

Ruth 4:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Full disclosure: **'Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance'**. Boaz reveals the complete obligation—redeeming property requires marrying Ruth to produce heir who will inherit the land, perpetuating Elimelech/Mahlon's name. This changes the calculation entirely—the redeemer wouldn't permanently add to his estate but would work land temporarily for another man's heir. The phrase 'Ruth the Moabitess' emphasizes her foreign origin, potentially making marriage additionally unappealing to the kinsman. Boaz's full disclosure demonstrates integrity—he could have concealed this requirement initially but instead ensured informed decision.

Historical Context

Levirate marriage law (Deuteronomy 25:5-10) required deceased man's brother to marry the widow, with first son legally considered the dead man's heir, inheriting his property and perpetuating his name. This obligation combined with property redemption meant the kinsman would purchase land, marry Ruth, father children, but the firstborn son would legally be Mahlon's heir, inheriting the redeemed property. The kinsman would expend resources (purchasing land, maintaining

household) without permanent benefit to his estate—the land would eventually go to Ruth's son as Mahlon's legal heir. This explains his subsequent refusal.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does Boaz's full disclosure teach about Christian honesty in presenting complete facts, even when it might disadvantage us?
2. How does the levirate marriage law illustrate God's concern for preserving family identity and caring for widows?

Interlinear Text

תִּשְׁמַע	וְ	אָמַר	בְּ עַז	בַּיּוֹם	קָנַתִּי	הַשְׁלֵךְ	מִי	נִשְׁמָת
Then said	Boaz	What day	thou buyest	the field	of the hand	of Naomi		
H559	H1162	H3117	H7069	H7704	H3027	H5281		
וְ	מִאֵת	רִוְתִּה	הַמּוֹאָבִי	אֲשֶׁת	הַמֵּת	קָנַתִּי		
H854	it also of Ruth		the Moabitess	the wife	of the dead	thou buyest		
	H7327		H4125	H802	H4191	H7069		
לְפַקֵּם	שְׁמָם	הַמֵּת	עַל	תִּתְּחַלֵּתְךָ				
to raise up	the name	of the dead	upon his inheritance					
H6965	H8034	H4191	H5921	H5159				

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 22:24 (Resurrection): Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

Genesis 38:8 (Resurrection): And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.

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