

# The Book of Ruth and Shavu'ot

The Jewish traditions on Shavu'ot include the reading of the scroll of **Ruth**. This small, four-chapter book is one of the most remarkable jewels in the TaNaKh. It is a love story that is venerated among literature buffs for its sheer elegance. **Ruth**, a Moabitess, in **her** loyal dedication to **Na'omi** (**her** widowed mother-in-law), after **her** own husband dies returns with **Na'omi** to Beit-Lechem where **she** ultimately marries **Bo'az**, a wealthy landowner, who is the hero of the story.

The book is also treasured among Bible students because it gives us an unparalleled glimpse into the life and customs of ancient **Isra'el**. The laws concerning gleaning, the redemption of property, and the laws concerning the levirate marriage are all beautifully illustrated by the narrative.

But it may come as a surprise to believers that it is also a key book of *prophecy*, without which one has little chance of really understanding the book of **Revelation**. The story illustrates the role of a *go'el*, **the kinsman-redeemer**, who returns the land lost to **Na'omi** by performing the requirements of redemption. **He** also takes for **himself** a Gentile bride who is destined to appear in the family tree of **David** and of **Jesus Christ**.

The exquisite parallels have been well recognized by many biblical scholars: **Na'omi** (foreshadowing **Isra'el**) returning to the land, and **Ruth** (foreshadowing the Bride of Christ), each established by the act of redemption by **the kinsman-redeemer, Bo'az**. What is remarkable is how even the subtle details of the scroll of **Ruth** seem to support this foreshadowing. **Ruth** learns of the pattern (**God's** design) of redemption through **Na'omi**. The Church learns of **God's** redemptive design through **Isra'el**. An unnamed servant introduces **Ruth** to **Bo'az**. **The Ruach HaKodesh** is always modeled in the TaNaKh types as the "unnamed servant." **Jesus** told us that **the Holy Spirit** would never testify of **Himself**. **Na'omi** learns of **Bo'az** through **Ruth**. Is there a witness burden here for the Church?

And where is **Ruth** during the threshing floor scene? At **Bo'az's** feet! The threshing floor is one of the idioms that can allude to the tribulation. One cannot build doctrine from foreshadowing, but it can be instructive. The list goes on and on. Every time we study this book it seems there are additional "discoveries."

It is interesting that **Ruth** can be viewed as prophetic of the Church (see **Av - Scene Three: Na'omi's Wonderful Plan for Ruth's Life**), which was a **mystery** in the TaNaKh (**Ephesians 5:32**). And it is interesting that, even among the Jewish community, this book is associated with Shavu'ot. Many assume that the Festival of Shavu'ot was completely fulfilled in **Acts 2:15**. But surely there's still more to come.