

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON FORTY-FIVE: RUTH 3:2

"And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold he winnoweth barley tonight in the threshing floor."

Naomi had chosen Boaz to be Ruth's bridegroom. She reminded Ruth that Boaz is a new kinsman and, so, is eligible to fulfill the Levirate Law (Dt. 25:5-6) and marry her, Mahlon's widow. The Kinsman-Redeemer must be willing to marry the widow. Naomi reminded Ruth of Boaz's care for her in allowing her to work alongside his female reapers. He must also be able to marry her. It was well known in Bethlehem that Boaz was a bachelor.

Naomi was familiar with the agricultural cycles in Bethlehem. That very night the winnowing of the harvested crops would take place. The winnowing was carried out at night on top of a hill to take advantage of the night breezes. The threshed grain was thrown into the air using a flail or wooden shovel called a "winnowing fan." This process separated the grain from the chaff. The heavier grain would fall back down to the threshing floor but the lighter chaff would be carried away by the wind. This process would be repeated until about midnight. Then the grain would be gathered in heaps to be sold or stored in silos. The chaff would be swept up and burned. Finally, the workers would be treated to a joyous feast.

Winnowing takes place at night after the harvesting is completed. Prophetically, we saw that Ruth, as a type of the Church, worked while it was still daylight. That is, the Church would continue to evangelize and bring new souls into the kingdom until Christ removes His Church from the earth at the Rapture. The time of harvesting will, then, be over.

It will be followed by the seven-year tribulation, a time of judgment upon the earth (Mt. 24:21). At the end of the seven-year tribulation, Jesus will return to earth (Rev. 19:11-16). He will destroy His enemies and set up His kingdom on earth, from which He will rule for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-4).

John the Baptist used this familiar activity of winnowing to explain what Jesus would do at His second coming. John said of Jesus, "Whose (winnowing) fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his (threshing) floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Mt. 3:12). Jesus is pictured using the winnowing fan to separate believers (wheat) from unbelievers (chaff). The believers will be gathered into His earthly kingdom. The unbelievers will be cast into hell.

When my husband died, I had to wonder why is he gone and I'm still here? After much prayer and Bible study I came to the conclusion that Charlie had completed the work God had for him to do but I had not. There is still more that God wants me to accomplish while it is daylight. This is true of every believer God has not yet taken home. We all have a purpose, a mission, a job God wants us to complete. What does He want you to do?

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ...." Philippians 2:15-16a