

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON THIRTY: RUTH 2:4

"And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee."

While Ruth is working in the fields, the landowner appears. Boaz "came from Bethlehem: Perhaps he had business to conduct at the gate to the city, which was the custom of the day. So he arrived in the fields after the reaping had already begun.

He greeted his workers with, "the Lord be with you." They responded, "The Lord bless thee." God was very much a part of the normal everyday life of the Jews. There was no such thing as "secular" activities and "religious" activities. God was at the heart of every activity.

Can you imagine your boss stopping by your desk in the morning with, "The Lord be with you" on his lips? If that were to ever happen, someone would complain to Human Resources that the boss had offended them or made them uncomfortable. That boss would get fired. American society has attempted to put God in a box labeled, "Religion: Do not open except on Sundays."

The Hebrew word translated "LORD" is "Jehovah." Jehovah is used 6,823 times in the Old Testament. It is the covenant name of God. The name by which He revealed Himself to the descendents of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is the name He gave Moses to use to convince the people that God had sent him to deliver them from bondage in Egypt (Exodus 3:14-15). The name "Jehovah" means "the self-existent One." It is associated with two primary attributes of God" holiness and righteousness. When we sin, we sin against the holiness and righteousness of God.

The name "Jehovah" was considered so sacred that the people would not pronounce it. They were afraid of accidentally breaking the third commandment against taking His name in vain (Exodus 20:7). The penalty for which was death by stoning (Lev. 24:16). They substituted the word "Adonai," which means "lord" (lower case 'L') or "master." Or, they might simply say the words "the name" in place of "Jehovah." To this day, the Jewish people will not speak God's covenant name even when Scripture is read in the synagogue.

Boaz greeted his workers with a lovely hope: the Lord be with you. If God is with us we have nothing to fear. If God is with us all our endeavors will prosper. If God is with us that should impact where we go, what we say, and what we do. My favorite of God's compound names is "Jehovah-Shammah," the Lord is present (Jehovah is there). It is found in the last verse of the book of Ezekiel (Ezek. 48:35). The last 9 chapters of Ezekiel describe his prophetic vision of the Millennial temple. That is where Jesus will rule and reign from for 1,000 years. Ezekiel concludes that Jerusalem will have a name change. It will be called "the Lord is there" (Jehovah-Shammah).

We don't have to wait for Jesus to return and take up residence in the Millennial temple to enjoy God's presence. If you have accepted the Lord as your Savior, you already have the indwelling Holy Spirit present with you 24/7. You can write across your heart, "Jehovah-Shammah" (the Lord is there).

The workers responded to Boaz, "the Lord bless thee." Once again, we can apply this to our own lives. Yes, we have grief and sorrow in our lives. But the blessings God has showered on us far outweigh the distress caused by our trials. To name a few: eternal life in the presence of God, access to God's throne 24/7, God's Word, and the indwelling presence of God the Holy Spirit.

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." II Corinthians 13:11, 14