

## Ruth Chapter 2

- OUTLINE:** I. Home in Bethlehem, re-establishing (1-2)  
II. Seeking food and favour (3-17)  
III. Prayers answered (18-23)

### I. HOME IN BETHLEHEM

2:1 We learn Naomi has family ties to a wealthy but distant relative of Elimelech, named Boaz. Later, he is shown to have economic and social standing (4:1-2). By introducing Boaz, whose name indicates a “pillar of society”, the narrator points to care of Ruth and Naomi.

2:2 ‘Ruth the Moabite’ highlights and reminds of her status as an outsider (Deut 23:4-7).  
*<sup>4</sup>because they did not meet you with food and water on your journey out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam son of Beor, from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.*

Ruth is proactive in taking initiative for provision, but respectful and deferential to Naomi.

‘Go to the field and glean’: *<sup>22</sup>When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the alien: I am the LORD your God. (Lev 23:22)*

Naomi shows acceptance and solicitude for Ruth. (v2 & v8: ‘daughter’)

### II. SEEKING FOOD AND FAVOUR

The first words of a biblical character often point to their qualities.

Ruth catches the attention of Boaz, but the reader is not told why.

The recurring biblical narrative of a man meeting his future wife through drinking at a well is found in v9b. eg. Rebekah & Isaac in Genesis 24, Rachel and Jacob in Genesis 29, Moses and Jethro’s daughter in Exodus 2. Ruth finds favour just as she has sought and hoped (2:2).

Foreigner ie. Not a member of the family.

Boaz’ description of Ruth’s break with her past parallels God’s call to Abraham (Gen 12:1).

V12 “under whose wings you have come for refuge”:

Psalm 91:4 “<sup>4</sup> he will cover you with his pinions, / and under his wings you will find refuge”

Psalm 17:8b “hide me in the shadow of your wings”

V14 Being able to eat until satisfied is indicative of God’s generosity:

Deuteronomy 6:11 “<sup>11</sup>houses filled with all sorts of goods that you did not fill, hewn cisterns that you did not hew, vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant—and when you have eaten your fill,”

Deuteronomy 8:10 “<sup>10</sup>You shall eat your fill and bless the LORD your God for the good land that he has given you.”

Deuteronomy 31:20 “<sup>15</sup>and he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you will eat your fill.”

Deuteronomy 31:20 “<sup>20</sup>For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I promised on oath to their ancestors, and they have eaten their fill and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, despising me and breaking my covenant.”

V17 Ruth is able to glean some five times as much as the daily need for Naomi and herself.

(1 ephah = 22 litres)

### III. PRAYERS ANSWERED

V21-22 Gradually Ruth’s relationship with Naomi shifts from ‘the Moabite’ to ‘daughter-in-law’.

V23 The barley & the wheat harvests were finished, prompting Naomi to take further action.

## QUESTIONS

1. Why might Ruth and Naomi appear to be isolated without enjoying reunions and family support on their return to Bethlehem.
2. What do you think might have been the reason Ruth was prepared to go alone to glean?
3. In offering to go to glean grain, what were the implications for Ruth, and for Naomi?
4. Was it just happenstance that Ruth went to Boaz' field?
5. Boaz' benevolent greeting to his workers brings God's presence to the forefront. How comfortable would you be using such a greeting?
6. How might Boaz' attention have been drawn to Ruth?
7. What Boaz asks God to provide for Ruth eventually comes from himself. He is God's human agency. Do you have any examples of God answering prayers through a human agency, particularly yourself.
8. V14: "*She ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over.*" Does this make you think of another 'feeding' story? Is there any connection?
9. Can you trace the protective measures of Boaz towards Ruth through Chapter 2?
10. How like Naomi are we, responding to God with bitterness when we feel abandoned, but gratefully honouring his loving kindness when we clearly see his blessing aligned with our hopes or expectations?