

Ruth 3:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

Analysis

Discovery: **'And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet'**. The midnight timing and Boaz's startlement ('was afraid', literally 'trembled' or 'was startled') show his surprise at discovering someone at his feet. The narrative's suspense emphasizes the vulnerability and risk Ruth undertook. Her presence could have been misinterpreted, yet the outcome validates Naomi's confidence in Boaz's character. God's providence orchestrated circumstances so Boaz would respond with honor rather than exploitation.

Historical Context

Waking suddenly to find someone at one's feet in darkness would startle anyone. Boaz's initial fear or trembling likely involved surprise, not recognition of impropriety or fear of scandal—the narrative presents his subsequent response as entirely honorable. Ancient threshing floors during harvest could attract thieves or vandals, explaining Boaz's initial alarm. Ruth risked significant reputation damage by this approach, demonstrating faith in both Boaz's character and God's protective providence.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does Ruth's risky obedience teach about faith that acts despite potential for misunderstanding?
2. How does this demonstrate God's sovereignty protecting those who act in faith-based obedience?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי H1961	בַּחֹצַי H2677	הַלַּיְלָה H3915	וַיִּחַד H2729	הָאִישׁ H376
And it came to pass at midnight			was afraid	that the man
וַיִּפֹּךְ H3943	וַהֲנִי H2009	אִשָּׁה H802	שָׁכַב H7901	מִרְגְּלָתָיו H4772
and turned		himself and behold a woman	lay	at his feet

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