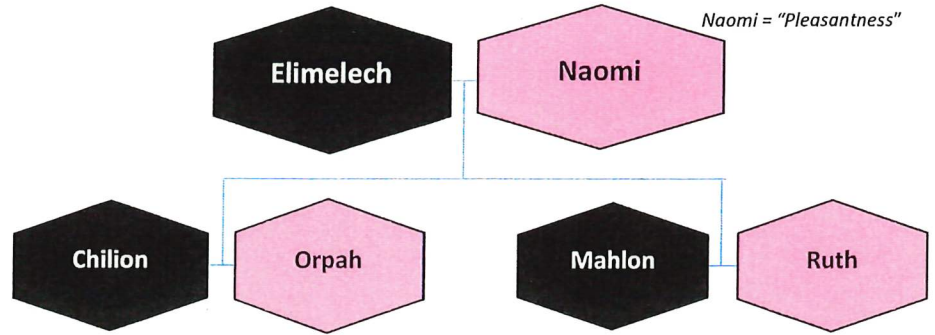
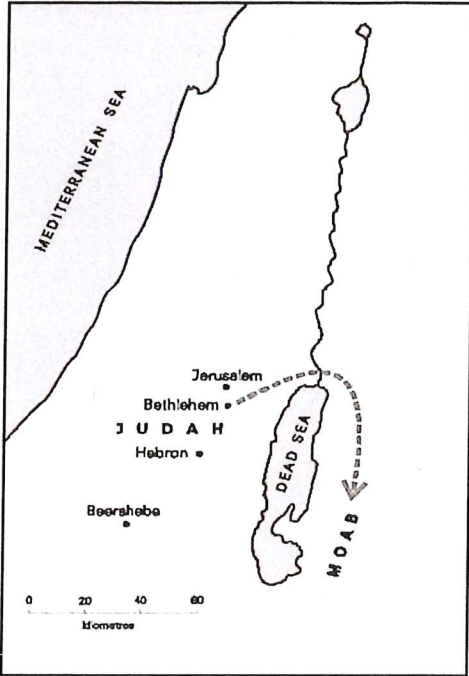


Ruth 2



Naomi and Ruth Return (Ruth 1:19-22)

¹⁹ So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?" ²⁰ She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. ²¹ I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"

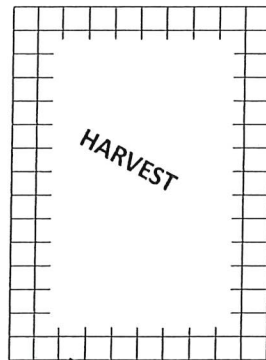
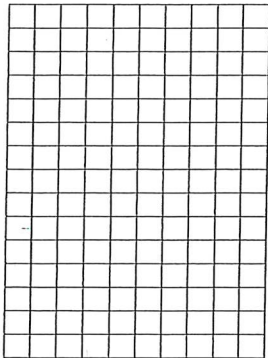
²² So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Quick refresher: "Gleaning"

(Lev 19:9) in the context as "Loving your neighbor as Yourself":

⁹ "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.

FIELD READY FOR HARVEST



LEAVE FOR GLEANERS

Ruth Meets Boaz

2 Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. ²And 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." ³So 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. ⁴And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered, "The LORD bless you." ⁵Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" ⁶And 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. ⁷She 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."

Western Culture:

We would have asked, "Who is she?"

Ancient Near-East:

"To whom does she belong?" (Emphasis on community)

"In a non-western world, people are never defined individually; they are always understood in relation to a group, be it family, a village, or a clan. An unmarried woman derived her identity from her father. She was tied to domestic duties in her father's household until the day of marriage. If she chose to live outside the authority and protection of her father she was deemed to be a harlot."

Douglas Green

Westminster Theological Seminary

In effect, Boaz is asking:

"What clan is this woman a part of?"

"Who is the man who protects and provides for her?"

This was the period of the Judges ---Israel's dark ages ("Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.")

"The presence of a male represented more than protection. If a male was with Ruth, it declared her status and said that she was properly fitted into a family structure and was a respectable woman. She should be treated as such. If she was unaccompanied, it signaled that she was not a respectable woman. It was fine to treat her any way you chose. The presence of a male communicated that the family she belonged to cared enough about her not to send her out without a chaperone. If you messed with her, her family would come after you. If she was alone, then either she didn't have a family to protect her, or they didn't care about her, so you could probably molest her with impunity."

Libbie Groves

Lecturer in Biblical Hebrew at Westminster Theological Seminary

"**Hesed**" (Hebrew word for "loving kindness")

Description:

- One-way love; unbalanced, uneven
- Commitment love
- Not based on equal contributions
- Determination to do someone good, no matter the impact on you

- Mentioned >250 times in Bible (mostly referencing how God loves us)
- "Love without an exit strategy" (Paul E. Miller)
- "Melody line of the book of Ruth" (Sinclair Ferguson)

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|---|---|
| Observations about this passage? | Where do we see the hidden hand of God so far? |
| | |

⁸ 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." ¹⁰ 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."

¹⁴ And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. 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."

And what was Ruth's response to all this?

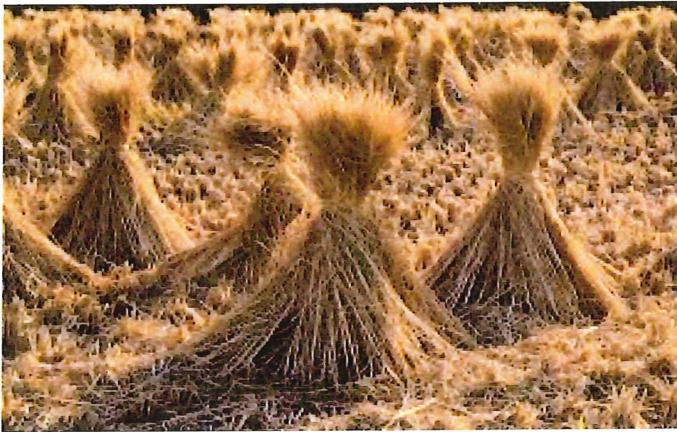
What does Boaz cite as commendable in Ruth?

Psalm 57:1

| |
|--|
| <p style="color: green; margin: 0;">Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge</p> |
|--|

Harvesting in those days:

1. Men went through with sickles (iron blades); let the stalks (sheaves) fall to the ground. Kept moving
2. Women came behind to pick up the sheaves and tie them together in bunches
 - Bunched sheaves into piles across the field
 - Between the piles--loose grains always spilled out
 - Those loose grains belonged to the landowner
 - not available for gleaning by the poor
 - gleaning was reserved for just the outer edges that were left uncut
3. The grain was "beaten out" with a curved stick or wooden hammer on a threshing floor nearby



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. ¹⁹ 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." ²¹ 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.

3-4 Months Total (April – June) = Boaz invited Ruth to stay under his protection & provision

During that period, look what Ruth (the former pagan Moabite) likely witnessed as a new believer in Yahweh!
Look at the Lord's hand throughout:

JEWISH FEASTS & FESTIVALS

Point to God's redemptive work of His people

| SEASON | DATE | FEAST | SCRIPTURE REFERENCE | REASON FOR CELEBRATION |
|---------------|---|--|--|---|
| Spring | 14 TH Day of 1 ST month | Passover [Pilgrimage Feast] | Lev 23:5 <u>Num 28:16</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliverance from Egyptian Slavery • Pascal lamb sacrificed • Blood marked the door of believers to be "passed over" by angelic destroyer |
| | 7 days following Passover | Feast of Unleavened Bread (immediately follows Passover) | Lev 23:6-8 <u>Num 28:17</u> Ex 12:39 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commemorates speed at which they left Egypt. God's deliverance. • Leaven prohibited in daily meals • Eating unleavened bread was act of faith, trust in the Lord's promise. |
| | March/April | First-fruits Harvest | Lev 23:9-14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give God the first of the barley harvest. And trust God to give us the rest. • Sheaf of the wave offering |
| | 50 days after Passover Sabbath | Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) [Pilgrimage Feast] | Lev 23:15-22 <u>Deut 16:16-19</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing the 1st crop of the new season. Wheat. New rains. • Reconstituted people of God composed of cleansed Jews & Gentiles. |

GOD'S ATTRIBUTES



| | |
|---------------------|--|
| LOVE (HESED) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's "hesed" love for Naomi; never gave her up, though she gave up on Him; covenantal, one-way • Protects, provides, watches, cares, gives attention, anticipates • God Instills "hesed" love into Ruth for Naomi; Boaz for Ruth |
| SOVEREIGNTY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes fruit out of failure; progress out of dead-ends • Makes sense out of tragedy; transforms tragedy into life • Nothing (natural disasters, bad decisions, death, sin, loneliness, poverty) can thwart God's plans |
| OMNIPRESENCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God was with Naomi (planning, redeeming) while living disobediently in Moab • God was with Ruth (protecting) as she stepped out into potential danger/unknown • God was with Boaz (guiding) as he showed up for an ordinary day at work • God was with Naomi back at Bethlehem (providing) while she despaired <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 10px;"> } <i>All at the same time</i> </div> |

It was the Lord who stopped the famine

It was the Lord who bound Ruth to Naomi in love.

It was no coincidence that Ruth happened to come to Boaz's field.

It was no coincidence that Ruth happened to show favor to this poor foreigner. The Lord directed her steps and his favor.

The light of God's love has finally broken through bright enough for Naomi to see.

The Lord is kind.

He is good to all who take refuge under His wings.

With Ruth and Naomi, let us fall on our faces, bow before the Lord, confess our unworthiness, take refuge under the wings of God, and be astonished at His grace.

John Piper
Sex, Race, and the Sovereignty of God