

## NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

### LESSON SEVENTY: RUTH 4:12

**"And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman."**

The last part of the blessing pronounced on Boaz and Ruth by the people of Bethlehem was for the future offspring of the happy couple. Similar to the blessing on Ruth to be fruitful, the blessing on their children looked forward to many generations. The blessing on Ruth came from a national perspective: Rachel and Leah were the matriarchs of the nation of Israel. The blessing on the children was tribal. The people of Bethlehem were themselves descendants of Judah's son Pharez. Boaz was in the seventh generation from Pharez. The third part of the peoples' blessing looked forward to many more generations of children after Boaz.

In Tamar we have the story of another widow (that's four if you are keeping track). In addition, Tamar invoked the Levirate Law. She fits into the Book of Ruth perfectly. Take a look at Genesis 38.

Tamar was a Canaanite girl who was chosen by Judah to marry his eldest son, Er. Er was so wicked that God Himself killed him (v. 7). What Er did to incur the Lord's wrath is not stated. Tamar was left a childless widow. Per the Levirate Law, she wed Er's brother Onan (v. 8). But, Onan was also wicked. He rebelled against God's Law that required him to raise up a son to be the heir of his deceased brother. He refused to do his duty (v. 9). So God killed him, too (v. 10). Tamar is once again a childless widow. Per the Levirate Law, it was time to marry son number 3, Shelah. But Judah intervened. "Shelah's too young to get married," Judah told Tamar. "Go back and live with your father until Shelah is older" (v. 11).

The Bible doesn't tell us how long she waited but after a while Tamar noticed Shelah was old enough to get married but Judah hadn't sent for her. So she tricked Judah into sleeping with her. She disguised herself as a harlot and covered her face so that he could not recognize her (v. 15). She took several items from him as collateral for the payment he owed her (v. 18). Then her alter ego, the harlot, disappeared so that he could not redeem his items (vv. 21-23).

Three months later Judah finds out Tamar is pregnant so that he plans to have her publically executed by fire (v.24). Tamar confronts him with the proof of his paternity (v. 25) and he acknowledges he was wrong to thwart the Levirate Law and withhold his son from her (v. 26). Their story concludes with the birth of twins, Pharez and Zarah (vv. 27-30).

Tamar, like Ruth, is named in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Mt. 1:3, 5). Matthew only records the names of three women besides Mary, Jesus' mother: Tamar, Rahab (Boaz's mother), and Ruth. Note that the only other woman mentioned is Bathsheba, who is referred to as "her that had been the wife of Urias" (another widow!) but her name is not given (Mt. 1:6).

The loss of a husband is devastating. I know from experience. But the world does not stop turning. It just feels like it. The widow must go on. The alternative is a slap in the face of God Who preserved her life and granted her additional days to be used for His glory.

Today's widow is not forced to remarry or live in poverty. We have resources and opportunities available to move us (perhaps kicking and screaming) into a viable future. It would be foolish and ungrateful to waste the time on earth God has extended to us. We are expected to redeem the time (Eph. 5:16). Use it wisely. And not just widows but all of us regardless of circumstances. Someone once said, "Every day is a personal gift from God."

*"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:24*