

# Bo'az's Grace and Ruth's Gratitude

## 2: 8-13

**DIG:** In what three ways does Bo'az foreshadow Christ? Why did Bo'az address Ruth as, "My daughter?" How did he provide for her? Protect her? What was her reaction? How did her reaction give us a clue as to what kind of person Ruth was? What are some clues we've seen in Ruth's story so far that she was a woman who had drawn close to ADONAI?

**REFLECT:** If you suddenly had no means of supporting yourself, do you think your reaction would be like Orpah (and do what was expected of you)? Like Ruth (simple, humble action)? Or like Na'omi (with some bitterness creeping in)? Why? When was the last time you exhibited an unmerited act of kindness to display the LORD's love to others? Whom do you know that needs to be reminded that God still loves them? What will you do today to demonstrate such love? How close to YHVH do you feel right now?

Now came the moment of truth. As it turned out (2:3b) ADONAI had placed Ruth and Bo'az together on the same field, but how would that upright Israelite nobleman treat this foreigner. Would he look down on the Moabitess? Or maybe would her presence make him uncomfortable! Would he respect or condemn her for coming to the field alone? More importantly, how would he view her unusual request?<sup>52</sup>

**5. Bo'az foreshadows Messiah because he took the first step toward Ruth.** In spite of the difference between their social standings, Bo'az took the first step toward Ruth. He said to her, "My daughter, listen to me." Bo'az called Ruth "My daughter" because she was younger than he (3:10), but it was also a term of endearment. **Messiah takes the first step toward us because while we were yet sinners he died for us (Romans 5:8).** Christ adopts us into His own family (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Bw - What God Does For Us at the Moment of Faith](#)), and Bo'az treated Ruth like family.

**6. Bo'az foreshadows Messiah because he promised to protect and provide for Ruth.** He encouraged her to gather barley only in his field and to stay close to his harvesters. Don't go to glean in another field, don't leave this place. His sudden candor may betray some irritation with his overzealous overseer. Bo'az told her, "Stick (Hebrew: *dabaq*, which means *to stick like glue*) here with my working girls who were immediately following the harvesters" (2:8 CJB). **The rabbis teach that the word *dabaq* was used by Bo'az to show his awareness of the incident on the road to Beit-Lechem when Ruth cleaved to Na'omi**

(1:14). If the overseer had already given her permission to glean after the harvesters as she had asked (2:7a) there would be no need for Bo'az to say: **Keep your eyes on whichever field the harvesters are working in, and follow the girls (2:9a CJB). Messiah also promised to protect and provide for us, saying: I AM the Good Shepherd. I know My sheep and My sheep follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of My hand (John 10:14, 27-28; also see the commentary on The Life of Christ Ms - The Eternal Security of the Believer).**

I've ordered the young men not to touch you (2:9b GWT). His words protected Ruth from anything harmful. When she got up to glean, Bo'az continued to warn his young men, saying: **Let her glean even among the bundles of grain themselves, without making her feel ashamed. In fact, pull some ears of grain out from the bundles on purpose. Leave them for her to glean, and don't rebuke her (2:15-16).** The meaning of rebuke here probably has the meaning of don't *bother* or *rough her up*. Perhaps a common scene during the harvest time lay behind his command. One can imagine enthusiastic gleaners, desperate for food, who ignored repeated verbal warnings, overstepping the line between "gleaner" and "harvester," and had to be forcibly restrained by workers. Also recall that Ruth's request went far beyond what the normal limits of a gleaner would be. Therefore, to head off a potential ugly incident, Bo'az informed his workers of the freedom he had given Ruth and ordered them to suspend their customary protectiveness. She was not to be "shooed away" or mistreated in any way. Like Sarah (Gen 20:6) and Rebekah (Gen 26:29), both foreigners living on alien soil, Ruth was to experience special protection in advance.<sup>53</sup>

He also gave her permission to drink from the water he supplied his servants. **Whenever you get thirsty, go and drink from the water jars the young men have filled (2:9c CJB).** Normally in the ancient Near East foreigners would draw water for Israelites, and women would draw water for men. Consequently, Bo'az's provision was extraordinary (see Af - **The Concept of Chesed**).<sup>54</sup>

Can you imagine the impact these words must have had on Ruth, the outsider? These were the first kind words she had heard since she left Mo'av. More than that, they were a blessing that sought the favor of ADONAI upon her, as if she too were a member of the covenant community. Bo'az recognized the sincerity of Ruth's words to Na'omi when they left Mo'av. He saw that she was turning her back not only on her homeland, but also her former gods, and looking to YHVH for refuge. Therefore, Bo'az prayed for God to grant her the protection she was seeking. Here was the gracious and warm response to commitment to Na'omi on the road to Beit-Lechem that she deserved but never received.<sup>55</sup>

**7. Bo'az foreshadows Messiah because he comforts Ruth.** Ruth, moved by his gentle kindness and generosity, knew full well that such extreme generosity was highly unusual, especially toward an impoverished woman from a foreign land. Deeply moved by his warmth, she fell on her face, prostrating herself, and said to him, "Why are you showing me such favor? Why are you paying attention to me? After all, I'm only a foreigner" (2:10 CJB). **As foreigners in this world, Messiah comforts us when He says: Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going (Yochanan 14:1-4).**

Bo'az answered her (Hebrew: *wayya'anah* signifies raising the voice), **and speaking so everyone in the field could hear, said:** I've heard the whole story, everything you've done for you mother-in-law since your husband died, including how you left your father and mother and the land you were born in to come to a people about whom you knew nothing beforehand (2:11 CJB).

Then Bo'az gave her an unusual blessing that revealed what a godly man he was: **May ADONAI reward (Hebrew: *shalem*) you for what you've done (2:12a CJB).** The key verb *shalem* meaning *to make whole, to complete*. It refers either to the final completion of an action begun earlier or to the restoration of a wholeness disturbed earlier. It can be an economic term for transactions involving compensation or repayment.

Behind this blessing stood the principle that YHVH has a set up in this world: a stream of blessing and a stream of cursing. A godly lifestyle brings blessing: **Blessed are those who reject the advice of the wicked, don't stand on the way of sinners or sit where the scoffers sit! Their delight is in ADONAI's Torah; on His Torah they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams - they bear their fruit in season, their leaves never wither, everything they do succeeds (Psalm 1:1-3).** And a godless lifestyle brings cursing: **Not so the wicked, who are like chaff driven by the wind. For this reason the wicked won't stand up to the judgment nor will sinners at the gathering of the righteous. For ADONAI watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked is doomed (Psalm 1:4-6).** ADONAI was Ruth's God, she was living that stream of blessing and she was being rewarded.

**May you be richly rewarded by ADONAI the God of Isra'el, under whose wings (Hebrew wings plural: *kenapim*) you have come for refuge" (2:12b).** Ruth has sought refuge/asylum. The singular word *kanaph* can mean *wing* or *corner of a garment*. Here, it represents the image of a bird tenderly protecting its young. Like a defenseless bird, Ruth

sat securely **under YHVH's mighty wings**. But later on the threshing floor, the same word will be used to describe how **Ruth** essentially proposed marriage, and asked **Bo'az to spread the corner his robe over her (3:9)** So just as **Ruth** would take refuge **under the wings of God**, she would **take refuge under the wings of her husband**. The audience now wondered how **Elohim** would guide what **Ruth** unknowingly began, to its unexpected good ending.<sup>56</sup>

**Her** reply was equally gracious and beautiful for its humility. **She** said, "My lord, I hope I continue pleasing you. You have comforted and encouraged me, even though I'm not one of your servants" (2:13 CJB). **Unworthy as Ruth felt herself to be of all of the kindness she had experienced, she was deeply stirred by the comforting words which "fell on her heart like showers on the mown grass," and would themselves be sufficient to win her gratitude even if Bo'az did no more.** **Ruth, the Moabitess**, had, for the first time, been made to feel that there might be a place for **her** among the Israelites. Why should anyone, especially a man of standing in the community like **Bo'az**, take such kind notice of a foreign woman like **herself**, who was an nobody in everyone else's eyes?<sup>57</sup>

**His** words sounded like a great, joyous sigh of relief after the days of uncertainty since **her** husband's death (1:5). One can only imagine what fears crossed **her** mind the morning as **she** headed for **the field**. However, the kindness of **Bo'az** was a response to **her** get-up-and-go. **She** had drawn **him** into **her** story, not the other way around. The respect shown to **her** should not mask **her** determination and courage. After all, even in submissiveness **she** still had the last word. Indeed, **her** impressive remark left **Bo'az** as speechless as **her** earlier one on the dusty road to **Beit-Lechem** had left **Na'omi** (1:16-18).<sup>58</sup>