

# Bo'az Provides for Ruth

## 2: 14-17

**DIG:** What are the three ways in which Bo'az foreshadows Messiah? Specifically, what is the fourth requirement of the kinsman-redeemer? How does this scene reveal the character of Bo'az? What did he do that was surprising? How did he display chesed to Ruth? What would have been unusual about Bo'az personally serving Ruth the roasted grain? How did Bo'az make the rest her day easier? What was amazing about his instructions? What was shocking about the amount of barley Ruth brought home?

**REFLECT:** Describe a time when you have been especially kind to someone in need. How important is it to share a meal with other believers? Is there a difference when sharing a meal with non-believers? What's the difference? How does it make you feel to protect someone who is vulnerable? When was the last time you did so? How are you best filled spiritually? Worship? The Word? Fellowship? Ministry?

After Ruth had 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), there was a pause of unknown duration because the next scene is at **mealtime**. This pregnant pause allowed the importance of Ruth's words to have their full impact on this **noontime** scene.

**8. Bo'az foreshadows Christ because he ate with her and personally handed her the food.** The meal begins innocently enough, as Bo'az and his workers pause at noon to refresh themselves after a morning of hard work. The fact that Bo'az ate with his harvesters says something about his character, but his actions at this meal must have caught everyone by surprise. At mealtime Bo'az said to Ruth, "Come over here, have something to eat, and dip your bread in the [olive oil and] vinegar. This is an example of Bo'az's chesed (see **Af - The Concept of Chesed**). She was not left to take care of herself as gleaners usually were, but instead, sat by the harvesters.

Then Bo'az personally served Ruth roasted grain. The narrator deliberately highlights this extraordinary action by using a word that occurs only here in the TaNaKh.<sup>59</sup> Bo'az reached out (Hebrew singular: *tsabat*) with his hand and personally served her some roasted grain (like bread, roasted grain was a staple of Isra'el's diet). And emphasizing his special generosity, she ate until she was full, and she had some left over, which she quietly put into her pocket (2:14 CJB). It must have seemed like a feast to her. **Messiah**

also ate personally with His disciples and handed them food. And while they were eating Jesus took a piece of matzah, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to His apostles saying: **Take and eat, this is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Kj - Breaking the Middle Matzah**).

After the meal Ruth returned to her task. But her way was made easier by the instruction from Bo'az to his young men. He did not leave the matter to his overseer, but personally took charge to make sure everyone clearly understood. When she got up to glean, Bo'az also got up gave them this order, "Let her glean even among the bundles of grain and do not rebuff her. In fact, he went further: Pull out for her some grain from the bundles on purpose and leave them for her to glean (2:15-16a CJB). They were to intentionally pull some of the stalks of grain from the bundles and leave them lying for Ruth to pick-up without much effort. The handfuls to be pulled were the amount that would be grasped in the left hand while being cut by with a sickle in the right hand.<sup>60</sup>

This was usually not allowed (Deuteronomy 24:19), but Bo'az makes an exception in her case. This went well beyond the usual generosity and compassion for the poor who were normally allowed to glean only after the harvesters had completed their work. This shows Bo'az was developing a special interest in Ruth who begins to win his heart because of her humility, her concern and care for Na'omi, and for her love of the God of Isra'el.<sup>61</sup> Was this a friendship or a courtship? All we know is that their friendship was growing. Whether one or the other realized it was a courtship - we just don't know. If Bo'az was falling for her, he probably thought he couldn't compete with the young men of the city.

And a final word of warning: **And don't discourage her" (2:16b CJB)**. One can well imagine the abuse that people like Ruth, who arrive at the field uninvited, might receive from those who had been properly hired by the landowner to harvest the crops. Therefore Bo'az lets his workers know that they are not to treat Ruth that way. They will not threaten her physically or discourage her psychologically with snide comments about being a Moabitess or the low class she represents just because she was forced to go begging for fields in which she might glean. Bo'az is pictured as a compassionate and kindly kinsman.

**9. Bo'az foreshadows Messiah because the fourth requirement of a kinsman-redeemer is that he must be free himself, and throughout the book of Ruth, Bo'az is presented as a free man. Yeshua was Himself free from sin: God made Him who was free from sin to be a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. And when the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed (Second Corinthians 5:21 and John 8:36).**

The narrator quickly switches our attention to **Ruth's** activities for the rest of the day. **So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening.** All day long, **Ruth** labored with a happy and hopeful heart. **She** didn't have to worry about **the men** chasing **her** away, or hindering **her** in any way. **She** had food when **she** was hungry, drink when **she** was thirsty, and a place to rest when **she** became weary.<sup>62</sup>

**10. Bo'az foreshadows Messiah because he saw to it that she was satisfied.** When **she** beat out what **she** had gathered, it came to about a bushel of barley, approximately thirty pounds. To emphasize that **Ruth** collected that much in one day was truly shocking. It testified to **Bo'az's** generosity and **Ruth's** tenacity. **The harvesters** had evidently followed **Bo'az's** instructions faithfully. This meant that **Ruth** had gathered enough to sustain **herself** and **her mother-in-law** for at least half a month (2:17 CJB). That was in one day! Over the next several months of **the barley** and wheat harvests, **Ruth** would be able to **glean** enough for almost a year's supply. **The two women** could not have imagined in **their** wildest dreams such a provision when **they** first returned from **Mo'av**.<sup>63</sup> **Messiah makes sure that we are satisfied spiritually.** When describing the characteristics of true righteousness on the **Sermon on the Mount** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Db - Blessed are the Poor in Spirit for Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven**), where **He** said: **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled** (Mat 5:6; Luke 6:21a).

The narrator leaves us with several questions after the **noontime meal**. How will **Na'omi** respond to **Ruth's** experience? The last time we saw **Na'omi**, **she** was very depressed, sharing **her** bitterness with the women of Beit-Lechem and being very snippy with **Ruth**. What does the future now hold for **Na'omi**? How would **her** family line escape extinction? Does the attraction of **Bo'az** give us a hint that **he himself** might help solve the problem?