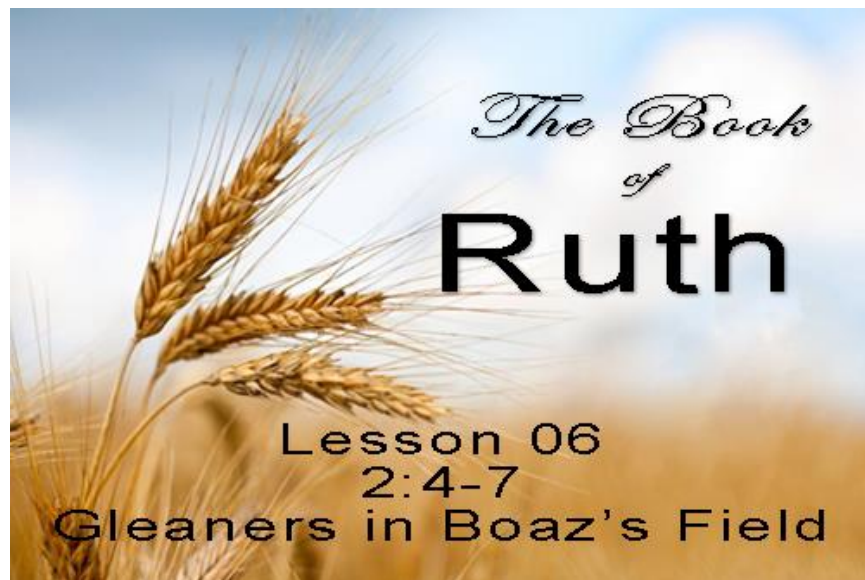


The Book of Ruth
Lesson 6
Chapter 2:4-7
"Ruth's Reaping"
Gleaners in Boaz's Field

Chapter 2:4-7

"Ruth's Reaping" (Ruth's Gleaners in Boaz's Field)

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LESSON 06

The Book of Ruth - CH-2:4-7

"Gleaners in Boaz's Field"

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Along the way we've been interchanging three words of "State" that you may find confusing.

First is "Israel"

Israel is the **name** given to the Hebrew people as a nation. Abram was renamed Abraham. He had a son named Isaac, and he had a son named Jacob, and God renamed him "Israel". So, the family lineage that follows was to be known as "Israel".

Second is "Judah"

Judah is the **name** of the family tribe of Jacob's son Judah. That is the family line from which the Messiah would be born, as well as King David.

Third is "Judea"

Judea is the **place** where the people of Judah lived. A tribal territory given by Moses when they were going to enter into the "Promised Lands" that God had promised Abraham for his family's inheritance. Two tribes received land East of the Jordan River and the other 10 to the West of the Jordan (Joshua 13-14).

Quick history... (mostly accurate) Following King David there was a civil war and Judah and Benjamin remained mostly faithful to the Lord. They occupied Judea upon the split. The other 10 tribes who did not remain faithful kept the name "Israel" and they were in the North and were taken captive by the Assyrians. As Judea became more and more unfaithful, God once again, exercised His discipline and both the Assyrians (who had taken Israel captive) and Judea were taken away by the nation of Babylon to the country of Babylon (Iran) in captivity. Upon their return, many years later, released by the Persians (another conquering nation), they occupied Jerusalem and Judea in general. The Hebrew "Israelites" became Judean, and then "Jews."

**"The Field of Boaz"
Addendum 02**

**The Book of Ruth: The Field of Boaz
Theme: John 14:2-3 "I have to go and prepare a place for
you."**

IN Ruth 2:2...

And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after one in whose sight I may find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."

God's Providential Hand brings Ruth to Boaz's Field.

The following observations are to be understood on at least 3 levels.

1. The story of the lives of Ruth and Boaz, just as they are reported in the book
2. The imagery of the characters and the Nation of Israel
3. The imagery of the characters and members of the Body of Christ

Each of these three levels can also be divided into different important categories.

- A. The Story of the characters of the book and their representations of the bigger story.
 1. Elimelech – Jewish man who makes the decision to leave "Judah" and move to neighboring idolator land of Moab, forsaking God's Abrahamic Covenant to the land, and dies there.
 2. Naomi – Often seen as the "God" character in her manner of providing for and testing Ruth.
 3. Mahlon and Kilion – Two Jewish sons, Judean men who married pagan women and worshipped their idols and died in Moab.

4. Mahlon's wife Ruth – The secondary central character of the book who represents the one who repents and seeks the Lord God through commitment to Him.
 5. Kilion's wife Orpha – She is seen as the one who is introduced to the Lord God but turns back to her pagan life.
 6. Elimelech, Mahlon and Kilion's deaths leaving their wives leaving them indigent in a foreign land.
 7. Boaz – the central character to the book. He is the Kinsman-Redeemer that will continue the family line to King David and The Lord Jesus.
 8. The closer relative – a Kinsman-Redeemer who refuses to act according to Jewish tradition in providing "redemption" of a widowed woman family member.
- B. The imagery of the characters representing the Nation of Israel
1. Elimelech – Jewish men who abandon their covenanted nation in order to find satisfaction for their needs when the Lord God brings discipline upon them and their families – especially by turning to pagan lands and people to bring that satisfaction.
 2. Naomi – The believing wives of the men who upon their chastisement and deaths repent and turn to the Lord God bringing other lost souls with them.
 3. Mahlon and Kilion - The men of God's Covenanted people who seek "foreign" women and are taken into Idol worship by them, and chastised by the Lord God, many to their deaths.
 4. Orpa and Ruth – Two Pagan women who have been found and married by Jewish men. Both will be offered belonging to the Lord God. One will repent and choose the Lord God, and one will not. "One will be taken, and one will be left."
 5. The Closer relative – Jewish men who have turned away from their Covenant responsibilities in order to avoid commitment.

6. Boaz – The Kinsman-Redeemer, the one who voluntarily chooses to continue the family line of a Jewish man who loses his life and leaves his wife with no male in her family to continue the original husband’s family name as part of the nation.
7. The Workers - The Remnant, those in the nation who have remained faithful to God.
8. The Field - The believing nation of Israel.
9. The Harvest - The calling out and gathering of the Believing members of the Nation of Israel.

3. The imagery of the characters representing the Members of the Body of Christ

1. Elimelech, Mahlon, Kilion – The believer who abandon’s his Christianity in order to fulfill his personal needs or one who embarrasses the Body of Christ in such a way that his life must be taken to stop it (Ananias and Sapphira – Acts 5).
2. Ruth – The Bride of Christ – all those who leave the love of this world, idols, distractions from God’s grace, and openly, willingly, voluntarily choosing The Lord Jesus as their Kinsman-Redeemer. Our substitutional personal sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins, our justification before The Lord God, and our provider of The Lord’s God’s Grace and Salvation.
- 3.. Boaz – The Lord God Jesus the Christ – Our Kinsman-Redeemer.
4. The Workers - The believing members of the local church.
5. Boaz - The Kinsman Redeemer - Jesus Christ.
6. The field - The bounty of God’s grace and the Word of God.
7. The Harvest - The calling out and gathering of the Body of Christ

It is important to know that the imagery of the book can be used in seeing the restorative, reconciling, redemptive nature of God.

Our focus will be two-fold. **First** is the restoration to fellowship with God of the disobedient child of God. In the book of Ruth, we see the nation of Judah (Israel) in the process of being welcomed back from her sin of idolatry in allowing many of the men to take foreign Godless wives who turned the nation against the Lord. The nation repented (turned around) through the chastisement of famine and once again sought their living God (Ruth 1:1-22). Beginning in chapter two we can see the imagery of repentant Israelites (Ruth) in the process of returning to her God (Boaz) by going to His field and approaching the "reapers" (the Hebrew word translated here as "reapers" only indicates that those Ruth approached were "followers," or "the remnant.") Those who did not disobey God and did not leave His will. Within this first focus we can also see the Grace of God for the believer who has sinned, confessed his sin, and is in the process of reconciliation and restoration in the fellowship of God (1 John 1:9 ff).

The **second** area of focus would be in seeing the imagery in terms of those who have not begun their relationship with God but have been called by Him (as Ruth is being called). The story then becomes the romance of God toward the one who approaches for Salvation whether it is a member of the Nation of Israel in Ruth's time (in Ruth's case a proselyte Gentile) or a Jew or Gentile seeking Him for salvation today.

Be careful when you read and apply each of these focus ideas that you do not confuse them. Ruth was probably included in the O.T. canon because of its parallel imagery concerning the Nation of Israel and its cycles of fellowship VS judgment throughout the book of Judges. The book is primarily about Restoration and Fellowship with God, not the salvation of the individual.

THE VISUALIZED TEXT (NASB)

(2:4)

Now

behold,

Boaz

came

from Bethlehem and

said

to the reapers,

"May the LORD be with you."

And

they said

to him,

"May the LORD bless you."

Brief Commentary on Ruth 2:4

It is remarkable how gracious the call of God is when you answer it and seek Him. Chapter 2 is all about Boaz's grace toward Ruth as she begins the journey toward Him.

In Chapter 2:4-7 we are introduced to Boaz. He is a man of wealth and property. He is also seen to be a man of not only grace but also of a heart to keep the law, especially where the poor are involved. At a time when many farmers closed themselves off to "the law of the poor" that allowed the poor and the stranger to have access to the harvest, Boaz is seen to be a landowner who is not surprised to find gleaners in the field with his workers. It is his common practice to make sure that those who have come under the law to find sustenance are allowed to do so in his fields.

Ruth has come to this field, she has asked for, and received, permission from the overseer to glean, and she has been diligent in the gathering of grain for herself and Naomi.

"Now behold" introduces us to this verse and adds a little excitement to the plot. Behold... this sounds like a rare occurrence... the master who owns this field has actually come out (from the City of Bethlehem) to the fields to meet his workers and those who are

poor and glean behind the workers. Ruth has asked for and received permission to glean – from the field supervisor, but not the owner. Now that she has been there gleaning for most of the day the owner arrives on the scene. He has come down from the city to review the fields and the workers.

Our introduction to Boaz tells us that he is a faithful man of the LORD God and that he is gracious to his workers. **"May the LORD be with you,"** he says to the workers. We can also see a sign of their respect for Boaz, as they reply to him, "Jehovah, Bless." This is very similar to our own, "May the LORD be with you," and the replay, "May the LORD Bless You."

Boaz is a "mighty man" who has come to the fields to give the workers the blessing of God upon their lives and work. We could expect the master on his horse with a whip, or a master leading a company of tough guys to bring order and more work out of the fields and the field workers. But instead, we are presented with a man of God who is at the first interested in his workers and the welfare of those who are less fortunate (the foreigner and the poor) who must resort to gleaning the leftovers.

When we see Boaz as the symbol of God in this text we get a glimpse into His grace. His interest lays in the workers of His field (those who know Him and are about His business) and those who have been drawn into His field to find not only His sustenance, but also to find Him.

Boaz's workers are also to be recognized for their grace toward their master (in blessing him) and for their grace toward Ruth and any others who have come to glean by extending permission (in the Master's name) to them to glean.

It's interesting that the background of the meaning of a "Blessing" is rooted in the word for "kneel," and is most often linked to the idea of adoration.

(2:5)**Then****Boaz said****to his servant****who was in charge of (Lit., who was appointed over)
the reapers,****"Whose young woman is this?"****Brief Commentary on Ruth 2:5**

We see order in the operation of Boaz's field. There are grain cutters, reapers, bundlers, and supervisors for each group. Some sow, some water, some reap. There are so many parallels between the truths of the Old Testament and the New.

Boaz wants to know, "whose young woman is this?" Perhaps we should add, "Behold!" He has seen her and must know more. She is probably quite beautiful, she's young, she has come alone and must be brave, she has come on Naomi's behalf and must be faithful, she has come and worked all day and must be diligent, and she has come to this field for sustenance, and she must be hungry.

In the larger imagery of Ruth (representing the one who is called by the LORD God and is responding to His call) therefore is quite beautiful to Him, she is quite young in Him, her faith has brought her to Him alone, she has bravely overcome the stubborn human will that is against Him, she has come to His presence because she is hungry for Him.

(2:6)**And****the servant****in charge of (Lit., who was appointed over)****the reapers****answered and said,****"She is the young Moabite woman****who returned**

**with Naomi
from the land
of Moab."**

Brief Commentary on Ruth 2:6

Boaz's servant or field supervisor has all the information on this one who has come to his field to glean. It's Ruth, the stranger in Judah, (again singled out as a foreigner) the Moabite who came with Naomi when she returned to Bethlehem. Naomi, who is the mother of the late Mahlon, who is the son of Boaz's close relative Elimelech who has also passed away. "Oh, that's Elimelech's son's wife, Ruth."

(2:7)

"And

she said,

'Please

let me glean and gather

after the reapers

among the sheaves.'

Thus

she

came and has remained

from the morning until now;

she

has been sitting

in the house

for a little while."

Brief Commentary on Ruth 2:7

The servant continues his dialog about Ruth. She asked permission to glean, and she asked specifically to glean right behind the reapers – there among the sheaves – and not way in the back where the field has already been picked over. She came this morning and has worked all day and only now takes a break.

Those who are returning to the Lord (repentance) or coming to Him for the first time (salvation) would do well to learn from Ruth. Come, ask, work hard at gleaning God's truth and character, and be diligent in your exercise of faith. Make sure you remain close to Him and His Word.

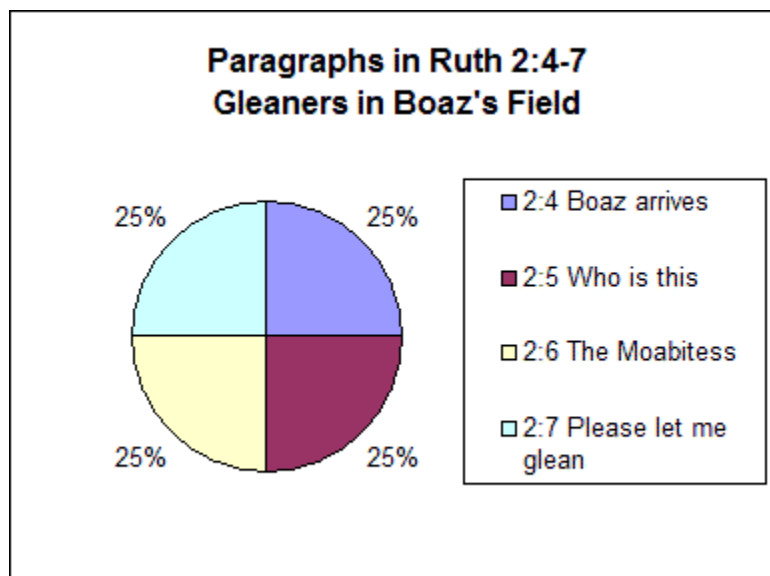
Some quick Field definitions:

Reaper – Those women who follow the male cutters of the grain. Their job was to gather and bundle the cut grain.

Sheaves – Bundled stalks of grain, usually a measured amount – the Omer.

“Among the sheaves” – Picture the harvested field with bundles of grain setting in rows waiting to be picked up and moved to the barns for winnowing and storage. Being among the sheaves is a beautiful picture of the work being done in the field.

Verse Percentage Chart for Ruth 2:4-7



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Jeremiah 18:15

"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path."

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