

### Gleaning in the Fields of Boaz

#### Ruth 2

#### Introduction

Ruth had made a brave choice. It was a wise decision that would change her life forever. She left her pagan home behind and committed herself to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Most remarkable is that she did not only commit to Naomi, but she also committed herself to the Jews and their God whom they called Yahweh. Ruth's Jewish husband and his parents must have been good witnesses for God to inspire her to such courageous action. Fully committed to her new life, she settled into living in Israel among God's people. While Naomi was surely glad to be home, she had no family of her own except Ruth, the Moabitess, who was an outsider. What would the two women do? How would Ruth be accepted? What would be the outcome of Ruth's decision? Chapter 2 gives us a picture of Ruth's life after arriving in her new home.

#### Outline of Ruth Chapter 2

- I. Making Her Way in Israel - Ruth 2:1-3
- II. Meeting the Owner of the Field- Ruth 2:4-17
- III. Receiving Her Mother-in-law's Approval- Ruth 2:18-23

#### I. Making Her Way in Israel- Ruth 2:1-3

We are introduced to Boaz in verse one. *There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.* We are not told how what role he will play in this story, but we know now that he will be a main character.

Naomi and Ruth needed to eat and somehow take care of themselves. Fortunately, the Jewish law provided rules about caring for strangers, widows, and fatherless children. Leviticus 19:9-11 commanded, *When you **reap** the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall*

*you gather the gleanings of your harvest.* Deuteronomy 24:19 adds, *When you reap...and forget a sheaf...you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.*

The term used for leftover grain is *gleanings*. The word **glean** means to collect gradually and bit by bit. God's command is to leave 'leftovers' for those in need. God is full of compassion toward His people. The harvest is proof of this. After all, who sends the rain and sunshine to grow the crops? Landowners showed respect to God by obeying His command. They recognized God's goodness to them. They worked the crops, but without God's provisions, their work would be worthless.

After such a long drought in the land, the people must have been very thankful for this harvest. The crop's corners were left untouched, and the landowner's reapers were not permitted to go back over the land a second time. They were also forbidden to go back for any **sheaves** that fell during their time gathering. This was a kind system meant to provide for those in need, while still allowing them to earn their own provisions.

Some people want to sit and wait to be given what they need. But God's system as He established in His word is not a free handout. The grain was not simply handed out. People had to come and get it for themselves. The apostle Paul also instructed believers in Thessalonica to *work with (their) own hands* (1 Thessalonians 4:11). He said it quite clearly in fact, *"If anyone will not work neither shall he eat* (2 Thessalonians 3:10)." Each one must do as much as possible to provide for himself or herself and any dependents.

Because it was harvest time, Ruth, as the younger woman, asked Naomi's permission to go into the fields and glean (Ruth 1:22). Naomi gave her permission. Again, Ruth showed her courage by going alone to the fields, knowing that, as a foreign Moabite woman, she was different than the other people in this land. Have you ever stood out as the different one in a group of people? Maybe you're family was invited to dinner, and the other kids were all much older than you. Perhaps, you have visited another church and found you are the only girl or boy in your grade level. Maybe all the kids in your neighborhood go to public school, but you go to a private school or are home-schooled. These are just a few examples of how you can be different than others. Being different is usually uncomfortable. As Christians, God calls us to be different from the world (Psalm 4:3, Romans 12:2). He has a purpose for us, and we are to carry out His will...even if it is uncomfortable (James 1:2-3).

Ruth's courage to do God's will is an example of obedience toward God and service toward others. Many years later, Ruth's great grandson would write these words, *Commit your way unto the Lord, trust also in Him and He will bring it to pass* (Psalm 37:5). Many generations later, Ruth and Boaz would be ancestors of the Messiah. Do not underestimate God's purpose for you and your life. Ruth was a common Moabite woman who married a foreign, Jewish man. Her husband died. For most people, that would be the end of the story, but it was just the beginning for Ruth. In what ways are you different than other kids? How can you use your differences to serve God. Do you believe that God has a purpose for your life?

## II. Meeting the Owner of the Field - Ruth 2:4-17

The owner of the fields, Boaz, arrived from Bethlehem and greeted his servants saying, *The Lord be with you!* His reapers responded, *The Lord bless you!* As Boaz looked over his fields, he quickly noticed someone new among the gleaners. *Whose young woman is this,* he asked? The foreman told him it was the

young Moabite woman who had returned with Naomi from Moab. She had asked to glean and worked hard since early in the morning, only resting for a short time.

Then Boaz spoke to Ruth directly, asking her to listen carefully. He instructed her not to glean anywhere else, but to stay close by his female servants when reaping. He assured her that he had commanded his young men servants not to touch her. He even gave her permission to drink from his water jars when she became thirsty. Clearly, Boaz was a man of strong faith. He cared about God's law and righteousness. He had likely heard about this foreign woman who had willingly left behind all worldly comforts including her family, homeland, gods, and friends. His kindness to Ruth indicates that he respected the **devotion** and **loyalty** she had demonstrated to Naomi.

Ruth bowed to the ground (*fell on her face*) and asked Boaz why he was taking notice of her, a foreigner, and how had she found favor in his eyes. In the same way, we are outsiders and foreigners to God's kingdom. We have no right to heaven; no right to His acceptance of us. In fact, we were *enemies* of God. The apostle Paul says, *For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled we shall be saved by His life* (Romans 5:10). It took Jesus' death and resurrection to change us from enemies of God to children of God! *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ* (Ephesians 2:13). We were far off when we were *without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world* (Ephesians 2:12). Have you ever fallen on your face before God and asked Him how He could take notice and show favor to you, a poor sinner? Ruth was not ashamed to fall on her face and express her thankfulness.

Boaz told Ruth that he knew of her goodness to Naomi, and he gave her a beautiful blessing,

*The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for **refuge**.*

Boaz could see Ruth's faith clearly. First, he had heard of her faith, next he saw her at work in his fields proving her faith, and, lastly, he saw her humbly fall to the ground before him, expressing her faith. Ruth had faith to do what was right, no matter what happened.

At mealtime, Boaz paid special attention to Ruth for all the workers to see. This special attention would reinforce that she was under his protection. As he left, he gave special instructions that she be allowed to glean among the sheaves. Also, the reapers were to drop some handfuls on purpose just for her. No one was to rebuke her for what she gathered. She finished the day with all she could carry home, about an ephah. An ephah is roughly one half a bushel or five gallons. Imagine walking home while carrying five gallons of milk!!

### III. Receiving Her Mother-in-Law's

#### Approval - Ruth 2:18-23

Back in the city of Bethlehem, Naomi must have waited anxiously for Ruth's return. She had been gone the whole day. What had she experienced? Naomi was probably very surprised at what she saw. Her daughter-in-law arrived carrying all she could handle. Ruth, tired but happy, placed her gleanings from the day in front of Naomi. She even had leftover roasted grain from her lunch. *Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you.* Naomi could tell that this was no ordinary gleaning. Ruth reported that she had worked in the field of Boaz.

Naomi immediately saw God's hand in this and praised Him. *Blessed be he of the Lord, who has not **forsaken** His kindness to the living and the dead.* Suddenly, Naomi's previous bitter spirit was replaced with a new spirit of thankfulness. Then, Naomi explained to Ruth that Boaz was a relative, in fact, a close relative,

a kinsman, who could redeem them. The Hebrew word is "goel" meaning "a redeemer." "A law established by Moses in Deuteronomy 25:5-10...set out specific actions to be taken by the surviving family if a married son were to die without a son to inherit or carry on his name" (The MacArthur Bible Handbook, John MacArthur). The one who did this "redeeming" was called a "kinsman redeemer." Boaz was in a position to be that relative for Naomi and Ruth.

Naomi agreed with Boaz' advice to Ruth that she should stay close to his servants. She added that Ruth should not be seen in any other field. So it continued through the season of the barley and wheat harvests. †

#### Prayer

Recognizing that you were once an enemy of God, thank God for sending His Son to save you. Ask God to help your understanding of what He has done for you, and how you can fulfill His purpose for you.

#### Memory Verse

Romans 5:10 *For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*

#### Vocabulary

**reap** - to cut or gather from a field

**glean** - to gather grain that is left after the main crop has been gathered

**sheaves** - more than one sheaf; a sheaf is a bunch of stalks and ears of grain that are tied together after being cut

**refuge** - shelter or protection from danger or distress

**forsaken** - given up or left entirely

**QUESTIONS FOR JUDGES/RUTH LESSON 19**

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

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

1. What provision in God's law applied to Ruth?

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2. a. How did Ruth help herself and Naomi?

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- b. How is the harvest a picture of God's grace and our grateful response?
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**DAY TWO: Read Ruth 3:1-5.**

3. What happened that made Naomi think it was time for action? Underline the correct answer and give the verse.

- a. Boaz was becoming interested in another young woman. Verse:\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Naomi was tired of living with Ruth. Verse:\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Boaz would be winnowing barley at the threshing floor that night. Verse:\_\_\_\_\_
- d. Ruth was ill and could not work any longer. Verse:\_\_\_\_\_

4. a. According to verse 1, what did Naomi want for Ruth?

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- b. What do you think this means?
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5. There were five important points in Naomi's plan. List them by answering the questions below.

- a. How was Ruth to prepare herself? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Where was Ruth to go? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. What was Ruth to do while Boaz ate and drank? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. What was Ruth to do when Boaz lay down to sleep beside his grain?
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- e. What would Boaz do if Ruth obeyed? \_\_\_\_\_

6. a. Do any of the above instructions seem strange to you? If so, which one(s)? Why?
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- b. From Ruth's response, do you think the instructions seemed strange to her? Why or why not?
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**DAY THREE: Read Ruth 3:6-9.**

7. a. In verse 6, what action did Ruth take in response to Naomi's plan?
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- b. What is a threshing floor? You may use a dictionary or Bible dictionary for your answer.
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- c. What place did Ruth take on the threshing floor?
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8. In verse 9, what question did Boaz ask? From verse 8, why did he ask it?
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9. a. What did Ruth ask Boaz to do for her? Give verse:\_\_\_\_\_
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- b. ? (Thought Questions) Using Leviticus 25:25 and Deuteronomy 25:5-6, try to explain what Ruth was asking.
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- c. How is this a picture of what God does for His people? See Ezekiel 16:8, Psalm 36:7-9, and Malachi 4:2?
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**DAY FOUR: Read Ruth 3:9-13.**

10. In Boaz' response to Ruth's request, what did he say about:

- a. the kindness she had shown?
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- b. her chasing after men for their money? \_\_\_\_\_
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11. According to Boaz, did Ruth have reason to be anxious or fearful? Why or why not?
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12. Fill in the blanks.

- a. Boaz told Ruth, all the people of my town know that you are a \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. ♥ (Heart Question) People know that I am \_\_\_\_\_.

13. a. From verse 13, what did Boaz need to find out?

\_\_\_\_\_

b. What would Boaz do about it?

\_\_\_\_\_

**DAY FIVE: Read Ruth 3:14-18.**

14. What happened in the morning? Mark each statement T (true) or F (false). Give the verse for the true statements and correct the false statements.

- a. T or F vs. \_\_\_\_\_ Ruth and Boaz arose before it was light.
- b. T or F vs. \_\_\_\_\_ Boaz walked Ruth home.
- c. T or F vs. \_\_\_\_\_ Boaz instructed Ruth not to let anyone know she had been to the threshing floor.
- d. T or F vs. \_\_\_\_\_ Boaz had Ruth fill her pockets with grain for Naomi.

15. a. When Ruth arrived at home, what did Naomi ask?

\_\_\_\_\_

b. What did Naomi receive?

\_\_\_\_\_

c. What instruction did Naomi give Ruth?

\_\_\_\_\_

d. What confidence did Naomi have?

\_\_\_\_\_

**VOCABULARY FOR JUDGES/RUTH LESSON 19**

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

1. .    **reap**    .....    lose    .....    pick    .....    harvest

2. .    **refuge**    .....    safe haven    .....    fortress    .....    stronghold

3. .    **forsaken**    .....    left behind    .....    abandoned    .....    reclaimed

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

<b>reap</b>	more than one sheaf; a sheaf is a bunch of stalks and ears of grain that are tied together after being cut
<b>sheaves</b>	to cut or gather from a field
<b>glean</b>	shelter or protection from danger or distress
<b>reguge</b>	given up or left entirely
<b>forsaken</b>	to gather grain that is left after the main crop has been gathered

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_ - to \_\_\_\_\_ someone or something completely

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

\_\_\_\_\_ - a state of \_\_\_\_\_, confusion, or disorder

\_\_\_\_\_ - to change something or someone to serve your own \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ - feeling in an unpleasant way; \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_ - male \_\_\_\_\_ who had the privilege or responsibility to act on behalf of a relative who was in trouble, danger, or need; rescuer; deliverer

\_\_\_\_\_ - the \_\_\_\_\_ killing of a large number of people

**WORD BANK**

MOVING  
EMOTIONAL  
CLUNG  
TIGHTLY  
ANNIHILATE  
DESTROY  
SYMBOLISM

IDEAS  
QUALITIES  
ANARCHY  
LAWLESSNES  
MANIPULATING  
PURPOSE  
BITTERLY

PAINFULLY  
IMAGERY  
IMAGINE  
KINSMAN REDEEMER  
RELATIVE  
SLAUGHTER  
VIOLENT