

**Ruth 3 - The purposes behind God's plans** a study for the College and Career/  
Young Families Sunday School class at Gulf Coast Baptist Church by Steve Thomas  
8/11/24

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**Introduction**

God made promises to His people. These promises come from who God is, and fit in to the plan that God has for his universe. Man's sin interfered with the relationship between God and man, but it did not derail God's plan for the universe. God is familiar with His creation, and that includes the poor choices that man makes. God will use these things to reveal Himself to His creation, adding to His glory. The tragedy that befell Naomi's family was heartwrenching, but God was prepared to use it in the story of redemption. Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz had a part to play, and in order to participate in the plan that God had for His people, would need to follow the law of God, and walk by faith.

**Naomi's care for Ruth 3:1- 4**

The ladies have provision for a year at this point. But Naomi began to see more possibilities ahead for her daughter in law. With an understanding of the law of God, and the tradition of the people of Israel, Naomi began to see how things might somehow be. She knows Boaz is a near kinsman, and that he has the means to provide "rest" for Ruth. She knows that the men will be winnowing their barley in the evening on the threshingfloor. The cool wind of the evening provided the necessary device to separate grain from chaff. Naomi is seeking a husband for Ruth, a way for her to be provided for and to take part in Israel's economy. We will see later that Ruth is looking for much more. The obstacle in Naomi's mind lies solely in the fact that Ruth is a Moabitess, and the question of whether Boaz would be willing to take a foreigner for a wife. At this point, Naomi is not looking for something beyond a caretaker for Ruth.

Naomi instructed Ruth to clean herself up, and make herself as pleasing as possible, and to propose to Boaz when he is resting after the work of winnowing is done. The place and time is significant, because it would allow the discretion for Boaz to consider the proposal, and accept or reject it without any embarrassment to himself or to Ruth. Some have placed immorality or indecency on this exchange, but it was not so. The uncovering of Boaz's feet in verse 4 has to do with alerting Boaz in the darkness that someone was there and would like to converse with him. Boaz would be asleep, and covered up for the night. Ruth was to uncover his feet, and sit to wait for him to wake up.

**Ruth's willingness to obey, and her continued care for Naomi 3:5-6, 7-8**

Ruth continued to follow the instructions of Naomi, without any concern for her awkwardness, or her personal desire in the matter. Boaz was an older man, and a stranger to Ruth. She followed Naomi's instructions and went to the threshingfloor without anyone knowing and uncovered the feet of Boaz. She adds one level to the request however. She asks Boaz to cover her with his skirt. This is the request for Boaz to take Ruth under his protection. She is asking Boaz to take her to wife. But she also mentions that he is a near kinsman. This is beyond what

Naomi was asking for. Ruth is asking for Boaz to take care of Naomi and her possession as well. This will take a lot more work on the behalf of Boaz, and there is responsibility in this request. Boaz is not just taking a wife into his economy, but adding land to care for. This will mean hiring more servants, investing more into seed and land preparation, and plans that take 6-7 years to come to fruition (year of jubilee, etc.).

God's law was all encompassing. It planned the best for the people, but also for the land. God required the farmers to rotate their crops, and to let the land rest from time to time. This preserved the land for future generations. God works in centuries and millenia where we often work day to day. God had many more generations in mind than this one, and His law would provide for them.

### **Boaz's response of faith 3:9-14**

Boaz was unsettled when he realized that there was a woman in his place of rest. This speaks to us of the virtue of this man. This was not a common occurrence for him to be in a private place with a woman. He showed care for Ruth, asking her to stay until the morning to protect her safety and reputation (13-14). He had recognized her virtue as a part of him finding out about her and Naomi (11). Boaz's adherence to God's law was evident as well. He was not seeking to subvert the process, he was willing to go through the right procedure to secure the possession for Naomi and Ruth (12-13).

Boaz's willingness to take on this responsibility was a sign of his quality. In Genesis 25:29-34 Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentils. Moses describes the transaction as Esau despising his birthright. Esau wanted the blessing of his father Jacob and was furious when he found out that Jacob had stolen it with his mother Rebekah's help (Gen 27). In Hebrews 12, Esau is called a profane person, a fornicator who did not show any care for the responsibility of spiritual leadership in the home (12:15-17). The details did not matter to Esau, only the way his belly felt at that moment and the blessings that would follow later.

Boaz responded with care for Ruth, and a willingness to care for Naomi. He was willing to take on the spiritual and financial responsibility for this family. But he was also careful to follow God's law as well. There was a kinsman nearer than him, and he would see if that blessing and responsibility was willing to be carried out by him. There was risk here, but Boaz was willing to submit to God's law first. He also sent her with six measures of the winnowed barley, a lot for one person to carry.

### **Naomi's return of faith 3:17-18**

Naomi was willing to wait to see how God was going to work this out. She placed her daughter in law in a possible compromising position, but was assured that Boaz would do the right thing.

The plans were in motion, and things would change for them. The situation was going to “fall” and they would know soon what the next step would be.