accept Gentiles who seek him. The author is unknown though traditionally ascribed to Samuel the genealogy at the end suggests that it was written during or after the time of David.

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NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

The previous chapter: Elimelech, Naomi, Mahlon and Chilion go to the country of Moab; Elimelech, dies and Mahlon and Chilion Marry Orpah and Ruth; Mahlon and Chilion die; Naomi determines to leave Moab and return to Judah; she tells her two daughters-in-law to return to their mother's house; Orpah returns to Moab and Ruth goes to Bethlehem with Naomi. The chapter ended with Naomi and Ruth arriving in Bethlehem and the townsfolk saying, "Is this Naomi."

Ruth 2:1-3

Ruth Gleans in a Part of the Field of Boaz of the Clan of Elimelech.

- **Ruth 2:1-3:** Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. ² And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." ³ So she set out 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 clan of Elimelech.

Boaz: is commonly taken to mean, "strength is in him." He came from Bethlehem and was a worthy man of the clan of Naomi's husband Elimelech (Ruth 2:1), and a kinsman of Elimelech (Ruth 3:12). He married Ruth, a Moabite woman and she became the ancestress of David, and through him, of the Messiah.

Kinsman: primarily denotes one's near relation, but can also refer to a person who one is intimately acquainted with.

Ruth the Moabite gleans in the fields of Boaz: (v2) Ruth's good character of humbleness, servitude and loyalty are manifested here, she does not hesitate to face the work necessary to support herself and her mother-in-law's, or too proud to do hard work in the fields, nor does she pine after her old home in the land of Moab.

Let me go to the field and glean: (v2) Ruth did take it upon herself to go, but in submission to her aged mother in law sought her permission. The following verses show that it was a law of God to permit the poor and the stranger to glean in the fields that were being harvested.

- **Leviticus 19:9-10:** "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. ¹⁰ And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.
- **Deuteronomy 24:19:** "When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

The right of gleaning was granted to the widow, the poor, and the stranger, but liberty to glean immediately behind the reapers (v3) was not a right that could be claimed, but a privilege granted or refused according to the good will and favour of the owner.

Naomi said, "Go, my daughter." This shows that Naomi was in a poor and low condition as to wealth and physical well-being, for had she been otherwise, it is not likely that she would have suffered her daughter in-law to go into the fields (especially on her own) to glean amongst the reapers and pick up the loose ears that they dropped and left, which was permitted for the lowest of people to do, while the reapers were busy binding the ears of corn into sheaves. (i.e., bundles).

In whose sight I shall find grace: (v2) based upon this statement of Ruth's, some suppose that she was unaware of Israel's law that permitted foreigners to glean from the fields and therefore went in the hope Boaz would allow her to glean. However, it is certain that Naomi would have explained Israel's law concerning a near kinsman redeemer to her sometime during their ten years plus together, so it is more likely that Ruth, having an understanding of the law concerning a near relative going into his deceased brothers' wife to raise up children for him, went in the hope that Boaz would take upon himself this duty.

A near kinsman: had the right of redemption of a widow's deceased husband's estate, it was his duty to marry her, and raise up seed to her former husband (his kinsman). A kinsman redeemer could be a near relation on the wife's husband's side, such as her husband's brother or an uncle, cousin or close relative from his clan. (Lev. 25:47-49). The following verses show that the redeemer had the right to, marry the deceased widows' husband and redeem his inheritance.

- **Leviticus 25:25:** "If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his brother has sold.
- **Deuteronomy 25:5-10:** "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. ⁶ And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. ⁷ And if the man does

not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.' ⁸ Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, 'I do not wish to take her,' ⁹ then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' ¹⁰ And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.'

She went and gleaned in the field after the reapers: (v3), the King James Bible says, "Her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz" (v3), this simply means that it happened that she gleaned in Boaz's field. From outward appearances it seemed that she was in Boaz's field by chance and what some people call good luck, yet her steps were divinely guided according to God's eternal plans and purposes that she would come to the reapers in that part of the field that belonged to Boaz, a near kinsman of Elimelech her father-in-law that the LORD's eternal plan would be worked out, for from Boaz and Ruth's marriage union came Obed the father of Jesse, the father of David and from David's bloodline came the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ruth 2:4-7

Early Morning Ruth Gleans among the Sheaves in the Field of Boaz.

- **Ruth 2:4-7:** And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered, "The LORD bless you." ⁵ Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" ⁶ And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab." ⁷ She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest."

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Boaz left his hometown Bethlehem and to goes out to his fields. He greets his labours with the words, "The LORD be with you," manifesting the beautiful and kind spirit he had toward his servants. Though he is superior to the reapers, he comes to his field to supervise the work with an attitude of courtesy and friendliness toward those that would be considered his inferiors. The LORD be with you; and the LORD bless you, was the beautiful language of Israel in ancient times.

This kind of language between Boaz and his reapers shows that there were godly people in Israel at this time, for true religion causes mutual love and kindness amongst people of different stations in life and different races.

Ruth continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest: (v7) this expression, shows that Ruth was not an idle woman, but prepared to do whatever was necessary to provide for herself and Naomi. Ruth began early in the morning and continued until it came time for rest, she followed the reapers as they cut down the corn in sheaves and bound them up in bundles and gathered up the loose ears of corn the labourers dropped and those that fell to the ground.

Ruth 2:8-9

Boaz tells Ruth He has Charged His young men not to touch Her.

- **Ruth 2:8-9:** Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women." ⁹ Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn."

The fields were not divided by hedges, but only by unploughed ridges, so it would be very easy to move from one owners field to another without being aware of it and be amongst strangers, so Boaz warns her not to stray from his field so that he could protect her while she remained on her own land for he only had authority over his own labourers.

Boaz charged his young men not to touch Ruth: (v9) so that they do not hurt or disrespect her by showing rudeness, vulgarity, injury, abuse or any form of sexual molestation.

Go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn: (v9) the young men would draw water from wells in the fields and fetch it from fountains in nearby cities. They would put it into bottles made of skin and pitchers etc., for the use of the reapers. This is a kindness toward Ruth on Boaz's part, for he was under no obligation to have his men supply water for the gleaners.

Ruth 2:10-13

The LORD Repay You, and a Full Reward Be Given You.

- **Ruth 2:10-13:** Then she fell on her face, bowing 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?"¹¹ But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before."¹² The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!"¹³ Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

Boaz prays that God will reward Ruth's for the kindness she has shown to her mother-in-law, and for leaving her native country, family and friends to embrace the faith and God of Israel. Boaz's prayer implies that such a work of righteousness and divine grace would be wrought in her that she could be sure that she would be crowned with a full reward. God sees the good work and labour of love, that children show to their parents. Though such works have no merit toward one's salvation, God is pleased to reward from His own grace, both in this world and the world to come those who show such kindness for they are as an acceptable fragrance before Him. In the world to come it is called the reward of the inheritance, which is an everlasting reward of grace that will be full of joy, peace, and happiness, and an abundance of good things that our mortal minds cannot conceive.

- **Colossians 3:24:** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Under whose wings you have come to take refuge (come to trust in KJV): (v12) this is most likely an allusion, to the wings of hens or an eagle that protects, shelters and comforts their young under their wings or to the wings of the cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat and between which God dwelt.

- **Exodus 25:20:** The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be.
- **Psalms 36:7:** How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

The expression, "Under whose wings you have come to take refuge" (come to trust in KJV), refers to Ruth, forsaking the land and the people that she had known to go to a land and people that she had not known and forsaking the idols and gods she had been raised to believe in, to trust in a God she had not known. Ruth professed that the God of Israel was her God, and determined to serve and worship Him only and

committed herself to trust in His grace, protection and favour. It is in this sense that Boaz says, “under whose wings you have come to take refuge and come to trust in the God of Israel, for wings are a symbol of care and protection.

- **Deuteronomy 32:11:** Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions,
- **Psalms 17:8:** Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings,
- **Psalms 36:7:** How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
- **Psalms 91:4:** He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

RUTH 2:13-14

Boaz Invites Ruth to Dip Her Bread in Wine and Eat with Reapers.

- **Ruth 2:14-17:** And at mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine (vinegar in KJV).” So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain (parched corn in KJV). And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. ¹⁵ When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. ¹⁶ And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.” ¹⁷ So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

The scene here is not in Naomi’s house, as some understand it, but of Boaz sitting with the reapers and Ruth in a farm house of Boaz adjoining to the field; or a cottage or tent or booth set up in the field to provide shelter and shade for the reapers and others to retire to for a little rest, refreshing and to eat meals at the appointed times. The time Boaz, the reapers and Ruth are eating this meal together is sometime around noon for we read that after she had eaten and was satisfied, she rose to glean and verse seventeen tells us that she continued to glean in the field until evening and then verse eighteen says that she went into the city to her mother in law and gave her the food that she had left over, referring to the meal she ate with Boaz and the reapers.

Boaz invites Ruth to dip her bread in wine (vinegar in KJV): (v14) bread is put forward here for all kinds of food that was made for the reapers. The bread was soaked in vinegar a kind of weak wine which made a refreshing and cooling drink. The vinegar may refer to small amount of vinegar mixed with water which the poor used as a refreshing and cooling drink in hot countries or vinegar mixed with a little olive oil, honey and various other ingredients to make a flavoured drink or sauce.

Even today people in Italy mix vinegar with water and various other ingredients to make a refreshing drink in the summer time.

Boaz passed to her roasted grain (parched corn in KJV): (v14) the following verses show that roasted and parched corn was a common food in these countries.

- **1 Samuel 17:17:** And Jesse said to David his son, “Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers.
- **1 Samuel 25:18:** Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys.
- **2 Samuel 17:28:** brought beds, basins, and earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans and lentils.

He passed to her roasted grain (parched corn in KJV): (v14) while Ruth sat amongst the reapers, Boaz curtesy passed to her the roasted grain (parched corn in KJV), probably in metal bowls or pans and she ate and was satisfied.

She ate until she was satisfied and she had some left over: (v14) Boaz gave Ruth so much, that after satisfying her own wants, she had enough left over to put aside and when the days' work was over take it home to her mother in law.

RUTH 2:15-18

Ruth takes an Ephah of Barley to Her Mother-in-Law in Bethlehem.

- **Ruth 2:15-18:** When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her." ¹⁶ And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her." ¹⁷ 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 And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied.

The grain would be put in small bundles and beaten with a heavy stick or rod used for such a purpose. At the end of the day and after Ruth had beaten out what she had gleaned she had one ephah of grain, which is about 23 litres (1½ to 6 gal), or 23 kg in dry weight or 93 dry cups.

Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her: (v18) Boaz not only commands the men not to touch Ruth, but also tells them to deliberately pull out some of the corn from the sheaves they have bundled up for her to gather up.

Ruth takes an Ephah of barley to her mother-in-law in the city: (v18) all we are told here is that Ruth took up her grain and went into the city. Some may rightly feel that 23kg is a lot of weight for a woman to carry for any distance, so it is possible that she did one of the following two things:

1. She tied it up and put it on a donkey or a wagon with others who were also returning to Bethlehem.
2. She poured it into a basket which woman commonly carried on their head or shoulder and placed it on her shoulder or head, for it is well known that women during these ancient times and even in some African countries today can carry great weights when balanced on their shoulder or head.

Some say that researchers have found that women who have been trained from a young age commonly carry up to 20% of their body weight with no extra exertion of energy. In East Africa, Luo women have been known to carry loads of up to 70% of their own body weight balanced on top of their heads. According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention the average weight of an American women aged 20 years and above is around 77 kg (170 pounds) (lbs), 20% would be around 15kg, which means that woman trained in ancient times to daily carry loads on their head would be able to carry around 23kg relatively easily.

Symbolically Boaz's kindness to Ruth, signifies the kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ to lowly sinners of all races.

RUTH 2:19-20

The LORD's Kindness has Not Forsaken the Living or the Dead!

- **Ruth 2:19-20:** And her mother-in-law said to her, “Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man 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.” ²⁰ And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!” Naomi also said to her, “The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers.”

Naomi asks Ruth, in what part of the field of Bethlehem or on whose land had she been able to glean so much, for she no doubt perceived that the quantity of corn she brought home was unusually large, and would naturally presume that there must have been some special kindness shown to her. Ruth tells her all about the events that occurred during her working day and after hearing Ruth’s story, she thanks Ruth and prays a prayer of blessing for Boaz for showing such kindness.

The LORD’s kindness toward the living: (v20) refers to the kindness that the LORD had previously shown to her husband Elimelech and her two sons while they were living, and the kindness He is now showing though the protection that Boaz is showing to Ruth and the generosity, care and kindness he is showing to both Ruth and Naomi.

The LORD’s kindness to the dead: (v20) Naomi's allusion to the dead shows that Elimelech her husband and two sons had been faithful servants of the LORD and her statement, “the LORD’s kindness to the dead,” refers to the kindness the LORD is now showing to Naomi’s husband and her two sons by caring and providing for them even after the death of their husbands.

A near kinsmen: embraces a near relation on the wife’s husband's side, such as her husband’s brother or an uncle, cousin or close relative from his clan. The redeemer had the right to, redeeming the inheritance of the deceased person and marrying the widow of the deceased husband. (Lev. 25:25) (Lev. 25:47-49) (Deut. 25:5-10). For further information concerning the redeemer kinsman see the title:

- A Near Kinsman, following (v1-3) (above).

One of our next kinsmen: (Hebrew, one of our redeemers), Naomi, tells Ruth that Boaz was a very close relative and one of their redeemers whose duty it was to marry Ruth, for her deceased husband was Boaz’s near kinsman and as such it was his duty to raise up offspring for the widow of his near kinsman and redeem his land. Naomi’s statement, “one of our next kinsmen,” does not imply that there were many, but that Boaz was one of the nearest to who belonged the right of redemption, and the right to redeem their houses and possessions if they were sold or mortgaged, and the right to raise up seed to the widow of a deceased brother or kinsman.

RUTH 2:21-23

Ruth gleaned in Boaz Field to end of barley and wheat harvests.

- **Ruth 2:21-23:** And Ruth the Moabite said, “Besides, he said to me, ‘You shall keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.’” ²² And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted.” ²³ So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Naomi agrees with Boaz, that it is good that Ruth accepts his generous invitation to stay close to his female reapers and not stray into other fields, so that she keeps herself safe from any form of rude treatment and from any chance of displeasing Boaz by appearing indifferent to his good and kind offer. It is also very likely that Ruth’s aging mother in law recognised that in all Boaz' generous attentions toward Ruth, there was the beginnings of a stronger affection, which she would no-doubt desire to

see blossom. Ruth accepted the kindness of Boaz, and the advice of her mother-in-law and kept herself close to Boaz's female reapers as she gleaned in his fields. Ruth stands as a wonderful testimony to dutiful affection and submission, hard work and humility.

Ruth gleaned in Boaz Field until the end of the barley and wheat harvests: (v23), as we read this story there is a tendency to think this is all happening in one day, but the barley harvest began at Passover and seven weeks came the Day of Pentecost and the beginning of the wheat harvest

Ruth lived with her mother-in-law: (v23) during both harvests it was most likely the custom for Ruth to go home after she had been gleaned all day and lodge with her mother-in-law, and after the harvests were ended continued to dwell with her mother-in-law. The statement, "Ruth lived with her mother-in-law," maybe added for the purpose of carrying on the history in the following chapter.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

Bible House of Grace