

loses his physical connection. So, Ruth is always of this order. But she has been told not to leave the workers (again masculine, cf. v. 15) until the harvest is over. She has complete provision. The verb "keep fast" has already been used (v. 8).

b. For safety v. 22

The verb "meet" means to "fall upon one" in the sense of doing harm (Judges 8:21). Hence, Naomi urges Ruth to stay with the workers of Boaz for safety. Those who come "under His wings" (v. 12) are safe because of His infinite care.

c. For care v. 23

The mention of the two harvests is reported to be a tacit illusion to a change for Ruth. These harvests were separated by three months. This is the period fixed by Jewish tradition for a female proselyte to marry! God gloriously gives indication of what is yet to come. Meanwhile, the text concludes with Ruth being faithful to her mother-in-law. A tremendous testimony of fidelity.

Conclusion This is a wonderful section. It has taught the provision of God for Ruth, but also for His own in any age. The best is yet to come (John 14:1-3). Blessed be the God of Israel.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

"God's Provision for Ruth"

Ruth 2:14-23

Introduction

1. The entire first chapter of this book teaches the decision of faith made by Ruth. Being a Moabite, she took her stand with the God of Israel and separated herself from home, land, and people. A record of her commitment is given (1:16, 17).

2. The second chapter advances from a decision of faith to a work of faith. Ruth gives evidence of her new relationship with God. Her first joyous experience in her new land is one of guidance (2:1-7). Then she met Boaz and came under his gracious and generous protection. In a variety of ways, Ruth experienced the blessing of coming "under His wings for refuge" (2:8-13).

3. Now the final segment of the second chapter relates to God's provision through Boaz for Ruth. The manner in which God does provide is clear.

1. PHYSICALLY v. 14.

a. With food

There are three wonderful verbs: come, eat, dip. Joined, these verbs are the invitation for full provision. The word "vinegar" signifies a sour beverage composed of vinegar mixed with oil. It was sharp and pungent. The word is used elsewhere in the Old Testament (Ex. 12:39; Isa. 63:1).

b. With workers

Apparently, Boaz participated in the meal. All ate together. It is the grace of Boaz that makes all alike. So it is with our Lord at His table! Mercy wipes out all distinctions. There is a divine unity among the believers, as typified here (Eph. 4:3).

c. With satisfaction

The parched corn was ripened grain, still on the

stalk, roasted over a blazing fire of dry grass and thorn bushes. When the chaff burned off, the grain was sufficiently roasted to eat. Interestingly, Boaz reached out to provide for Ruth personally. The food speaks of him too, for it was the grain through the fire for Ruth! Moreover, it was sufficient. Nothing else was needed. Christ more than meets our need. Being filled, she left. The verb for "left" means to "hang over" and "to go after being satisfied."

2. ECONOMICALLY vv. 15-18.

a. Freedom to glean v. 15

Boaz assured Ruth of freedom by commanding his workers to permit her to work. The use of the masculine here is not inconsistent with the text (cf. v. 21). The word probably includes both male and female workers. No area of the field was to be off limits for Ruth. The verb "reproach her not" means not to do her injury or insult (Judges 18:7; 1 Sam. 25:7).

b. Freedom to share v. 16

Here the workers are charged by Boaz to allow the grain coming from the "bundles" to just lie on the ground for Ruth. She is not to be "rebuked" for picking up the pieces (Gen. 37:10; Zech. 3:2; Mal. 3:11). A prepositional phrase indicates nothing is to be heaped "on her." Illustrations spiritually of a piece dropped from a bundle are manifold (cf. Mark 7:24; 10:16).

c. Freedom to work v. 17

This records the simple fact that Ruth did not loaf but worked for what she obtained, even unto the nighttime! As a result, she gained an enormous amount: about 8 gallons or 25 pounds. This was more than enough for two persons for a month!

d. Freedom to take v. 18

What Ruth gleaned, she took into the city to her mother-in-law, Naomi. She was surprised. But more than that, Ruth brought to her some of the food provided by Boaz (v. 14). This affirms that she had received more than sufficient. It was to be shared and she did share it.

This is a witness to our opportunity to give to others what He has provided for us.

3. MATERNALLY vv. 19-20.

a. With questions v. 19

While questions might not seem to be a provision, they turned out to be. Naomi was so overwhelmed with what Ruth brought home she could not resist the desire to ask where and how it all happened. Ruth divulged the facts. Indeed, she gave her the name of Boaz. There is a wonderful spiritual truth latent here: when one really comes to grips with the Lord Jesus Christ, folks will ask questions. They will want to know how it all happened! Furthermore, the answer will of necessity include the "with whom" it has all taken place--the greater than Boaz, even our Lord Jesus Christ.

b. With blessings vv. 19, 20

The word for blessing occurs twice. In the one instance, thankfulness is given because Boaz "took knowledge" (v. 19). This is the same verb root as "stranger" (v. 10). Then a blessing is uttered to the Lord (v. 20). The word "kindness" is "grace" (v. 10). This grace was extended to both the living and the dead, the latter meaning those of Naomi's family now gone. Here is an early testimony of the modern Jewish "baroch" (blessing).

c. With identifications v. 20

Two words are used by Naomi to identify Boaz for Ruth. In the first instance, he is a near of kin, that is one who is close to them. But more importantly he is a kinsman-redeemer. This had special connections with the Old Testament law (Lev. 25:23-27; Deut. 25:5-10). Two actions could now be expected: 1) provision for the family and 2) protection for the impoverished. Both were forthcoming. What Boaz was to do for Ruth, our blessed Lord has done for us. He is the true "Kinsman-Redeemer."

4. CONSISTENTLY vv. 21-23.

a. For food v. 21

Ruth is again identified as a "Moabites." One never