

COMING TO PERFECTION IN MESSIAH

In Col. 1:28 Paul states that “*Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man **perfect** in Messiah Yahshua.*” In Phl. 3:15 Paul says “*Let us therefore, as many as be **perfect**, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded God shall reveal even this unto you.*” 1 Cr. 2:6 says “*Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are **perfect** ; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought*”. Hebrews 5:14 reports that “*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of **full age**, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*”.

The Greek word translated “perfect” or “full age” in the above passages (KJV) is *telios* and is used 19 times in the New Covenant writings. Looking at the various usage of the word in the scriptures, we could say that it generally applies to man as related to the will of GOD and is defined as man brought to the end or finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness; perfect; full grown; adult; full age; or mature. There are those that will say that the above passages are referring to believers that have been saved by the blood of the Lamb; those that have been washed by His blood. While this is undoubtedly true, the Pauline Epistles and other New Covenant writings are overflowing with encouragement to God’s people (the redeemed) to grow in Messiah, to run the race with diligence, to fight the good fight, and to come to maturity (*telios*). It is apparent that there is more in Messiah than simply appropriating His blood in salvation. Salvation is the beginning of a journey into YHWH. It is obvious that within this journey there is a place that Messiah can bring us to spiritually, and upon arrival, we can be referred to by Him as being “*telios*” or “perfect”.

I believe that we have been given several pictures in scripture of this walk into maturity. Several of these are centered in the period of time between the feast days of Passover and Pentecost. This period of time is called by the Jews “counting the omer” and consists of 50 days passing after the feast of firstfruits as commanded in Leviticus 23:15-16. Pentecost is the only feast day that is not specifically commanded by date, such as the “*14th day of the first month*” commanded for the festival of Passover. It would appear that this variance is important and should indicate to us that this period of time is special in YHWH and is given for a reason. This period of time encompasses the time between the beginning of the barley harvest and the time of the wheat harvest in Israel. This fact alone should be an important clue to us in discerning the spiritual significance of this period, since we have come to understand that the barley harvest represents YHWH’s firstfruit harvest and is typical of His work in the world today. This firstfruit harvest is also known as the Israel of God and is God’s covenant people, the house of Judah and the house of Israel. We also know that the Wheat harvest is typical of those that will come to YHWH during the millennium reign of Messiah. A third harvest will follow these, typical of the fall grape harvest in Israel and will represent YHWH putting all things under the feet of Messiah.

We know from scripture that most recently, this period of time (Passover to Pentecost) was utilized by YHWH to bring about the sacrifice of our Passover Lamb, His resurrection and 50 days later, His indwelling of the redeemed in the upper room. The progression of the believer typified by this journey into YHWH from the blood of the Passover Lamb to the indwelling of the Spirit at Pentecost should be obvious. The book of Exodus provides us with another obvious example of this journey. This journey was to prefigure the later sacrifice and resurrection of the Messiah as described above, but both periods were given to prefigure the plan for YHWH's dealings with His chosen people to be harvested as the barley harvest in this age.

The children of Israel were brought out of bondage in Egypt through the blood of the Passover Lamb and 50 days later arrived at the mountain of God to be cleansed by Moses through sprinkling with the blood and water of the covenant (Exodus 24:6-8, Hebrews 9:18-22). Our scriptural remembrances of the trials and testing of the children of Israel in the wilderness are largely framed within this 50 day period. They were baptized into Moses in the Red Sea (1 Cor.10) as the armies of Egypt were destroyed by YHWH, the bitter waters were made sweet, the enemies that attacked them were defeated, Moses brought water from the rock and food was supernaturally provided by the God of Israel. The purpose of these testings was to teach the people of God that YHWH was trustworthy and that they could rest (Sabbath) in Him. This journey and the transition of the people was necessary before YHWH would make a covenant with them on His mountain. Israel began the journey to God's mountain as an unorganized, unruly and untrusting mob. It was His intention that they would leave the mountain and make the short journey to the Kingdom as one unified and organized people in complete Sabbath with Him and looking neither to the left or to the right (Joshua, Chapter 1). We know that Israel was not faithful and did not trust Him as it departed the mountain. As a result, Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years until all that was untrusting had perished. 1 Cor. 10 tells us that this happened to them at that time in order to serve as an example and warning to us. We are given the same warning in Hebrews chapter 6.

This journey to His mountain and our transition into a trusting people in Sabbath with Him is also necessary for us to come into maturity and enter into that final covenant with YHWH, prior to entering the Kingdom. To come out of Egypt covered in the blood of the Passover Lamb, to walk in the wilderness with Him and to be washed with the blood and water of the covenant and clothed with His glory on His mountain is the essence of our journey and the goal and destination in this age. The book of Ruth gives us additional insight into this journey and our destination. The last verse in chapter 2 sets the theme of the book and is our key into understanding what we should learn from these verses. This verse reports that Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz from the Barley harvest to the Wheat harvest. As stated previously, this is the time from Passover to Pentecost and immediately, we can understand that this book has to do with our journey into YHWH. As Kinsman redeemer, we know that Boaz in the story is typical of Messiah and from the genealogies given, is also from a special Kingly line within the house of Judah. Ruth is a widowed Gentile daughter-in-law of Naomi, who has pledged and bound herself to her mother-in-law and the God of Israel. When Naomi and Ruth return to the land, Naomi instructs Ruth to glean grain from the fields as the Barley harvest begins. She gleans in

the fields of Boaz and is instructed by him to glean in no other fields but his. He also speaks to his servants to insure that Ruth will glean what he wishes her to have. This is a beautiful picture of the Lord of the Harvest providing what He wishes to His people. Most looking at these verses begin to speak of evangelism and harvest, but it is clear that this story is about spiritual growth and our walk from Passover to Pentecost gleaned only what the Lord of the Harvest provides.

When the Wheat harvest (Pentecost) arrives, Naomi gives special instructions to Ruth. She is to wash herself, anoint herself with oil and to put on clean clothing. She is to then go to the threshing floor of Boaz, lie down and watch where Boaz himself would lie down. She is to then go to him, uncover his feet and lay there at his feet. When he notices her, she is to do whatever he says. These instructions are a paraphrase of what happened to God's people at the mountain at Pentecost. They washed themselves, anointed themselves, put on clean clothing and Moses cleansed them with the blood and water of the covenant. They lay down at His feet upon His threshing floor (the mountain of God) and declared that whatever He said they would do.

Ruth was faithful to carry out the instructions of Naomi and when Boaz awoke and discovered her, he praised her for what she had done and for being faithful to glean only from his field. He makes a covenant with her by promising to redeem her, and indeed, the next day goes to the gates of the city and does so. However, on the threshing floor, Boaz says and does an extraordinary thing. He says that it is not right for Ruth to return to her mother-in-law empty handed. The Lord of the harvest, Boaz, therefore gives her 6 measures of barley from his harvest. The symbolism here is obvious. Six is the number of man and barley represents the first fruit harvest of mankind. Is YHWH saying here that those that make the journey to His threshing floor will be rewarded with the barley harvest? If so, then it is important that we understand the typology of Ruth and Naomi. Who are they in this age?

The answer is obvious. In this age there is two covenant peoples, the house of Judah and the house of Israel (Hebrews 8:8-13). When Boaz made a covenant with Ruth, he was also making a covenant with Naomi (Ruth 4:14). He would redeem their land and their lives and they would become his household. His union with Ruth produces Obed whom is nurtured by both women and ultimately becomes the father of Jesse, the father of David. The kingly line of Israel continues.

Returning to our question as to the identity of Ruth and Naomi in this age, it would appear that Naomi is the house of Judah (returning to the land?) and Ruth is a faithful remnant of the house of Israel. This remnant has made the journey down the ancient path and found themselves at the threshing floor of the Lord of the Harvest. They have been rewarded with 6 measures of barley, therefore all Israel will crossover into the Kingdom. The child produced by the union of the Lord of the harvest and the faithful remnant in this age is the Israel of God; *"She gave birth to a son, a male child, the one who will rule all the nations with a staff of iron"* (Revelations 12:5).

