



The Threshing Floor: The Wheat

Leviticus 2: 1-3 “When anyone presents a grain offering to the Lord, the offering shall be of choice flour; the worshiper shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it 2 and bring it to Aaron’s sons the priests. After taking from it a handful of the choice flour and oil, with all its frankincense, the priest shall turn this token portion into smoke on the altar, an offering by fire of pleasing odor to the Lord. 3 And what is left of the grain offering shall be for Aaron and his sons, a most holy part of the offerings by fire to the Lord.”

The Bible is full of references to farming. Ruth encapsulates this with the story about a farmer and a gleaner. Yet, it was so much more. However, before I get too deep, let’s keep it at the farm.

Matthew 3:12 “His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The Threshing floor is a farmer’s tool. A place where they separate grain, animals, and other farm products. I call it a tool because it’s meant to keep the good product from getting dirty or spoiled. For instance, wheat is separated from the Chaff or husk of the kernel. I have seen images of this place. It could be in or outside. The point is that they throw up the grain and the wheat kernels fall down. The chaff is carried away in the wind. Some animals are separated.

Literally, they could be dissected in this place. The Biblical point of the threshing floor is to separate the good from the bad.

The wheat is represented as the good. This product is used to give a grain offering to the Lord. Of-course the wheat feeds the people. Yet, in this study, we will be concentrating on the gift offering to the Lord. This is to say the wheat is separated twice. The first is to use the threshing floor. To take away the wheat stalk (hay) and husk coverings. The second is to give some to the Lord as a burnt offering and the rest to the priest as payment for the Lord's work they do. The process begins at the threshing floor.

Where to begin? Ruth and Naomi are hungry. They have no husbands or means to survive. They decide to head back to the land of Naomi's kindred. Why? The Hebrew people have been instructed by God to leave a certain portion of the wheat for the poor. These poor people can glean the edges of the field. Naomi knows where the food and family are. Ruth is sent out by Naomi to do just that. In the process, a kinsman of Naomi falls in love with Ruth. Naomi then asks Ruth to pledge herself to this man at the threshing floor.

Why tell this story in regards to wheat? I feel that the story of Ruth is all about separation. She is a Moabite who separates herself from her people to dedicate herself to Naomi. Naomi in-turn is separated from her kinsmen. She returns to the land of her father to be reunited. The farmer named Boaz is called a kinsman redeemer. This whole story is of redemption and separation all at the same time. Yet, in the background is an offering to the Lord through the threshing floor.

Deuteronomy 16:13 *“You shall keep the Festival of Booths for seven days, when you have gathered in the produce from your threshing floor and your winepress.”*

Matthew 26:28 *“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”*

It’s all about the Winepress and wheat. Wheat is used in the making of wine, bread, and offerings. The analogy Jesus uses is all too real when you think of the grain offering to the Lord. It can’t be understated what Ruth and Boaz represent. Both of them sacrifice in the name of Israel and love. The words compassion and loyalty play a big part. The grain offering is meant to honor God with our best. To be given as God would like. He called the burnt offering a sweet-smelling savory fragrance. What? Ruth and Boaz give of themselves. Yet, they honor the law and they honor the traditional way things are done. Offering themselves at the threshing floor.

Jesus says he is the bread of life. That his blood will pour out like wine. That is exactly why Passover and communion is all about breaking bread and drinking wine. Jesus told them to withhold their offering until restitution can be made, then bring the offering. A separation must be made. We can be wheat but first we must be separated from our sin. Ruth had to separate herself from Moab. Boaz had to give up Ruth to another kinsman. Yet, these two became the line of Jesus.

Hebrews 12:1 *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”*

Wind and direction. The Bible says we could live as if we are tossed around by the wind. Who knows where the wind will blow you. However, if we come to the alter or threshing floor, we can be redeemed. Separated from our sins and given over to the Lord. We do begin as whole wheat gain. Surrounded and attached to the worldly ways. Coming to God is like coming to the

threshing floor. Only Jesus can separate us from our sins. The analogy is all over the place. New wine in new wineskins. Throw off the old self. I could go on and on. What direction do you want in life? To be chaff or wheat?

The threshing floor study is about making choices. Who do you want to be: confident, directed, assured and useful to the Lord? Or, is it about living in the moment. What happens, happens. Your hope is in only what you know and you plan. What about life's blustery days? Read Proverbs 3:5-6 "*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*" It's time you came to the threshing floor. A place where God can toss you up in the air. Yet, you will come down on the threshing floor. A place where redemption happens. Where your usefulness begins.

I will end with a story. I know a lady who could direct her own path better than most. A real go-getter so to speak. I wonder if I'd met anyone more talented than this lady. Yet, church changed her. It took away her desire to rule the world around her. But, the best parts of herself remained. God has used her mightily as a musician, writer, speaker, and inventor. Everything she is has been poured out to the Lord. Her life is amazing. Far more amazing than before. Yet, first, she had to come to the threshing floor to become her wheat. She had to discard the chaff. This woman is now new wine in a new wineskin. Pouring herself out to the world in the name of the Lord. It all began at the threshing floor.