

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON SIXTY-SEVEN: RUTH 4:9-11a

"And Boaz said, unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day. And all the people that went in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses."

At this point Boaz addressed his ten witnesses and all the people who had gathered around to watch the proceedings. "You are all my witnesses," Boaz said. "I have purchased all the property of Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion from Naomi." Boaz paid for it all. While the Bible doesn't specify, you can be sure he paid the full price. No bargains or deals. Boaz completely satisfied the letter of the Law.

Likewise, Jesus completely satisfied the requirement of a righteous God when He redeemed mankind. He paid the price in full with His blood (Rom. 3:25). Jesus' sacrifice was witnessed by His disciples, His mother, His followers, and His enemies. His triumphant resurrection was witnessed by more than 500 people (I Cor. 15:3-8).

"Further," Boaz told the witnesses, "I have purchased Mahlon's widow Ruth to be my wife. And together we will produce an heir for Elimelech's and Mahlon's family legacy." The Hebrew word translated "purchased" in this verse means "to procure; redeem" but the implication is "to own." Boaz was giving public notice that he had redeemed Ruth and she belonged to him.

The Bible tells us that our Redeemer purchased us and our bodies no longer belong to us - they belong to God (I Cor. 6:19-20). We are a "purchased possession" (Eph. 1:13-14). At the moment of salvation we were sealed with the Holy Spirit, Who took up residence in our regenerated (made alive) spirits. Our bodies became His temple (I Cor. 6:19).

The inheritance that Boaz sought to preserve was an earthly one, tied to the land that God gave to Israel. As a prophetic type of Israel, Naomi had her land restored and she found rest. This prophecy will be fulfilled when Jesus sets up His millennial kingdom on earth after the tribulation.

Although the Bible doesn't specifically state that Boaz and Ruth took Naomi into their home and cared for her for the rest of her life, it seems likely that this is what happened. After the baby was born Naomi became his nurse (4:16). It's only logical to assume that she lived in the same house as the baby.

Boaz began and ended his summary of the business conducted with "ye are witnesses this day." And all the people, including the elders, acknowledged that they had witnessed the redemption of the land and the widow.

Jesus, the Kinsman-Redeemer of Whom Boaz was a type, spoke similar words to a different group of witnesses. On the day He ascended back to heaven, He told His followers, "... and ye shall be witnesses unto me...." (Acts 1:8). These witnesses were promised the power of the Holy Spirit to aid them in their task. They were given a territory to reach: the whole world. They were given a strategy: begin where

you are, and increase your reach steadily outward until you have completed your task (i.e. evangelizing the whole world).

We are that group of witnesses. Our task is to begin where we are and tell others what Jesus has done for us. The loss we've suffered, and the difficult circumstances we have faced and overcome give our witness some extra weight. Jesus has brought us through hard times and He'll do the same for those we witness to. We just need to lead them to Jesus. Let them see Him through our eyes.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Hebrews 12:1