

## A Night at the Threshing Floor Ruth 3

### Introduction

Boaz and Ruth met in the fields and shared a lunch together. There was unfinished business for Boaz to take care of. Boaz was a very godly man, and he would have known the rights of a kinsman (close family member), to redeem the property and name of a brother who had died. He would also have known that it was not as simple as getting more land and a 'bonus' wife. There was a cost for the kinsman to redeem. According to the law of Moses, if Boaz married Ruth, their first child would be considered her dead husband's son. He would carry on Naomi's son's name (Ruth's first husband's name), not Boaz' name. Did Boaz have that kind of love within himself? Could he **submit** to having his firstborn son, his own flesh and blood, carry on another man's name?

### Outline of Ruth Chapter 3.

- I. Ruth at the Threshing Floor -  
Ruth 3:1-15
- II. Ruth Waiting for Redemption -  
Ruth 3:16-18

### I. Ruth at the Threshing Floor - Ruth 3:1-15

Time had passed since Ruth first gleaned in Boaz' fields. It had been approximately two months from start to finish of the barley harvest. Ruth had gone faithfully every day and done as she was told. While going about his own business, Boaz would have seen Ruth often. Naomi saw that the time was right for further action. She decided to be a 'matchmaker,' someone who tries to get two people together so they might fall in love! She said, *My daughter, shall I not seek security for you that it may be well with you?*

Boaz was most likely the closest unmarried relative. Naomi knew that he would be at the threshing floor **winnowing** (applying wind to the grain to separate it from the **chaff** that very

night. The men often worked all night, once they began winnowing, in order to finish before rain came. They even slept at the threshing floor to protect the grain from **raiders** (thieves). Naomi saw an opportunity.

Naomi told Ruth to wash, put on perfume, and dress in her best clothes. Then she was to go to the threshing floor and wait in the shadows. When Boaz finished eating and drinking, he would go and lie down. Then, Ruth was to lie down at his feet, uncover them, and wait for his instructions. Ruth did not argue with Naomi about such an unusual plan. Surely, she would have had many fears about following these instructions. But, as we have seen before, Ruth had faith. When you stop to think about what it looks like to have faith, you need look no further than Ruth. She obeyed, even when it could make her look foolish in the eyes of those around her. When she did not return to Moab with Orpah, her people must have thought she was foolish to move away with Naomi. When she arrived in Bethlehem with Naomi, most of the Jews probably thought she was foolish to leave her own home and come live among strangers. But, Ruth was not influenced by what others thought about her because she had strong faith in God. She believed in Naomi's God and had made Him her own God. Christians look foolish to those without faith. Unbelievers cannot understand without the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:14). Ruth responded to Naomi's instructions with beautiful obedience, *All that you say to me I will do*. In the same way, the Bible is full of instructions from God on how we are to live our lives as Christians. When was the last time you read God's instructions and followed them with Ruth's obedience. There is another example of this beautiful, selfless obedience in the New Testament. His words were, "*not as I will, but as You will*" (Matthew 26:39).

There was nothing improper about Ruth's actions. The actions were part of the law and culture in Israel at the time. Naomi had chosen a public place where there were witnesses if needed. Also, she had chosen the cover of darkness to free Boaz from embarrassment so he could respond however he wanted.

Just as Ruth came to Boaz looking for protection, Christians also come to Jesus looking for protection. If we do His will found in Scripture, He will lead us further. Often times, we want to see the whole picture before we are willing to obey. But, those who are humble enough to walk with faith are the ones to whom God's way is taught (Psalm 25:9).

After a long day's work of threshing grain and a cheerful dinner, Boaz lay down feeling satisfied with the day's work. The wind that helped to separate the grain from chaff had died down, and there was nothing to do but rest for the coming day. As usual, Boaz lay down next to his heap of grain, to guard it through the night. He fell asleep quickly but awoke suddenly at midnight, startled by something, or someone, at his feet.

*Who are you?* he asked. It was dark, after all, and he was not expecting anyone. *I am Ruth,* she answered, *your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing for you are a near kinsman.* This was her formal request for Boaz to do the duty of the kinsman redeemer according to the law. According to The Bible Background Commentary,<sup>1</sup> it was also a proposal of marriage. Boaz' response shows that he took it that way. "Naomi had not advised her to be this bold, but the outcome of marriage was certainly what she had in mind."

Two separate parts of the law applied to Ruth. First, Leviticus 25:25 deals with redeeming property. *If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold.* Boaz

was in a position to buy back the property of Elimelech, Naomi's dead husband.

A section passage in Deuteronomy 25:5-6 deals with the situation of a widow in Israel. It describes what is known as the law of levirate marriage. *If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And it shall be that the firstborn son that she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.*

Ruth had a right to ask Boaz to fulfill these laws and be her kinsman redeemer. Now it was Boaz' turn to act. He must give her an answer. Boaz understood immediately what Ruth was doing and the claim she was making. He answered, *Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter.* He may have been much older than Ruth. He commended her for not encouraging younger or wealthier men. He promised to act on her request. He also remembered that there was a closer relative than he who must be given opportunity to take up the claim. But either way, she would be redeemed. Once more Boaz showed his care and generosity. He filled Ruth's shawl with grain for Naomi, this time perhaps as payment for prompting Ruth to action and for being a mediator herself.

## II. Ruth Waiting for Redemption - Ruth 3:16-18

After **discreetly** leaving the threshing floor, Ruth arrived at home with the load of grain and a wonderful story to tell. Naomi rejoiced that all had gone according to her plan. Now she could relax. She told Ruth to relax too. *Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day.* Some matters we take to the Lord and leave with Him, knowing there is nothing more we can do. We rest in the Lord, confident that He is busy acting on our behalf. He never slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm 121:4).†

<sup>1</sup> John H. Walton, Victor W Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas

**Prayer**

Thank God for providing the example of Ruth's faith in His word. Ask God to help you become more like Ruth in your obedience to His word.

**Memory Verse**

1 Corinthians 2:14 *For the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

**Vocabulary**

**submit** - to yield oneself to the authority or will of another

**winnowing** - throwing grain up in the air to allow the unwanted parts to blow away

**chaff** - the seed coverings and other debris separated from the seed in threshing grain

**raiders** - people who suddenly and unexpectedly attack a group or place

**discreetly** - with good judgment in conduct

**QUESTIONS FOR JUDGES/RUTH LESSON 20**

All questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

**DAY ONE: Read all notes and references.**

1. ? (Thought Question) Why do you think that it was so important to the Jews for their name to be carried on? (See 1 Samuel 24:21 and 2 Samuel 14:7 for help.)

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2. What do you think of Naomi's plan now that you have studied Ruth chapter 3?

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**DAY TWO: Read Ruth 4:1-2**

3. a. Where did Boaz go to sit down? \_\_\_\_\_

- b. What happened at "the gate" in the following Scripture passages?

2 Samuel 15:2 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Kings 22:10 \_\_\_\_\_

Joshua 20:2-4 \_\_\_\_\_

- c. ? (Thought Question) From the above verses, why was "the gate" an important place?

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4. Who came by while Boaz was at the gate? If possible, look this up in at least one other version of the Bible, other than the one you normally use. Be willing to share the words used by the different versions.

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5. Who else sat down with Boaz?

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**DAY THREE: Read Ruth 4:3-6.**

6. a. What did Boaz tell the close relative ("kinsman" in KJV, "redeemer" in ESV).

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- b. In verse 4, what did Boaz ask this person to do?

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- c. What was his response?

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7. a. At this point, what additional information did Boaz add?

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- b. From what you have learned in studying the Book of Ruth, what difference would this make to the close relative? Put a check mark next to the statements which are true.

\_\_\_\_\_ He would have pay double the price of the land.

\_\_\_\_\_ He would have to marry Ruth.

\_\_\_\_\_ He would have to build a memorial to Ruth's husband on the property.

\_\_\_\_\_ He would have to build a home for Ruth and Naomi on the property.

\_\_\_\_\_ The firstborn son would be considered the son of Ruth's dead husband.

- c. How did the close relative respond to this news? Fill in the blanks below.

I \_\_\_\_\_ redeem it. I would ruin \_\_\_\_\_.

You (Boaz) \_\_\_\_\_.

8. ? (Thought Question) Explain in your own words why the close relative refused.

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**DAY FOUR: Read Ruth 4:7-12.**

9. a. What was the custom in Israel to confirm an agreement?

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- b. What did the close relative do with his sandal?

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10. a. What two things did Boaz acquire in the agreement?

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- b. Who agreed to be witnesses?

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- c. What blessing did they bestow upon Ruth?

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- d. What blessing did they bestow upon Boaz?

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11. ? (Thought Question) From Genesis 35:23-26, why would it be a blessing for Ruth to be like Rachel and Leah?

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**DAY FIVE: Read Ruth 4:13-22.**

12. a. From verse 13, how did God bless Ruth and Boaz?

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- b. From verse 14, how did the women say God had blessed Naomi?

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13. a. How did the women describe Ruth?

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- b. What did they name the baby?

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- c. Whose grandfather did this baby become? Give verse:\_\_\_\_\_

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14. a. Look in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38 and list the verses which match Ruth 4:18-22.

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- b. ? (Thought Question) Why is it important that these verses match?

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**Final Review Questions for All:**

15. Choose one of the people from the Book of Ruth and tell:

- a. Why that person is important in history.

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- b. Why that person was important to you in your study of this book.

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VOCABULARY FOR JUDGES/RUTH LESSON 20

*"The more words you know, the more clearly and powerfully you will think...  
and the more ideas you will invite into your mind."*  
— Wilfred Funk

DAY ONE: Write the definition of each vocabulary word.

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DAY TWO: Write three sentences using three different vocabulary words from this lesson.

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2.  

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3.  

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DAY THREE: Circle the word's synonym(s). (Synonym is a word/phrase that means the same thing.)

1. .    **submit**    .....    resist    .....    surrender    .....    yield

2. .    **raiders**    .....    attackers    .....    invaders    .....    defenders

3. .    **discreetly**    .....    wisely    .....    carelessly    .....    thoughtfully

**DAY FOUR: Match the word to its meaning.****Word****Definition**

<b>chaff</b>	people who suddenly and unexpectedly attack a group or place
<b>raiders</b>	throwing grain up in the air to allow the unwanted parts to blow away
<b>submit</b>	to yield oneself to the authority or will of another
<b>discreetly</b>	the seed coverings and other debris separated from the seed in threshing grain
<b>winnowing</b>	with good judgment in conduct

**DAY FIVE: Review previous vocabulary words. Try to work from memory.**

I I A R D N E I I R R B F M P  
 F X M Y M E G C Q S N Q O Z E  
 B B S A H S G E W U A S R Y F  
 V O Y S G I O U K E E C S C O  
 W Y M A S E V V F E L X A M R  
 T G B R V J R F S E G F K Z W  
 E K O G S A B Y H K R J E Z L  
 N J L D V W V P E E V G N K T  
 L P I G Q R M Z A U Q R S Y G  
 W X S G M Z V Y V G S C K Q H  
 P J M N S O K W E N P O J O P  
 E H U D J T V K S U A F F V L  
 V R D U X G H I Z L E U M Z W  
 S I U S O T A S N C R U V X G  
 V T W A P P J X C G R N M Q T

\_\_\_\_\_ - language the causes people to imagine pictures in their mind

\_\_\_\_\_ a bunch of stalks and ears of grain that are tied together after being cut

\_\_\_\_\_ - held on to someone or something very tightly

\_\_\_\_\_ - the use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities in literature

\_\_\_\_\_ - to cut or gather from a field

\_\_\_\_\_ - having a strong emotional effect

\_\_\_\_\_ - shelter or protection from danger or distress

\_\_\_\_\_ - given up or left entirely

\_\_\_\_\_ - to gather grain that is left after the main crop has been gathered

**WORD BANK**

FORSAKEN  
 REFUGE  
 SHEAVES

GLEAN  
 REAP  
 CLUNG

MOVING  
 IMAGERY  
 SYMBOLISM