

## NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

### LESSON SIXTY-FIVE: RUTH 4:6

**"And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it."**

The introduction of Ruth into the negotiations changed everything for the nearer kinsman. When he agreed to redeem the land for Elimelech's widow Naomi there was no heir to stand in the way of him inheriting the land himself. Naomi's age precluded the possibility of another heir. Mahlon's widow, Ruth, was a different story.

There was a high probability that Ruth would be able to produce a son who would become the heir of her first husband, Mahlon. The money that the nearer kinsman would spend on redeeming the land would, in effect, be a charitable contribution to the family. He personally would get no benefit from it.

But, why does he say that marriage to Ruth could mar his own estate? It is likely that he was already married. Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, recorded in his book, Antiquities of the Jews, that the nearer kinsman already had a wife and children. Nevertheless, he could have married Ruth since polygamy was not contrary to the Mosaic Law or the morals of society. There are examples in Scripture of polygamy even among the common people. The prophet Samuel's mother, Hannah, shared her husband with another wife, Peninnah (I Samuel 1:1-2). Generally, the financial burden of a second wife and additional children made polygamy unfeasible for most men. An exception would be the case of rural areas where multiple wives and children would be beneficial for working the land and tending the animals.

How does making Ruth his second wife affect the nearer kinsman's estate? Any children that he had with Ruth would most likely be in line to inherit from him along with the children of his first wife. Ruth's eldest son would inherit Mahlon's land and family legacy. He would also inherit part of the nearer kinsman's estate, which he would combine with the Elimelech-Mahlon holdings. Thus, the nearer kinsman's estate would be reduced while Elimelech's family's estate would increase. The Bible does not confirm that this is how the kinsman's estate could be marred by his redeeming Ruth but it seems to be a reasonable guess. Whatever the reason, the nearer kinsman withdrew his claim on the property. Boaz was free to redeem Ruth.

Prophetically, the identity of the nearer kinsman has been in dispute: some Bible scholars take the position that he represents humanity as a whole and other scholars maintain that he represents the Law. We've already discussed the first position in a previous lesson.

As a type of the Law, the nearer kinsman was unable to redeem Ruth. He, therefore, yielded his position to Boaz, a type of Christ. The writer of Hebrews states, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). God required human blood to redeem the human race. Perfect human blood. The animals that were sacrificed daily under the Law only covered sin temporarily. Their blood did not take away sin (Heb. 10:11). Jesus' perfect blood, however, satisfied the demands of a righteous God. He accomplished the Plan of Redemption through His one perfect sacrifice

(Heb. 10:12). His Bride, the Church (Ruth), was redeemed, her sins were forgiven (Eph. 1:7), and she was made perfect by His sacrifice (Heb. 10:14).

No matter what happens to us in this lifetime our future is assured (John 3:16). The difficulties we face today will be a dim memory in the light of the glorious future we are promised in Christ (John 14:2-3). We simply have to hang in there.

*"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Psalm 23:6*