

A Covenant to Marry

Key Verse: “*He said, May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.*”
—**Ruth 3:10,**
English Standard Version

Selected Scripture:
Ruth 3:1-18

it about time I arranged a good home for you so you can have a happy life? And isn't Boaz our close relative, the one with whose young women you've been working? ... Tonight is the night of Boaz's barley harvest at the threshing floor. Take a bath. Put on some perfume. Get all dressed up and go to the threshing floor. ... When you see him slipping off to sleep, watch where he lies down and then go there. Lie at his feet to let him know that you are available to him for marriage. Then wait and see what he says. He'll tell you what to do.”—Ruth 3:1-4, *The Message Bible*

IN OUR KEY VERSE, BOAZ

commends the virtues of the young maid Ruth. She had gone to him at the advice of her mother-in-law, Naomi. Being a close relative, Boaz was eligible to assume the right of redemption of Elimelech's estate and that of his son Mahlon. Under such rights Boaz could both purchase Elimelech's property and beget children to Mahlon's posterity by taking the widow Ruth as his wife. This was Naomi's motive and hope.

The account reads, “One day her mother-in-law Naomi said to Ruth, My dear daughter, isn't

To support Naomi and herself, Ruth had gone into the barley fields of Boaz to glean. She was noticed by Boaz. Perhaps he found her outer beauty appealing but it was her inner beauty that truly attracted him. Boaz showed her special favor and gave her reassuring protections. These were a great comfort to her, a stranger in a strange land. However, she was surprised by these and asked, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner? But Boaz answered her, All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. The LORD repay you for what you have done, a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!”—Ruth 2:10-12, *ESV*

It seemed a disaster that Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion died, but God overruled these experiences to bring Ruth, a Moabite, into Israel to meet and marry Boaz. The genealogy in Matthew’s Gospel makes God’s purpose clear. Ruth is part of the lineage of Jesus Christ our Lord—“Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king,” of whom Jesus was descended.—Matt. 1:5,6, *ESV*

Boaz loved Ruth for her kindness to Naomi and her devout adoption of Israel’s God as her God. May we be as faithful as Ruth to our values, in the kindness we show others, and by our love for the Heavenly Father. In so doing we may prove ourselves faithful and be blessed as the Bride of the Lamb whom we have covenanted to marry. “I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”—II Cor. 11:2 ■