

he may well stand for the law. While it is just, it had no place for the alien Moabites Ruth (Deut. 33:3). The unnamed was willing to take the estate of Ruth, but not the person of Ruth. The law can do nothing for us as sinners and aliens of God. It cannot forgive, cleanse, nor bring into a new life. It can only condemn (Gal. 3:10, 11). So, what the law shut out is admitted by grace. Where Mt. Sinai thunders against us, Mt. Calvary woos us graciously (John 5:24). Thank God for His redemption.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

"Decision in Bethlehem"

Ruth 4:7-12

Introduction

1. The Book of Ruth teaches several important doctrines: faith (chap. 1), grace (chap. 2), blessing (chap. 3), and redemption (chap. 4). Each moves forward around the life of Ruth the Moabites, a Gentile.
2. That God has graciously led in the events of this book of 85 verses is patent. From the gloom of Moab, this chapter brings one into the joy of Bethlehem. Here is vital and sweet reward. It is a testimony to the fact that God gives the best to those who leave the choices with Him.
3. The previous section concluded with an impossible redemption. The unnamed nearer kinsman to Ruth refused to redeem his rights. He feared to mar his own inheritance. This may well be connected to his fear that what happened to Mahlon and Chilion would happen to him. Why? Because they had married aliens (cf. Deut. 7:1-6). On the other hand, he probably feared lest his own family suffer loss in the division of their properties. He may have been a selfish man. Whatever his reason, he is unnamed and unwilling to fulfill a responsibility.
4. This brings us to the commitment of Boaz to Ruth. This is how he effected it:

1. THE EXPLANATION GIVEN v. 7.

a. Historically

It is clear that this record was made sometime after the event, since it was necessary to give an explanation of an erstwhile custom. It was out of date now and presumably this action was superseded by a written deed.

b. Biblically

The manner described for confirming the contract is given in the Word (Deut. 25:5-10). It existed long

before the law of Moses (Gen. 38:8, 11). The Mosaic law, however, made it obligatory (Matt. 22:25) for younger brothers or the nearest of kin (Ruth 4:4). The law of levirate was associated with the perpetuating of property in the tribal name and family (Num. 33:54; 36:9). If the relative refused to perform his duty, the widow brought her claim before the elders. There at the gate she loosed her kinsman's shoe and spit before him (not in his face, cf. Deut. 7:24; 9:25; 12:14). Apparently the shoe was kept by an elder as evidence of the transaction.

2. THE TRANSACTION ACCOMPLISHED vv. 8-10.

a. Stated v. 8

It is obvious that v. 7 is an interlude to explain the manner in which the redemption of the land and Ruth had to be made. Boaz is told to take it according to the custom of the day. So, the shoe was unlatched. What he had promised to do, he had now done (3:13).

b. Witnessed v. 9

Three times it is indicated that the people are witnesses to the event (vv. 9, 10, 11). Boaz had gathered the witnesses (v. 2). He had moved the transaction expeditiously. Before the nearer kinsman could change his mind, everything was a fait accompli. The efficiency and promptness with which Boaz moved demonstrates his careful forethought and planning of the whole event. Such virtuous manner of business would benefit the work of Christ too, if it were experienced!

c. Detailed v. 10

Lest there be any question, Boaz outlines his commitment. He gives special consideration to Ruth as his wife and his intent to raise up seed for her family. The "gate of his place" is a reference to Bethlehem.

3. THE EXPECTATION DECLARED vv. 11, 12.

Like well-wishers at a wedding, the townspeople and witnesses of the event give audible expression. They support Boaz' unselfishness and honorable actions.

a. For Ruth v. 11

The desire for Ruth is that she might be like Rachel and Leah. The verb "build" is to be understood in the sense of bearing children (Gen. 16:2; 30:3). Hence, fruitfulness is their interest.

b. For Boaz v. 11

To "do worthily" means to "get power." While this may mean to get property or wealth, it hardly seems possible since Boaz was already wealthy. It may mean that he should beget sons and daughters and train them worthily. The phrase "be famous" literally means to "call out a name." This peculiar phrase is only found here in the Old Testament. It also probably is associated with the idea of having a well-established name through marriage with Ruth which would result in worthy sons who in turn would make the name of Boaz renowned.

c. For marriage v. 12

Perez is included in the ancestry of Boaz (Gen. 38; Ruth 4:18). As he had a numerous posterity, so it is hoped that Boaz and Ruth would have the same. That Ruth is referred to as a "young woman" suggests the age differential between Ruth and Boaz.

Conclusion There you have it. Boaz has done it. The affair has been witnessed. The contract is sealed. What a glorious conclusion to the faithful waiting upon God. Ruth did "sit still" (3:18) and she received her reward. It came through Boaz who pictures our blessed Lord as the Redeemer of our souls in at least three undisputed ways: 1. He had the right to redeem. Our Lord did also because of who He is (Matt. 20:28). He is the single Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). 2. He had the power to redeem. So with our Lord. His sacrifice satisfied our holy God (Rom. 3:25). 3. He was willing to redeem. Had Boaz refused, redemption would have failed. Our Lord was obedient even unto death at the cross (Phil. 2:5-11). As Ruth was brought into the wealth and home of Boaz, so we have been made to share in our Lord's life, home, wealth, and eternal joys. In Christ, we boast more blessings than we lost in Adam. The unnamed kinsman--who is he? We do not know. Typically, however,