

Ruth-Chapter 4-Handout #3

We now look at the only account in the bible of the exercise of the Kinsman-redeemer provision. Boaz aggressively and enthusiastically moves to fulfill his promise to Ruth by initiating this provision with the next of kin to Elimilech.

v.1- Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there. The gate of a city is where important things occurred: judgements, covenants, counsel, etc . Boaz hails the kinsman as he is coming by and asks him to sit. Notice that the kinsman is not named.

v.2-Then he got ten men, official quorum in Jewish tradition to be witnesses. The Jewish rule of “minyan” requiring a minimum of 10 men for congregational prayer and other important religious ceremonies.

v.3-6-Boaz actually challenges the kinsman, holding up this provision as an obligation to their brother Elimelech. And indeed, the kinsman had an obligation, if he was able to be redeemer. But Boaz let him know he could not redeem the land without taking Ruth as a wife. With that added provision, the kinsman was not willing to meet his obligation. Kinsmans said I cannot redeem it for myself lest I mar (corrupt) my own inheritance. I pass on my obligation to you; you redeem it. Looking at the language, the kinsman was quite possibly concerned with marrying a Moabite woman, having children with her, thus, corrupting his inheritance. Maybe a bit of racism.

v.7,8- Kinsman removes his shoe to indicate he was not going through with his obligation. (Deut.25:7-10) (The house of him that has his shoe loosed). It is interesting to note that this kinsman is never named, probably because it was shameful for him not to fulfill his obligation is the nearest kinsman, go-el)

v.9-10-Boaz says to the people “you are the witnesses” now he was legally free to exercise the kinsman-redeemer provision as next in line. All this done “that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren” He names Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chillion, Naomi and Ruth and all that they have, he is redeeming or purchasing.

v.11-12- The people confirmed that they were witnesses, and then they blessed Boaz by blessing the woman that was coming into his house. (Be fruitful like Rachel and Leah; be like Tamar- Gen 38)

v.13-17- Boaz marries Ruth and God causes her to conceive a son, whom the women neighbors gave the name Obed (probably shortened version of Obadiah) Obed means servant. Obadiah means servant of God. He was a blessing to Naomi who laid it in her bosom and became nurse unto him. He was father of Jesse, who was father of David-King of Israel.

Ruth the virtuous woman (v.3:11) term used in Proverbs (31:10)

God is faithful provider, showing hesed (chesed) to those who trust him.