

THE BOOK OF RUTH

"God's Protection of Ruth"

Ruth 3:6-13

Introduction

1. This section is right in the middle of a chapter which speaks of the "appeal of faith." Ruth is called upon to believe God and trace His steps in her life. God demonstrates His loving protection for her.
2. Blessing is the result of the life of faith (Psa. 1). Ruth had commenced the life of faith (1:16, 17). How she grew is evidenced (chaps. 2, 3). This is just the way one would expect things to move (2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Pet. 3:18).
3. Naomi was led of God to pursue the obvious direction of His will for Ruth and herself (vv. 1-6). As a result of this movement of events, Ruth did all that her mother-in-law advised her to do (v. 6). The sequel to all of this is now given. Two persons spotlight the event, Ruth and Boaz. The lessons are obvious:

1. APPROACH TO BOAZ

a. Position v. 7

Boaz is relaxed. This is evidenced by the words: eaten, drunk, and was merry. The word "merry" suggests satisfaction with his lot. As a result of this, Boaz lay down and fell asleep (the text does not say "sleep" but it is gathered from the context). It may well be that Boaz was entirely oblivious to the plan which God was working for Ruth.

b. Action v. 7

Ruth's action is a tremendous testimony to her utter obedience to her mother-in-law. This sort of thing is a rarity even among the saints. Everyone wants his own way and is usually unwilling to respond to another's desire. How unlike the Word (Rom. 15:1-3). Ruth's action is all described in the imperfect tense. It is a dramatic account. God help us not to shrink from total obedience to the Lord.

c. Question vv. 8, 9a

The Hebrew indicates it was at half of the night or midnight that Boaz was aroused. It will be at the darkest night of Israel's history also that she will turn to the Lord. Quite obviously, Boaz was afraid. The verb used means to "tremble, be terrified" (Ex. 19:6; 1 Sam. 28:5). From his relaxation (v. 7), he is now frightened. Why this fear? God had wakened him. There is no other way to explain the phenomenon. From now on things moved according to the plan which Naomi apparently conceived from the Lord. The verb "turned himself" means that Boaz bent himself forward or on one side to feel who was near him. The emphatic pronouns are used in the question and the answer. There is no hiding of identifications.

d. Invitation v. 9b

"Skirt" is the word translated "wings" (2:12). It implies protection in general, but in this context the idea of marriage is patent. Some Arab groups are reported to practice this custom today. The verb "spread" means to break in pieces or divide (Deut. 27:20). In rather bold language, the phrase would mean: let me be received into your bed. The reason? Because Boaz is claimed to be a near kinsman. This specific fact shows that Ruth was conscious of the Biblical basis for giving the request. She had learned well from her mother-in-law the Word of God (cf. 2 Tim. 1:5). Ruth had done her part already; it was now up to Boaz to pursue his in accord with his faith in the revealed will of God (Deut. 25:5-10). Ruth's cooperation with Naomi, Boaz, and most of all with God's Word is remarkable for a stranger, a Moabite.

2. APPEAL TO RUTH vv. 10-13

a. Blessing v. 10

Boaz appeals to God for His blessing upon Ruth. The reason is that she has showed more kindness (grace) toward him at the end than she had already shown toward her husband and mother-in-law at the beginning (cf. 2:11). Furthermore, Ruth had not sought after "young men" in order to fulfill her life. It may well be that Boaz was an octogenarian. If so, the action of Ruth becomes more worthy of praise.

b. Assurance v. 11

Boaz sees here his personal responsibility toward Ruth. Therefore, he gives her assurance of her future. He promises to do all that is required. As an old man, the promise is of particular worth. The word "city" is "gates" (cf. Gen. 34:24; Deut. 17:2). It was at the gate that persons were known. So Boaz notes that everyone in Bethlehem was aware that Ruth was a "virtuous woman." This phrase may be rendered a "capable woman" or a "woman of strength" (cf. Prov. 31:10). Her character warranted her treatment.

c. Admission v. 12

Boaz admits that he is a "kinsman-redeemer" who qualified to do the law of the levirate. However, there was one who was closer than he. Interesting that he should state all these facts in the middle of the night (v. 8). While many items suggest Boaz had not taken an interest in Ruth, the unveiling of God's plan (v. 8) seems to excite in Boaz the fulness of willingness to do the will of God for Ruth (and Naomi).

d. Agreement v. 13

Ruth is instructed to stay the night at the threshing floor. The next day would reveal whether the other kinsman would respond to his charge by God for his relative's wife. If he failed, Boaz gives an oath before God that he will do it. Hence, Ruth could relax in the fact that her mission had been accomplished. Naomi's word and plan had been supported. Note the holy name of God is used. It is the tetragrammaton.

Conclusion The greater Redeemer, even our Lord, has committed Himself to us, too. He has told us not to fear. We are to stay with Him until the morning (rapture). He will do for us what is required. Hallelujah. The same is true for Israel. Oh, the glory of this account of the Word. May its truth fill our souls. He does for us as a church, individual, or for Israel as a nation all that is required.