

## NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

### LESSON SIXTY-FOUR: RUTH 4:5

**"Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabite, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance."**

When the nearer kinsman indicated that he would redeem Elimelech's property for the widow Naomi, Boaz played his ace card: Ruth. "Naomi isn't the only owner of the property," Boaz informed the nearer relative. "There's also Ruth, the widow of Mahlon."

Now, you would think that the nearer kinsman would be aware of the existence of Ruth. The whole town was in an uproar when Naomi returned (Ruth 1:19). Surely, her Moabite daughter-in-law was discussed at length. Ruth's reputation preceded her when she asked for permission to glean in Boaz's fields (Ruth 2:6). Boaz had heard of her kindness to Naomi before he met her (Ruth 2:11). How did the nearer kinsman not hear the rumors?

Elimelech died in Moab where his family had fled to escape the famine. Upon his death his eldest son, Mahlon, inherited the property in Bethlehem. Property that Mahlon never saw because he, too, died in Moab. Mahlon had no heir to inherit the land and name. In addition, Elimelech's other son, Chilion, had also died in Moab without an heir. Naomi and Ruth inherited the land from their husbands, but they needed an heir to preserve the family name and legacy. Only Ruth was physically capable of producing that heir.

Boaz was careful to refer to Ruth as "the Moabite." Ruth's nationality would deter most Hebrew suitors due to the prohibition in the Law that forbade Moabites from joining the "assembly" (Dt. 23:3). The "assembly" was the technical term for Jewish adult males who participated in the religious, social, and military activities as God's covenant people. Since Ruth was a female she would be permitted to become part of Israel's covenant community upon marriage to a Jewish man. Nevertheless, her nationality would be off-putting to most Hebrew men.

Boaz reminded the nearer kinsman that he would have to redeem Ruth, the widow of child-bearing age, as well as redeeming her dead husband's property. And their first son would become Mahlon's heir and ensure Mahlon's name and heritage would continue. This was God's way of preserving property within the tribal boundaries and perpetuating family lines.

Boaz rested his case. He had been completely honest with the nearer kinsman in the presentation of the facts regarding the redemption of Elimelech's family land and Mahlon's widow. In spite of his desire to redeem Ruth by making her his wife, Boaz acted honorably in following the Mosaic Law and advising the nearer kinsman that he had first rights to act as Kinsman-Redeemer. Boaz could only hope that the addition of Ruth in this business would cause the nearer kinsman to rethink his position. Boaz's future depended on his kinsman's decision.

There are times when we cannot move forward with our lives until someone else acts. We are forced to wait. The Lord expects us to do so with patience. Patience means "to endure or persevere" through trials, tribulation, suffering, and problems of all varieties.

James tells us that we get patience by enduring through trials (James 1:2-4). Paul agrees (see Romans 5:3-4). It seems, then that we get patience by practicing patience during difficult times. Patience plus trials equals more patience.

The Greek word "hypomone," which is translated "patience" in both the James and Romans reference above carries with it the idea of "cheerful or hopeful." In other words, we not only have to endure our trials but God wants us to do so cheerfully. James even says that: "Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2). It is through trials that your faith is built up. Thus, we do not suffer to no purpose. Trials, suffering, etc. produces stronger Christians.

*"And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience;  
And patience, experience; and experience, hope." Romans 5:3-4*