

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON FORTY-FOUR: RUTH 3:1

"Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?"

Naomi asked Ruth, "Shall I seek a marriage for you?" Naomi loved Ruth like a daughter. And, she was concerned about Ruth's future. In their culture, women were limited in what they could do to earn a living. Marriage meant security for the female.

For several months Ruth had been gleaning in the fields belonging to Boaz. His special care and attention to Ruth would not have escaped Naomi's notice. In fact, it was probably the talk of the town since he was a wealthy bachelor and she was looked upon favorably because of her devotion to Naomi. Naomi probably decided to play matchmaker.

Ruth was the widow of Boaz's kinsman. As such, she had the right under the Mosaic Law to request that Boaz fulfill his duty to her husband and marry her (Dt. 25:5-6). In fact, it was her duty to her deceased husband to marry his near kinsman and conceive an heir.

The purpose of the Levirate Law (Dt. 25:5-6) was two-fold. It provided for the childless widow by giving her the protection of another marriage. But, it also ensured the deceased husband's land did not pass out of the hands of his family and tribe.

Each Hebrew family was assigned a plot of land within the boundaries of the land allotted to his tribe. God commanded that the land remain with that family (Lev. 25:23). Even if the landowner became poor and had to sell the land to obtain money, ownership of the land would return to him in the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:25-28). Thus, in effect, the purchaser was actually purchasing the use of the land for a given number of years (from the date of purchase to the year of Jubilee). Payment was, therefore, prorated to correspond to years of usage.

When the landowner died without an heir, his widow was obligated to marry his brother if he had an unmarried brother. If not, she must marry a near male relation. Their son would be the heir of the deceased and inherit his land. This kept the land within the family and tribe originally assigned. If the widow were to marry someone outside her deceased husband's tribe (the "stranger" of Dt. 25:5) the land would pass out of the hands of the assigned family and tribe. This was not permitted under the Mosaic Law.

Boaz may very well have been waiting for Ruth to approach him. Since there was another near kinsman Ruth could have chosen him to be her Kinsman-Redeemer (assuming he was willing and able to do so). Ruth may have been shy and reluctant to ask Boaz to marry her. Or, she may not have been familiar enough with the Law of Moses to realize the first move was up to her. Also, considering her devotion to Naomi, Ruth may have feared her marriage would mean Naomi would be left alone.

So, Naomi took matters into her own hands and offered to help Ruth arrange a second marriage. It was customary for Hebrew parents to find a spouse for their children and Naomi looked upon Ruth as her daughter.

God included provisions in His laws to cover a change of circumstances in a person's life. He is the same God today that He was 3,000+ years ago (Heb. 13:8). He has a plan for your life, too, in your changed circumstances. Do you already know what God wants you to do with your unique talents and gifts? If not, take some time to seek His will. Pray, search the Scriptures, talk to Christian friends. You will find your answer.

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4:18