

RUTH/THREE FUNERALS AND A WEDDING

Week 6 – Ruth 3: At the Feet of Boaz!

2/23/16

Ruth 1 - Israel's disobedience/sin – exile ensues followed by return to the land. Naomi, at this point in the book of Ruth, represents Israel returning in unbelief to the land. Naomi returns to the land with her Gentile daughter-in-law, Ruth. Ruth – a Gentile - a stranger to God's covenants of grace. Yet, Ruth vows her love to God and to Naomi's people, the Jews. This Gentile, Ruth, has come alongside Naomi. We see great love on the part of Ruth extended toward Naomi as they arrive in Bethlehem at the barley harvest.

Ruth 2 - Boaz and Ruth are introduced at the barley harvest – the “end of the age” in God's chronology. Ruth has already trusted in God; she has already come under His wings for refuge. Boaz and Ruth enjoy communion at lunch. Boaz represents Jesus in this book. Ruth is satisfied in her partaking of this communion with Boaz. Gentile Ruth then shares with her Jewish mother-in-law that which satisfied her during her time with Boaz. Ruth essentially introduces Boaz to Naomi. Of course, Naomi already knows that Boaz is a close relative – one of the family's redeemers.

The book of Ruth lays out God's timeframe in terms of His plan of redemption. . . there's a flow. . . there's a CHRONOLOGY. . . Ruth 2:22-23 - *And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field.”*²³ *So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.*

The timeframe at the end of Ruth 2 appears to bring us through the harvest time – both the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. The barley harvest falls within the March/April timeframe. The barley harvest occurs at the Feast of First Fruits. The wheat harvest falls within the May/June timeframe. The wheat harvest occurs at Shavuot (The Feast of Weeks). We are coming upon the time of final reaping toward the end of the harvest season. The harvest time represents the Church Age (Lev. 23:22; Matt. 13:39). God is using the Church, comprised of Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus, as HIS redemptive tool. We are laborers in His harvest (John 4:35; Matt. 9:38). In God's chronology, the Messiah is to return after the harvest. BUT, threshing needs to occur first! And, so we read in Ruth 3 where Ruth is found during the threshing time.

Ruth 3:1-4 - *Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?”*² *Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.*³ *Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.*⁴ *Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.”*

It was customary for parents in Israel to arrange marriages for their children (Gen. 24:3-4; Judges 14:1-10).

Ruth 3:1 - *My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?* Naomi desires security for Ruth. The Hebrew word for security is *manowach* from the root word *nuach* which means an absence of movement. This word pictures one being quietly settled in a particular place. It speaks of REST! Matt. 11:28-29 - *Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you REST.* The bride of Christ rests in Jesus!

Ruth 3:2 - *Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.* Naomi specifically states that Boaz is “our” kinsman redeemer. Boaz, was a kinsman redeemer for BOTH Naomi and Ruth as Boaz was a brother to Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, and Ruth was married to Elimelech’s son, Mahlon. Boaz is a kinsman redeemer for Elimelech’s family. The kinsman redeemer could buy back Naomi’s property. And, if he was willing, Boaz could carry on the family name by marrying a childless widow through Levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5-10). Levirate marriage – if a husband dies without children, the brother of the husband could marry the widow and raise up a child as an heir to the dead husband. REMEMBER: Boaz was one of the family’s close relatives. Nonetheless, Naomi tells Ruth what she should do because there is an opportunity for the both of them. Naomi and Ruth could both be redeemed! If Boaz will perform as a Goel – a kinsman redeemer - Naomi has the chance to get her land back. AND if Boaz will take Ruth as his wife, the family name will not die. We understand this as God’s provision and protection. God is serious about preserving Israel.

CONSIDER – Boaz actually could take Naomi as his wife. Remember, Boaz might be closer to Naomi’s age! BUT, that would leave Ruth out of the equation! This book addresses God’s plan of redemption for both Jew and Gentile!! We are seeing Naomi stepping aside and giving this marriage opportunity to Ruth.

Boaz is winnowing barley (first harvest) at the threshing floor. Firstly, observe that Boaz is the Landowner and he is a worker who identifies with his laborers. Who came to identify with man? JESUS! In His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane before His crucifixion, Jesus said, *I have finished the work which You have given Me to do* (John 17:4).

Why is Boaz winnowing barley when the timeframe appears to be at the end of the wheat harvest? “In the Bethlehem area, barley and wheat are harvested close together (‘nearly the same time’). The barley was left to dry out while the wheat (which ripened later) was harvested; only then could the barley be threshed.” Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom (his commentary is interspersed with the Expositor’s Bible Commentary notes [Frank Gaebelien, General Editor] and w/ notes from the Theological Wordbook of the OT originally published by Moody Press). Boaz waited until the end of the barley harvest AND the wheat harvest to winnow/thresh the barley.

“Threshing floors were nothing more than level places of smooth rock or pounded earth located on a hill *or on the side of a hill* – taking advantage of the winds - where the grain could be separated from the chaff (straw) by tossing the threshed grain into the wind that rose in the evening from the Mediterranean. The grain, being heavier, fell to the ground as the chaff was blown away.” (EBC/Expositor’s Bible Commentary, p. 78) (I Chr. 21:18; II Chr. 3:1). The entire picture of threshing encompassed loosening the grain from the straw by various methods. Oxen would often drag a wooden board studded with metal to further break up the stalks and separate the grain. Threshing and winnowing point to judgment. Winnowing is tossing the grain into the air/wind by means of a fork w/ large teeth – to separate the grain from the chaff (Psa. 1:4; Matt. 13:24-30). Threshing is indicative of the Tribulation. Where do we see Ruth at this time of threshing?

Threshing in Scripture is illustrative of judgments of God:

- Matt. 3:12 - John the Immerser/Baptizer – *His winnowing fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.* John is speaking of Jesus physical Second Coming - for judgment!
- Isa. 21:10 - *Oh, my threshing and the grain of my floor!* God is speaking of Babylon – His threshing tool – Babylon’s violent oppression of Israel!
- Jer. 51:33 - *The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor when it is time to thresh her; yet a little while and the time of her harvest will come.* Following Babylon’s threshing of Israel, God will thresh Babylon!
- Hab. 3:12 - *You marched through the earth in fury; you threshed the nations in anger* (ESV). God is seen as trampling/threshing the nations in judgment.

YET, in Joel 2:24 we read of a rather different picture concerning threshing - *The threshing floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.* This is speaking of abundance, fullness, blessing – following threshing!! In Malachi 3 we see the purging of Israel prior to their RESTORATION! God will purge the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver and then they will offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.

The Hebrew word for “thresh” means “to trample” which comes from one of the threshing practices of using oxen to trample the grain. The “threshing roller” was a rectangular wooden frame with rows of small wheels. There was a seat on top to give it weight. In Latin this “threshing roller” is called a *tribulum!!*

The primary purpose of the Tribulation in Scripture is the purging of Israel as a nation which we read last week in Malachi 3:3. The Tribulation will also see judgment for the nations (Isaiah; Zech. 12:2-3; Matt. 25:31-46). The world will see God’s wrath poured out on the earth during the Tribulation. I believe that Jewish and Gentile believers in

Jesus will be sitting at the feet of Jesus in heaven while the Tribulation rages on earth. We need to remember that the Bible teaches that believers in Jesus will suffer:

- II Tim. 3:12 - *all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*
- Phil. 3:10 – *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. . . .*

There's a difference between suffering and being a recipient of the wrath of God!

Remember Rom. 8:1 – there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!

What is the most well-known threshing floor noted in Scripture? Jerusalem. David purchased Jerusalem, which was known as the threshing floor of Araunah. Later this land was the site on which Solomon's Temple was built (II Chron. 3:1). Solomon's Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC. The second temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. In Zech. 12:2 – all nations will come against Jerusalem during the battle of Armageddon. BUT GOD will make Jerusalem a praise in the earth – Isa. 62:7. Zech. 8:13 - *And it shall come to pass that just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you, and you shall be a blessing.*

Returning to Ruth 3:3, Boaz is winnowing barley at the threshing floor. When threshing was over, workers slept near the grain to prevent their grain from being stolen (I Sam. 23:1 – David was told that the Philistines were robbing the threshing floors). And, we need to remember that these were esp. difficult times during the account of Ruth. It was the time of the Judges. Anarchy ruled! Every man did what was right in his own eyes.

Ruth 3:4 - *Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.* Naomi tells Ruth to wash and anoint herself (w/ oil) and put on her best garments. These external rituals spoke to what GOD does internally:

- Wash yourself – purification for marriage. In Eze. 16:9-10 we read that when God spread His wing over Jerusalem, at her “time of love,” He WASHED her and ANOINTED her with oil, and He CLOTHED her.

God entered into a covenant relationship with Israel.

Re: cleansing:

- Psalm 51:7- David said to God – wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.
- Eze. 36:25 – after God brings Israel back to the land, He will sprinkle clean water on them – cleansing them from all filthiness and from idols.
- Ephesians 5:25-26 – Jesus gave Himself for the Church (Jew & Gentile) that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the WASHING of water by the Word (sanctification); Titus 3:5 – washing of regeneration.
- Anoint – (cuk or suk) – describes the ordinary physical process of anointing the body which in the ancient orient was usually with olive oil (Dt. 28:40) particularly after bathing (II Sam. 12:20) and esp. for its fragrant effect.
 - The Jews had the custom of rubbing the head with oil or ointment at feasts in token of joy. This anointing is known as the oil of gladness (Psa. 45:7).

○ Jer. 16:9, Jer. 25:10, Jer. 33:11 – we read that the voice of the Bridegroom and bride is connected with mirth and gladness! Anointing w/ oil typifies that gladness.

- Garments in Scripture are clearly linked to salvation.

○ Eze. 16:10 - *I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk.*

▪ Outerwear reflects inner faith, i.e. sack cloth represents repentance and mourning (Gen. 37:34). Fine linen represents righteous deeds (Rev. 19:8).

○ Origin – where do we first read about garments? Gen. 3:7, 21 – fig leaves – NO! Animal skin – YES!

○ Isa. 61:10 – He has clothed me with the garments of salvation; He has covered me with the robe of righteousness.

Do you think Naomi is instructing Ruth to prepare herself for marriage? The law prohibited marriage of a Jew to a Moabite. “What the law didn’t allow, God’s grace allows!” The law shut Ruth out; grace took her in. God’s GRACE is seen so clearly in the book of Ruth:

- Ruth went to glean in a field to find favor (GRACE – unmerited favor) from the landlord
- Boaz extends GRACE to Ruth
- Ruth extends GRACE to Naomi

. . . leads to LOVE:

Love obligated Naomi to counsel Ruth

Love motivated Ruth to obey Naomi’s counsel

Love encouraged Boaz to take responsibility as a Goel

Ruth 3:4 - *Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.* Ruth is NOT propositioning Boaz. Naomi is telling Ruth to come to Boaz in a most humble and submissive way. Ruth has the right to claim Boaz as her Goel. Ruth should not come as a victim demanding rights, but as a humble servant. Are we waiting on the Lord’s timing in the various events of our lives? Are we submitting to God’s timeframe? Ruth placed herself in the position of a servant. Servants sat at the feet of their masters waiting for the next command. Ruth, in her submissive action, asking Boaz to assume the role of the Goel – to take authority over her according to the law of Levirate Marriage – where the surviving brother of the husband who died marries the widow and raises up an heir in the name of the deceased (Deut. 25:5-10).

Why did Ruth initiate the proposal?

- Boaz appears to be older. Boaz has already addressed Ruth as “my daughter”. Boaz is known to speak archaic Hebrew. Ruth does not speak archaic Hebrew. An older, gracious Boaz would not have initiated w/ a younger woman.
- Boaz was NOT the closest relative. He could not initiate the offer!

“Uncover his feet and lie down” - ??? In Israel, the hem of the garment depicted authority. By placing herself under the hem of Boaz’ garment, lying at his feet, Ruth is indicating her desire to come under Boaz’ authority as his wife.

Ruth 3:7 - *And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.* Boaz lies down after his HEART was “cheerful” or “merry”. The Hebrew word for “cheerful” means made well, happy, pleased, cheerful, joyful. Boaz is described as having a sense of well-being which is explained by the full harvest in contrast to previous years of famine. He was not drunk. He could not have guarded the grain if he was drunk. AND his subsequent actions and words during the night do not suggest that he was drunk – but that he was in command of his senses. Harvest time was a joyful time for the Jewish people (Isa. 9:3; Isa. 16:10)

Ruth 3:8-9 - *Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. ⁹ And he said, “Who are you?” So she answered, “I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.”* Ruth is essentially asking, “May I come under your authority?” This was a bold but not an inappropriate move on the part of Ruth.

Ruth 3:10-13 - *Then he said, “Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹ And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman. ¹² Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. ¹³ Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.”*

Boaz handled himself honorably. He reveals that there was someone who actually had prior claim over Ruth and her inheritance. This “someone” was a closer relative. However, if this closer relative should prove unwilling to take responsibility in the matter, then Boaz would marry Ruth.

Re: this closer relative - the Kinsman Redeemer – he had to be:

- He must be a kinsman – he must be a relative – he must be a man!
 - We see so clearly in God’s plan that the kinsman redeemer is Jesus. Re: Jesus, what does this mean?
 - Jesus is Jewish; He’s a kinsman (Dt. 18:15-18).
 - Jesus humbled Himself and came in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:7). He had to be man to bear man’s sin.
 - Jesus is sinless. He is God. He is eternally God. He must be God to defeat sin.
 - Gal. 4:4 – born of a woman (virgin born); born under the law.

- He came to fulfill all righteousness (Matt. 3:15). He fulfilled the law.
- Available (most likely not married). God's standard re: marriage: Gen. 2:24 – a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
 - Jesus is our Bridegroom – betrothed to His bride.
- Willing (Ruth 3:12-13; voluntary action)
 - Jesus – “I lay down my life. . . .” (John 10:15-18)

Ruth's latter “kindness” in v. 10: Ruth's former act of devotion was her decision to stay with and help Naomi. The latter act of devotion is her decision to marry Boaz and not go after younger men.

Why had this closer relative never before been mentioned? The answer can only be surmised, but it seems likely that Naomi had already decided that this closer relative was unlikely to take on any extra responsibilities.

Ruth 3:14-15 - *So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, “Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.”*¹⁵ *Also he said, “Bring the shawl that is on you and hold it.” And when she held it, he measured six ephahs of barley, and laid it on her. Then she went into the city.* Ruth demonstrates great strength, great faith, great peace. Ruth seems willing to marry even this other relative sight unseen, again subordinating her own happiness to her duty of raising up an heir to her deceased husband and to Naomi.

Boaz acted responsibly in two ways:

- He did not send her home in the middle of the night. He would protect her.
- He protected the rights of her nearer kinsman.

It appears that Boaz doesn't want this nearer kinsman to learn that Ruth is now demanding her right to marriage to a *Goel* before Boaz can tell him personally. And, Boaz didn't want others to talk.

Before Ruth leaves the threshing floor, Boaz gives her 6 ephahs of barley – to give to Naomi. You need to know that “ephahs” is in italics which means that there is conjecture re: its translation. Some commentators have suggested that the measurement was 6 grams. One gram equals .035 ozs. Why put such a minimal amt. in Ruth's shawl? John MacArthur has suggested that the measurement is 6 seahs. A seah is 42 quarts. Six seahs would equal 60-80 lbs.! Some have suggested that the measurement translates to six grains.

Ruth 3:16 – *When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “Is that you, my daughter?” Then she told her all that the man had done for her.*¹⁷ *And she said, “These six ephahs of barley he gave me; for he said to me, ‘Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’”*

¹⁸ *Then she said, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day."*

The barley that Boaz gave to Ruth for Naomi appears to communicate a message with which Naomi is familiar. Naomi speaks of finishing/concluding and rest. Ruth 3 begins with Naomi speaking of rest and ends with Naomi addressing rest!

For your consideration:

- Six days God worked and rested on the 7th day.
- Consider that the shawl/cloak noted in v. 15 might be a veil - ?? The Bridegroom only would have the right to ask his betrothed to lift her veil. From what we see, this has not been settled.

Matt. 11:28-29 - Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you REST. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find REST for your souls.

QUESTIONS

Are you more fully grasping God's plan of redemption? Can you verbalize it?

Are you seeing God's chronology re: His plan? Can you map out the chronology?

Why don't we see Naomi preparing herself for marriage with Boaz?

What are your thoughts regarding the threshing scene and where Ruth was found during the threshing?

If Naomi represents Israel, and Ruth represents the Gentiles, and Boaz represents Jesus, who does the closest/nearer relative represent???

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Review your notes

Attempt to decipher who the closest/nearer relative represents

Read the week 7 handout when you receive it