

Ruth 3:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.

Analysis

Revelation: '**And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman**'. Ruth identifies herself and makes explicit request. The phrase 'spread thy skirt' (paras kenaphekha, כְּנָפֶךְ שׁוֹרֵךְ) uses same Hebrew word (kanaph) Boaz used blessing Ruth to find refuge under God's 'wings' (2:12). Ruth essentially says 'you prayed I'd find refuge under God's wings—be the answer to that prayer by becoming my kinsman-redeemer.' She appeals to covenant law and his previous blessing. The request combined bold faith with appropriate legal grounds—Boaz was go'el, authorized and responsible to redeem.

Historical Context

The 'spreading skirt' idiom symbolized marriage and protection (Ezekiel 16:8). Ruth wasn't requesting improper relationship but formal marriage under kinsman-redeemer laws. Deuteronomy 25:5-10 established levirate marriage where near kinsman married deceased relative's widow to preserve family line and property. Ruth's appeal to this law demonstrated both knowledge of Israel's customs and appropriate channel for marriage request. Her identification as 'handmaid' maintained proper respect while asserting her claim on his covenant responsibility.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Ruth's bold request demonstrate proper initiative within appropriate biblical boundaries?
2. What does her reference to Boaz's earlier blessing teach about holding others (and God) accountable to their stated commitments?

Interlinear Text

אַמְתָּה	תְּבִרְכָּה	אַמְתָּה	תְּבִרְכָּה	אַמְתָּה	תְּבִרְכָּה
And he said	H4310	אַמְתָּה	H859	And he said	H595
H559		H559		I am Ruth	over thine handmaid
				H7327	H519

אַפְרִישָׁת	בְּ	עַל	אַמְתָּה	כִּי
spread	therefore thy skirt	H5921	over thine handmaid	H3588
H6566	H3671		H519	

גַּאֲלָה	אַפְתָּה:
for thou art a near kinsman	H859
H1350	

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 16:8 (Parallel theme): Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.

Ruth 2:20 (Parallel theme): And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.

Ruth 3:12 (Parallel theme): And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.

Luke 14:11 (Parallel theme): For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

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