

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON THIRTY-SIX: RUTH 2:12

"The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."

Boaz prayed that God would reward Ruth for her care of Naomi. She had earned it. And he looked to the God of Israel to provide an equitable repayment for her devotion.

Ruth had been Naomi's faithful companion since she lost her husband in Moab. She remained with Naomi in Moab, accompanied her on the journey to Bethlehem, and settled with her in Bethlehem. Ruth ventured out into the fields to work for grain that she and Naomi would use for food. Her unselfish actions entitled Ruth to some compensation.

The Church, like Ruth, can look forward to being rewarded for good works. This will take place at the Judgment Seat of Christ after the Rapture (II Cor. 5:10). The Greek word translated "Judgment" is "Bema" in II Corinthians 5:10. The Bema Seat was a raised platform located in the square at Corinth where the Roman Magistrates sat to administer justice and to dispense rewards to athletes who distinguished themselves in the games.

I Corinthians 3:11-15 provides some details concerning the Bema Judgment. In this passage, Paul likens the believer to a building - God's building (v. 9). Under the building there must be a foundation. Jesus Christ is that foundation (v. 11). The Bema Judgment, then, is only for believers. Once saved, each believer builds his life (his "building") on the Jesus Foundation using good materials or bad - his choice. Good materials, represented by gold, silver, and precious stones, are thoughts, words, and deeds that glorify Christ. Obedience to His Word, service to the Lord, prayer and Bible study to name a few (v. 12). Bad materials, represented by wood, hay, and stubble are thoughts, words, and deeds that have no value in the kingdom of God. Selfish actions, cruel words, and impure thoughts are examples of bad materials (v. 12).

When the building materials that are accumulated over a lifetime are subjected to trial by fire (v. 13), the bad materials are burned up but the good materials remain (vv. 14-15). Judge Jesus will reward each believer based on the fireproof materials (v. 14). The believer who has no good materials in his life will still be in heaven with Jesus because he can't lose his salvation, but he can lose rewards. That is, when he was presented with opportunities to do good, he chose to do his own thing instead. Thus, he "lost" a reward he could have had if he had made a better choice.

Ruth had earned her reward by her loving care for her mother-in-law. But she was only eligible for this reward because she had come to trust the Lord God of Israel first. Ruth was building her life on the Jesus Foundation.

We do not earn the Jesus Foundation. We choose it. The opportunity to chose this foundation is presented to everyone free of charge. That's called "grace." Salvation is a free gift provided by the grace of God and obtained through faith in Jesus (Eph. 2:8-9). Works has no place here.

But, works does have a place in building our lives on the Jesus Foundation. What materials have you been storing up for yourself in heaven? (Mt. 6:19-20). Your building is still in progress, and will be until the day you die (or are Raptured). Choose the best materials you can find.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Matthew 6:19-