

The Two Born in Bethlehem

Ruth 4:9-15

I love the Old Testament Scriptures. They are filled with history, poetry, allegory, and most of all, Good News. The book of Ruth is our subject, and the early Hebrews had the story of Ruth on the same scroll as the story of Judges. Judges powerfully demonstrates the chaos that arises when sin reigns and people do “that what is right in their own eyes” (Judg. 17:6). Yet during the rebellion, chaos, and self-destruction of Israel, God chose to redeem His people. Ruth was part of the same scroll as Judges and offers a message of redemption and hope for people in chaos. Ruth highlights God’s goodness and His grace. The entire story is an allegory for sinners, for “Your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 54:5).

⁹Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, “Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. ¹⁰I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!”¹¹Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, “We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. ¹²Through the offspring the LORD gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”¹³So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. ¹⁴The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! ¹⁵He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.”

There are some wonderful parallels between the birth of Obed (Ruth’s son) and the birth of Jesus.

1. Just as Boaz and Ruth were blessed by the elders of the city (vs. 9-14).
Joseph and Mary were blessed by an angel prior to the birth of their Son (Matt. 1:24).
2. Ruth experienced the favor of the LORD to miraculously conceive Obed (v. 13).
Mary experienced the favor of the LORD to miraculously conceive Jesus (Luke 1:28).
3. Obed was born in Bethlehem just as the elders foretold (v. 12).
Jesus was born in Bethlehem just as the prophet Micah foretold (Micah 5:1).
4. The name of Obed became famous in Israel (v. 14).
The name of Jesus is famous all over the world (Acts 4:12).
5. The LORD gave to Ruth a son, described as “her redeemer” (v. 14)
Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of the world, known as “Christ the Redeemer” (Titus 2:14).

The events of Ruth, Boaz, and the birth of Obed occurs well over 1,000 years before the birth of Christ. The parallels of the two births continue. In verse 15, there is a vivid description of your Redeemer, Jesus.

¹⁵“May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.”

I. The One born in Bethlehem is a restorer of real life – “may he be to you a restorer of life” (v. 15).
Defining life may not be as easy as you think. Webster’s definitions include: (a) the quality that distinguishes a vital functional being from a dead body; (b) the period from birth to death; and (c) a way or manner of living. It is this last definition that defines the biblical usage of one’s life.
“I came so you can have real and eternal life, more and better life than you ever dreamed of” (Jn 10:10).

II. The One born in Bethlehem is a sustainer of old age – “may he sustain you in your old age” (v. 15).
Our world is built around a culture of youth. Television, business, sports, entertainment, and other cultural venues all emphasis youth. Youth is fleeting, but oh how people attempt to keep it close.
“Do not lose heart. Outwardly we’re wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed” (II Cor. 4:16).

III. The One born in Bethlehem is a provider of true love – “(she) who loves you has given birth” (v. 15).
One of the main messages of this little book is that God is at work in the worst of times. Even through the sins of his people He can and He does plot for their glory. It was true at the national level. And we will see that it is true at the personal, family level, too. God is at work in the worst of times. When you think he is farthest from you, or has even turned against you, the truth is that He is laying foundation stones of greater happiness in your life.

“...If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:31-32).

**Judge not the Lord by your feeble senses (our five senses)
But trust Him for His grace.
Behind all threatening providences (events in our lives)
He will reveal His redeeming face.**

Trust Him who redeems you!