

The Book of Ruth

Chapter 3

Notes on Chapter 3

- We pick up the story at the end of the harvest season (early June?)
- vs. 1 – Naomi sees hope for Ruth’s situation in the faithful care that Boaz had displayed to her.
- vs. 2 – The harvest is over, and the barley has sufficiently dried to be winnowed.
 - Winnowing involves tossing the harvest grain in the air so the wind can blow away any chaff.
 - In Israel, this was usually done at night because the breezes were stronger then.
 - This and other aspects of the harvest are times of celebration for God’s provision.
- vs. 3 – Ruth looks her best as she goes to the threshing floor. This does not appear to have much to do with attractiveness.
- vs. 4 – There is some debate as to the meaning of uncovering his feet. I think a consistent use of this phrase (Judges 3:24, I Samuel 24:3) refers to covering oneself while sleeping.
- vs. 5-6 – Note the obedience of Ruth.
- vs. 7 – After the feast celebrating the harvest, Boaz lays down by the winnowed grain to sleep (to guard it?).
- vs. 7 – Ruth uncovers his feet from his robe/blanket and lays down at his feet.
 - Uncovering his feet would cause some discomfort and eventually wake him.
 - Laying at his feet is a sign of submission.
- vs. 8 – A natural reaction on Boaz’s part.
- vs. 9 – “spread thy skirt [literally ‘wing’]” – recognized as a Jewish idiom for marriage – Deuteronomy 22:30, 27:20; Ezekial 16:8.
 - A remnant of this custom in modern Jewish weddings when a *tallit*, or prayer shawl, is used as a canopy as the couple exchange vows.
- vs. 10 – “Ruth’s earlier or first love was the love she had shown to her deceased husband and her mother-in-law (comp. Ruth 2:11, where Boaz praises this love); the later love she had shown in the fact, that as a young widow she had not sought to win the affections of young men, as young women generally do, that she might have a youthful husband, but had turned trustfully to the older man, that he might find a successor to her deceased husband, through a marriage with him, in accordance with family custom (vid., Ruth 4:10).” – Keil and Delitzsch Commentary
- vs. 11 – Note that Boaz sees nothing wrong with Ruth’s actions.
- vs. 12 – Plot twist! There is a closer kinsman! I think this could be why Boaz had not acted on marriage before.
- vs. 13 – One way or another, Ruth is about to married.

- vs. 14 - Ruth departs before dawn before anyone would notice her there. No place is given for gossiping tongues to go to work!
- vs. 15 – The measurement used is not given.
- vs. 15 – This gift is for Naomi since Ruth is likely about to wed.
- vs. 16 – “Who art thou, my daughter?” – I like J. Vernon McGee’s interpretation of this, that Naomi is basically asking, “Are you Mrs. Boaz or not?” The same phrase is used, though in the masculine, when Isaac asks Jacob, “who art thou, my son?” in Genesis 27:18.
- vs. 17 – the gift of barley is to reassure Naomi.
- vs. 18 – Now they must rest in hope in faith in God and Boaz.