

## Beloved Part 1

### Boaz and Ruth meet each other, a love story

We read from the Bible (AMP): Ruth 2:8-14 and Ruth 3:1-13

Ruth 2:8-14

Ruth Gleans in Boaz' Field

8Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but stay here close by my maids. 9Watch which field they reap, and follow behind them. I have commanded the servants not to touch you. And when you are thirsty, go to the [water] jars and drink from what the servants draw." 10Then she kneeled face downward, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes that you should notice me, when I am a foreigner?" 11Boaz answered her, "I have been made fully aware of everything that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people that you did not know before. 12May the Lord repay you for your kindness, and may your reward be full from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge." 13Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not as one of your maidservants."

14At mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come over here and eat some bread and dip your bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate until she was satisfied and she had some left [for Naomi].

Ruth 3:1-13

Boaz Will Redeem Ruth

1Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to Ruth, "My daughter, shall I not look for security and a home for you, so that it may be well with you? 2Now Boaz, with whose maids you were [working], is he not our relative? See now, he is winnowing barley at the threshing floor tonight. 3So wash and anoint yourself [with olive oil], then put on your [best] clothes, and go down to the threshing floor; but stay out of the man's sight until he has finished eating and drinking. 4When he lies down, notice the place where he is lying, and go and uncover his feet and lie down. Then he will tell you what to do." 5Ruth answered her, "I will do everything that you say."

6So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had told her.

7When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was happy, he went to lie down at the end of the stack of grain. Then Ruth came secretly, and uncovered his feet and lay down. 8In the middle of the night the man was startled and he turned over, and found a woman lying at his feet. 9So he said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth your maid. Spread the hem of your garment over me, for you are a close relative and redeemer." 10Then he said, "May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made your last kindness better than the first; for you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. 11Now, my daughter, do not be afraid. I will do for you whatever you ask, since all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence. 12It is true that I am your close relative and

redeemer; however, there is a relative closer [to you] than I. 13Spend the night [here], and in the morning if he will redeem you, fine; let him do it. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then, as the Lord lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning.”

## Explanation

Ruth traveled with Naomi (or Noömi) to Bethlehem. Naomi is her mother-in-law: Ruth was married to her son Machlon. But Machlon, like his brother and father, died in Moab.

Naomi, her husband, and their two sons had moved to Moab because there was a famine in the land. But now that the men have died and Naomi hears that there is bread again in her homeland, she decides to return.

Ruth goes with her.

When they arrive in Bethlehem, the barley harvest has just begun. And because she needs to put bread on the table, Ruth decides to go and look for fallen ears of grain.

At that time, poor people were allowed to do this; it was laid down in God's law: everything that the reapers dropped had to be left for the poor.

Ruth ends up in Boaz's field and asks if she can gather ears of grain. She is allowed to do so and spends the whole morning busily gathering them.

Then farmer Boaz comes to check on the harvest and sees someone he does not know. He hears from a

reaper that it is Ruth, the Moabite. Boaz has already heard of her. He speaks to her and tells her not to go to another field and to stay close to the girls who work for him. She may also have a drink if she is thirsty.

“Why are you so kind and caring to me, a foreigner?” she asks. “I have been told how well you cared for your mother-in-law when your husband died, and how you left everything behind to go with her to Bethlehem. May the God of Israel reward you for this. He will protect you under His wings,” says Boaz.

She is allowed to sit at the table with the staff during lunch, and she saves what she has left over for Naomi.

As she continues working in the afternoon, Boaz tells his reapers to deliberately drop some ears of grain.

When she comes home in the evening, she has brought back 30 kilos of grain. Naomi cannot believe her eyes: “Where have you been?” she asks. And when Ruth mentions Boaz's name, Naomi has a sudden realization: “He is our relative, he is a redeemer.”

Ruth continues to work in Boaz's field until the barley harvest and the wheat harvest are over.

One day Naomi says to Ruth: "I would like you to have your own family. Listen: Boaz is our relative, he is our kinsman-redeemer. Go to him tonight, and when he has eaten and drunk enough, and he is looking for a place to sleep, lie down quietly at the foot of his bed."

I find it a bit dubious: going to a man in the dark who has probably drunk quite a lot to celebrate the end of the harvest and then lying down with him in his sleeping place... What kind of advice is Naomi giving her daughter-in-law here?

But Ruth does as Naomi says, and in the middle of the night, Boaz wakes up with a start and notices that a woman is lying next to him. Ruth says, "I am Ruth, may I stay with you? Will you take care of me, for you are my kinsman-redeemer."

In fact, this is nothing less than a marriage proposal from Ruth. Not only because Boaz is her kinsman-redeemer by law and tradition, but also because she wants him to be.

Boaz knows that he is the kinsman-redeemer. He has already thought about it himself. But he has not taken any action because he does not know whether Ruth might prefer a younger man. He waits patiently. But he praises her for coming to him. He says that he thinks she is a wonderful woman. "But," he warns, "there is someone else who is closer to you and Naomi, a man who has the right of redemption first. Tomorrow I will go to the city to find out if he wants it. If he does not, I will marry you."

Naomi must have known that there was another family member who would be allowed to redeem her first. Yet Naomi prefers Boaz.

Was that why she suggested that Ruth visit Boaz at night? Before the other man could become interested in Ruth?

Boaz is a decent man; he does not seek physical intimacy with Ruth that night,

but he promises to take care of her by seeking clarity from the other redeemer the next day. "Go to sleep peacefully, tomorrow we will know more," he says.

Early in the morning, while it is still dark, Ruth quietly leaves, because Boaz does not want people to see that she has slept on the threshing floor, as this will only lead to gossip.

He goes to the city himself and waits at the gate until he sees the other redeemer pass by.

The reaper who has not yet made himself known. No name is mentioned in the Bible.

He does not want to redeem either. Yes, he wants to buy a piece of land that Naomi still owns, but he does not want Ruth as his wife. The future children would then bear the name of Mahlon, and he does not want that.

"Then I will take Ruth, the Moabite, as my wife, and the name of Mahlon and his father Elimelech will not be forgotten," says Boaz, "you are my witnesses," he says to the elders at the gate and to all the people who had gathered to see what was going on.

Everyone gives him their blessing. Then Boaz goes to the house of Naomi and Ruth. What must they have thought when they saw Boaz coming?

It is good news: Boaz wants to marry Ruth!

They get married and the Lord gives them a son: Obed.

What a beautiful love story.

Obed later becomes the grandfather of David. David, the shepherd boy who becomes king of Israel.

God has arranged for Ruth to be included in the ancestry of the Lord Jesus.

Ruth and Boaz are both mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:5).

***Prayer: Lord God, faithful Father, when You guide our lives, things can happen that we could never have imagined ourselves.***

***Lord, You took care of Ruth and Naomi when they returned to Bethlehem. Thank You for giving laws that enabled the poor to obtain food. You led Ruth to Boaz's field.***

***Boaz, a man who had such a good heart but no wife to care for him. You led them to each other. How You made everything right for Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz. You want to care for us in the same way. Your goodness knows no bounds.***

***Will You spread Your wings over us, Lord?***

Questions:

– By chance (...) Ruth ended up in Boaz's field. Have you ever been to places where you later said: God led me there?

– There is a lot of talk in Bethlehem: Boaz knows Ruth's entire life story

before he has even seen her. He has heard positive things about her. What do others say about you? Are they positive or negative things?

– What do you think of the way Naomi wants to arrange everything?

- Boaz was a man who feared the Lord. How is that evident?
- The Bible book of Ruth cites two laws of God that care for the poor and/or widows/orphans: gathering fallen grain (Leviticus 19:9) and redeeming (Leviticus 25:25).

Do you know of any other laws that God gave?

- Jesus is often called the Redeemer. In what way did He redeem us?

This Bible study was written by Carla Heuvelman and can be found at [www.febelijbelstudies.nl](http://www.febelijbelstudies.nl).