

Na'omi Evaluates the Encounter

3: 14-18

DIG: If found together, who would likely be blamed: Na'omi, Ruth, or Bo'az? Does this story reflect some kind of romantic love, or a proper sense of duty to an ethical code of conduct? Why? What are some examples of how the LORD wants His people to sit still? **How did Ruth foreshadow the Church? How did Bo'az foreshadow Messiah?**

REFLECT: What are you willing to risk? And for what? What are you willing to risk for the sake of the Gospel? What are you willing to die for? Anything? Anyone? How patient are you? Can you wait on God? Does He need your help? Why can't we come into God's presence clothed in our own righteousness? Is Jesus Christ your Redeemer?

Ruth foreshadows the Church in that she listened to Bo'az. So Ruth lay at the feet of Bo'az until morning; then, before [it was light enough that] people could recognize each other, she got up because Bo'az said: No one must know that a woman came to the threshing floor (3:14 CJB). Nothing immoral occurred, of course, and the Bible is clear about that. But Bo'az, being protective of Ruth's virtue, awoke her and sent her home just before dawn.⁸³

Ruth foreshadows the Church in that she received gifts from Bo'az. He gave her a generous portion of grain as a gift for Na'omi. He also said: Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out. When she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley (or eighty pounds), lifted it up, and placed the bundle on her back so she could carry it home. Then [she] went back to town (3:15). Chapter 3 ends much the way that Chapter 2 had ended, with Ruth returning home to share with Na'omi news of her adventure.

The growing realization of Ruth's value is underlined by Bo'az's generous gift. He sends her back with a large bundle of barley so that she will not return to Na'omi empty, the same word that Na'omi used to describe herself in Chapter 1. She came back to Beit-Lechem empty, but ADONAI was fulfilling all of her needs through Ruth and Bo'az. She was no longer empty. God provided food for her hunger and a place for her to rest. Would YHVH now withhold from her the one other thing she lacked - descendants? No way! In light of that, Bo'az's earlier comment: There is a redeemer closer than I, takes on a whole new light. At that time Bo'az was merely talking about some the unknown-kinsman. But all through the story there has been a Redeemer closer than Bo'az, a Redeemer for Na'omi and Ruth who has hovered behind the scenes of the narrative, behind all the human agents, reaching out to His beloved but wandering sheep and showing them grace upon on grace.⁸⁴

Na'omi, of course, had probably been up all night and was anxiously awaiting to see if her plan worked or not. When Ruth came to her mother-in-law, Na'omi said: **How did it go, my daughter? Are you his wife or not! Then she told her everything Bo'az had done for her and added, "He gave me these six measures of barley, saying: Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed (3:16-17).** The gift was a sign of good faith to carry out his promise (3:13). The emphasis is on not being **empty-handed**. In 1:13 Na'omi stated that **she had returned to Judah empty-handed** with no husband and no sons. But now the implication is that **she will no longer be empty-handed**. The aged widow could then rest assured that **she** would not be forgotten in the future. The gift of barley foreshadowed the fullness that was soon to come. This verse provides a transition of **Ruth's** exit from the story. From now on, **she** is only a secondary character. In contrast to **her**, it puts **Bo'az** and **Na'omi** on the center stage.⁸⁵

Ruth foreshadows the Church in that she waited for Bo'az to act. Na'omi, who feminine intuition was impeccable, said: **Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will fall; for the man will not rest, he will do everything in his power to fulfill his promise, until he has finished the thing this day" (3:18).** It is through faith and patience that we inherit the promises of God (Hebrews 6:12 and 10:36). Because Na'omi and Ruth trusted that Bo'az would accomplish what he said he would do, they waited patiently until they received the good news that Ruth was his bride. Being still is not an easy thing to do. Especially in today's society, we want it done yesterday! Now Ruth could have followed Bo'az around Beit-Lechem but that wouldn't have done any good. Our human nature gets nervous and wants to help God out, and when we do that, we only make things worse. Let's look to the Bible and see what it has to say about this matter.

Stand still (Exodus 14:13) was the command of Moses to the people of Isra'el when the Egyptian army had them pinned in with no possible way of escape. There was no need to panic, for YHVH had the situation well in hand. When ADONAI commanded the people to **go forward, He** led them safely through the Sea of Reeds (see the commentary on **Exodus Ci - The Waters Were Divided and the Israelites Went Through the Sea on Dry Land**). There is a time to stand still and a time to go forward, and we need to ask the LORD for the wisdom to know which is which.

Be still, and know that I am God (Psalm 46:10) is a wonderful cure for a restless spirit. The Hebrew word **be still**, *yashab*, means *relax, take your hands off*. It's so easy for us to get impatient and start "helping" God when we should stop playing Holy Spirit. He is God and He can accomplish the impossible. Our hands may get in the way and make it worse.

Bo'az was busy working for **Ruth**, and **Na'omi** was confident that **he** wouldn't rest until **he** had settled the matter. **Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6)**. It is encouraging for us to know that **Messiah** never stops working for **His** children as **He** intercedes for us in heaven: **Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died - more than that, who is raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us (Romans 8:34).**⁸⁶

In his book on *Ruth*, Iain Duguid discusses the fact that the story of **Bo'az** and **Ruth** is not a *Romeo and Juliet* type of love story. It's not boy meets girl, in which they are physically attracted to each other and the rest is a passionate love affair. We know that **Bo'az** was relatively old and that **Ruth** could work all day in the hot sun with hardly a break and then carry eighty pounds of grain home on **her** back. Doesn't exactly sound like the usual movie script. No. The book of **Ruth** is a different kind of love story than we are used to.

The devotion that **Bo'az** and **Ruth** had for one another was built on **their** common character, which is always a much better foundation for a lasting relationship than mere physical attraction. **Theirs** was a character match, not a sex match; **they** were both people of substance. That is specifically what **King Lemuel's mother** advised **him** to look for in a **wife of noble character (Proverbs 31:10-31)**. When the young (and not so young) make their mental checklist of what they are looking for in a spouse, physical attributes usually head the list with spiritual attributes recorded as an afterthought. **Bo'az** and **Ruth**, however, had a far more biblical agenda than most do today.

The real love story in this book is not about **Bo'az** and **Ruth**, but about **ADONAI** for **His** sheep that have wandered off the path. It is a love that prevented **God** from merely ending the world when Adam and Eve first sinned. It is the love that chose and called Abraham and then persisted in pursuit his rebellious offspring Isaac and Jacob. It is the love that would not **the Israelites** go, even after centuries of rebellion and idolatry. His love causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall. In the lives of the children of **YHVH**, this love feeds us and clothes us. In **His** providence, **His** love may bring godly friends to encourage us, and a godly family with whom we can share our lives. We should be thankful for all **God's** gifts of love.

Yeshua Messiah gives us the clearest picture of **God's** love. **His** love for us took **Him** much further than a grain pile at midnight. It took **Him** all the way to the cross. There, in the midst of a darkness far greater than any ordinary midnight, **He** offered **Himself** for the sins of **His** people: **God made Him who had no sin to be a sin offering for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21)**. And because **God the Father** cannot be in the presence of sin, for the one and only time in all eternity, **the Father** turned **His** back on **God the Son** as **Jesus** was punished for the sins of all humanity

from noon to three o'clock (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Lv - Jesus' Second Three Hours on the Cross: The Wrath of God**). **Messiah** didn't just risk **His** life, **He** gave it. Was it is because we are such wonderful people and we really deserve it? Hardly! It is because **ADONAI** was so committed to saving sinners like us, this was the only way it could be done. **Bo'az** was the only one could redeem **Ruth**; and **Jesus** is the only **One** who could redeem us. **For salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we may be saved (Acts 4:12).**

Do you know this love of **God**? Have you responded by giving your heart to **Him**? Disfigured by sin though it is, your heart is all you have to give. So give it to **Him**. **He** will be your **Redeemer** and receive you into **His** family. **He** will cover you with **His wings** and be your refuge. **He** will **spread His robe** of **Messiah's** righteousness over your nakedness. No matter how undeserving you are, no matter what you've done or where you've been, the invitation is open to come and be redeemed.⁸⁷ **YHVH** will welcome if you believe that **Christ died for your sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day and that He appeared to Peter and then to the Twelve (First Corinthians 15:3b-5)**, and you want to make **Yeshua** your **Lord**. **Messiah** loves you so much. Have you put yourself at the feet of **the Lord of the harvest**, and are you trusting in **Him** to work?