Bible Study 93

# September 6, 2023

 The Women of the Bible

We reached the mid-way point of the Book of Ruth. So here is the question: Naomi knowing that she is a kinswoman to Boaz sends Ruth out into his fields to glean. Is she playing ‘match-maker’ here in the best Jewish tradition?

Ruth comes across as a wonderful young woman but definitely a little naïve. Boaz does everything but tell his harvesters to throw the wheat at her. Does she not realize what is happening?

Israel and Judaism had a long history of arranged marriages. Even today in certain sects arranged marriage is not uncommon. But we have to remember that Ruth is a Moabite girl who is also a widow. The anomaly here is that the sons of Naomi were even allowed to marry Moabite women in the first place.

Boaz’s monologue after finding Ruth sleeping at his feet has a set purpose. First, he explains that there is another relative closer in kinship to Ruth and Naomi than he is. This may well be to fulfill a Jewish Law that demanded that the ‘Next of Kin’ marry the widow of a man in the family who has died young.

Boaz seems to want to do everything right.. Second, he gives the first opportunity to the ‘Next of Kin.’

In telling his workers: “Do not let it be known that this woman came to the threshing floor!” Boaz seeks to protect Ruth’s reputation. Still we are all left a nervous at the idea of Ruth sleeping at Boaz’ feet, since it invites everyone to put two and two together and get five.

Ruth is given the gift of six ephahs of barley. I guess an ephah is a pound.

Chapter 4.---Boaz goes up to the gate? Why the gate?

The gate of the town or city was the place where judgment was rendered each Monday morning. It had stone benches on either side where the elders of the tribe sat.

On leaving for Moab Naomi had sold her plot of land; now she has returned the Next of Kin must buy it back for her. Boaz puts the proposition to the kinsman at the Gate. He says yes that he will redeem it.

Then Boaz adds the DEAL\_BREAKER he must also redeem it for Ruth the widow, which means he need marry her. The kinsman cannot do it.”Lest I ruin my own inheritance.”

The custom of handing over his sandal---meant that the kinsman handed over the responsibility for Ruth and Naomi to another.

NOTE: Boaz calls on the TEN as his witnesses. “I have bought all that was Elimelech’s, Chilion’s and Mahlon from Naomi. Ruth I now acquire as my wife.”--------------the deed is done.

In doing this Boaz assures everyone that the line of succession from Elimelich and Mahlon remains unbroken. This was important for Jews.

4:11 is THE BLESSING. Read.

Ruth conceives and bares a son—he is called OBED. He is the father of Jesse and the grandfather of DAVID.

Read Chapter 3 & 4.