

December 1, 2024

“Jesus’ Ancestry”
Lesson 1

Ruth 4:9-17, Luke 3:23, 31-32

Intro

The events recorded in Ruth took place during the time of the judges (1389-1050 BC). This time period was marked by the people’s recurring failure to keep their covenant with the Lord. In contrast, the book of Ruth tells the story of a handful of people living in faithful obedience to God.

The book of Ruth ends in a genealogy of David (4:18-22). Genealogies are found in literature of the Near East, usually recounting a ruler’s lineage. Recounting the high quality of a ruler’s lineage was meant to legitimize the ruler’s reign. This function of genealogy hints at one reason the book of Ruth was written: to show God’s hand and intent at work in the lives of David’s ancestors. Tracing Jesus’ lineage to David (seen in the second part of today’s lesson) answered an important question: What right had Jesus to claim to be the king of Israel who fulfilled God’s promise to David?

Read Ruth 4:9-17

1. vs. 9: Boaz here is going to buy Naomi’s property

Naomi has returned to Israel after her husband and sons have died in Moab

These are the three names mentioned at the end of the verse

Her daughter-in-law Ruth, a Moabitess, has come with her and earned praise for her work

Boaz is of the same tribe as Naomi, and buying her land is more like a lease

The land returns to the sellers when then can afford to redeem it

This is why Boaz is referred to as a “kinsman-redeemer”

Buying the land also includes the intent to marry Ruth as well

The witnesses, the elders and the people, serve as an oral form of a notary public

This shows that all is legal and above board, with witnesses verifying it

2. vs. 10: A levirate marriage is one where a relative marries a dead man’s widow

This is designed to provide heirs to the dead man’s legacy, to inherit his land

This type of marriage is provided for Israelites

However, Ruth is a Moabitess, not an Israelite

But Boaz, who is related to her dead husband, acts to guarantee his legacy

“So that his name will not disappear from among his family or...his hometown”

The first child born to Boaz and Ruth would be raised at Mahlon’s child

He would inherit Mahlon’s property and carry on his name

3. vs. 11: The things said in vs. 9-10 occur at the city gate, a typical meeting place for legal proceedings

The people not only acknowledge Boaz’s words, but also pronounce a blessing

The blessing is primarily for Ruth, that she would be fruitful like Rachel and Leah

Rachel and Leah were the mothers of the 12 tribes Israel is founded on

They also pray for a blessing of standing and fame—for wealth and a good name

The fact that this blessing is for Ruth, a Moabitess, reveals the people’s view of her

It shows that they have accepted her and hints at the Lord’s pleasure with her

4. vs. 12: The blessing concludes with a connection to Perez and Tamar
 Tamar was another foreign woman married to Er, the son of Judah
 When Er dies, Tamar was entitled to a levirate marriage as well
 However, when this did not occur, Tamar tricked Judah into sleeping with her
 The result was the child Perez
 Ruth's situation wasn't identical, but both she and Tamar were foreign women
 Both became ancestors to Jesus
5. vs. 13: It's not clear why Ruth's first marriage didn't produce any children
 She was married to Mahlon for 10 years
 Here, we are told that "the Lord enabled her to conceive"
 This demonstrates God's blessing on her and on the marriage
 This blessing is despite the fact that Moabites were not to have land in Israel
6. vs. 14: Vs. 14-17 focus on Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law
 The women here had previously witnessed Naomi's heartbreaking return to Bethlehem
 Now they rejoice with her that God provided hope for her when all hope seemed lost
 "Praise be to the Lord" acknowledges His actions, and God's loving character
7. vs. 15: In Israel, grown children were expected to care for their aging parents
 This is especially true if their mother was widowed, as was Naomi
 Women had few financial resources to call on in this situation
 With the birth of a grandson, her future is not bleak as it once was
 The women also note how good Ruth has been and will be to Naomi
 She is "better to you than seven sons"
 This is huge praise; seven sons would provide enormous security to a woman
8. vs. 16-17: A well-off family, like Boaz, would likely have had a nurse to care for the child
 Here, however, Naomi takes on that role
 This may be hinting at an informal adoption to make this child Mahlon's
 This is the only place the Bible has neighbors naming a child
 The name Obed means "worshipper" or "servant"
 His lineage is given her to show the significance of his birth
 Obed was the father of Jesse, who was the father of King David

Read Luke 3:23, 31-32

9. vs. 23: Luke's gospel records here that Jesus was 30 years old when he "began his ministry"
 A Levite could begin serving in the tabernacle when he was 30 years old (Num. 4:3)
 Though not a Levite, Jesus's age shows He was "old enough" to be in God's service
 Luke also adds an editorial comment about Jesus' parentage
 It was "*thought*" that Joseph was Jesus' father
 This seems to be used to show that Luke is noting that God is Jesus' true Father
 Joseph is legally Jesus' father, however
 Many scholars feel Luke's genealogy goes through Mary's line, Matthew's thru Joseph
 These different possibilities are not the main point, however
 Ancient genealogy was not intended to be a complete accounting of a family

Neither of these two genealogies should be seen as mistaken or corrected by the other

10. vs. 31b: From vs. 24-31a are the generations from Mattha to Mattaha, which lead to David

“The son of Nathan, the son of David”

Nathan was one of David’s sons by Bathsheba

Matthew traces Jesus’ line through Solomon, also a son of Bathsheba

Both writers are showing that Jesus can be directly linked to David

This is essential to Jesus being able to fulfill the promise that God made to David

“I will raise up your offspring...I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever”

(2 Sam. 7:12-13)

11. vs. 32: This verse brings us back to the story of Ruth, where we began today’s study

Jesse was David’s father, Obed his grandfather, and so on

Some names have likely been left out

Boaz lived near the end of the time of the judges (about 1100 BC)

Salmon lived during the initial days of conquering the promised land (1400 BC)

However, these two names are side by side in this accounting of Jesus’ family line

Application: The story of Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi should be very encouraging to us. Each chose to follow the Lord faithfully, as we can see by their righteous actions. All three received blessings as a result. These blessings continued beyond what the three experienced themselves. Israel was blessed by David, the future king, and by Jesus, the promised King. This family could not have anticipated how their faithfulness would echo through history. We are blessed today to see how God can work through us and for us when we choose to follow Him. Let us continue to follow and serve Him, even if we don’t see all the outcomes immediately, or even in our lifetimes.

Prayer: Father God, thank You for the faith of Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi. Thank you for the blessing they brought to the world through faithfulness, the Savior Jesus Christ. Help us to mirror their faith in our daily lives, to bring glory to God and to bring others to You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.