

### A Son is Born to Ruth and Boaz

#### Ruth 6:13-22

Ruth 4:13-22 - *"So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. <sup>14</sup> Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! <sup>15</sup> And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him." <sup>16</sup> Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. <sup>17</sup> Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David. <sup>18</sup> Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; <sup>19</sup> Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; <sup>20</sup> Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon;<sup>21</sup> Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; <sup>22</sup> Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David."*

#### Background Notes

Two books in the Bible are named after women -- the book of Esther and the book of Ruth. In both these books we see "Providence" at work-- that is, we see the hand of God working behind the scenes and accomplishing His purposes in human history. There are no supernatural miracles in either Esther or Ruth, but in both books, we see God guiding human history through natural events.

In the book of Ruth, we've seen how God brought a Gentile woman from Moab to the land of Israel and the God of Israel, though Naomi, her mother-in-law. We've seen how God guided Ruth to glean in the field of Boaz, the kind relative who was both able and willing to fulfill the role and responsibilities of kinsman redeemer. We've seen how God opened the door for Boaz to marry Ruth when the other relative turned down his responsibility to be kinsman redeemer. And in chapter 4 we see that God enabled Ruth to conceive and bear a son who would become the grandfather of King David -- and thus become a vital link in the lineage of Christ!

In verse 14, the women of Bethlehem said to Naomi, *"Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative."* So Obed, the child born to Ruth and Boaz, become not only the heir of Elimelech's estate, but also a "kinsman redeemer." When this boy grew up, he would be security for Naomi in her old age (verse 15).

Notice the high praise that was given to Ruth (verse 15). The women told Naomi that her daughter-in-law who loved her, was better than seven sons! This was about the highest compliment that could be paid to a woman in those days, because having seven sons was considered to be a supreme blessing to a Hebrew family.

When the neighbor women said that a son had been born to Naomi, they mean that Obed would be like a son to Naomi, since her own sons had died. Furthermore, the Hebrew word for “son” that was used here can infer grandson. The fact the neighbor women helped name the child (v17) was a little unusual, but sometimes even in our own culture grandparents and friends suggest names for a baby. “Obed,” by the way, means “servant” and that name probably refers to the fact that Obed would serve Naomi in her old age.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. Children are a gift from the Lord!

Psalms 127:3 says, *“Behold, children are a heritage [or gift] from the Lord. The fruit of the womb is a gift from the Lord.”*

Where is that truth taught in Ruth 4? Look at verse 13: *“So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.”* The Lord “gave Ruth conception.” The Lord enabled Ruth to conceive. Remember that Ruth had not been able to conceive when she was married to Mahlon.

In this case, it’s quite obvious that God was in control, and Obed was a gift from the Lord -- but the same is true in the conception and birth of every child. God is in control of all the factors and variables. Children are a gift from the Lord! That was true in Bible days and it’s true today -- not only in cases such as Ruth and Hannah, but every child is a gift from the Lord!

Because children are a gift from the Lord, we should think of our children that way. We should not think that we can do whatever we want with our children, or mold them to become whatever we want them to be! No, a child is a gift from the Lord, and we should do whatever it takes to show our thanks to the Lord for this wonderful gift. If you are a parent, do you thank the Lord for your children? Do you recognize that they are a gift from the Lord?

In addition, we should think of our children as a gift on loan from the Lord. Think of the Lord coming to your house one day with a baby in His arms -- your child. The Lord says to you, “I’m giving you this child for about 18 years. I want you to take care of this child. I want you to feed this child, and I want you to educate and discipline this child. I want you to teach this child about Me and My Word and My salvation. About 18 years from now I’m coming back to lead this child on in life, and at that time I would like this child to be prepared in every way for the challenges of life.” That’s the way we should view our children -- as a gift **on loan** from the Lord, for us to raise for Him!

The Lord determines whether we have children or not, and every child is a gift that is absolutely unique. Children are a gift from the Lord!

## **2. God can turn mourning to joy.**

In Jeremiah 31:13 we read, “*God will turn their mourning into joy.*” Jeremiah 31 is specifically addressed to the nation of Israel, and in that context verse 13 is speaking of the joy that the people of Israel will experience when they turn to the Lord in a coming day. However, it certainly can be applied to Christians today, if we turn to the Lord in a time of mourning. God can turn mourning to joy.

Where do we see that truth taught in Ruth 4? We see it in the life of Naomi. What a difference we see in the Naomi of chapter 1 and the Naomi of chapter 4! In chapter 1, Naomi was in mourning. She had lost her husband and both sons. Listen to her sorrow in Ruth 1:20-21, as she recounted her bitter experiences: *“<sup>20</sup> But she said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. <sup>21</sup> I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?”*

Now look at Naomi in chapter 4. Her mourning has been turned to joy! She had become the proud and happy grandmother and nurse of Obed. Verse 16: *“Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him.”* Furthermore, Obed was her security and her family heir.

What a change of circumstances for Naomi! In about a year her mourning had been turned to joy. The Lord can do the same for us as well. God can turn mourning to joy.

Some of you may be mourning right now. You may have lost a loved one, and you are mourning that loss. Perhaps you are getting older, and you feel you’re not as useful to others as you once were. You’re don’t have the joy of fulfillment you once had. Maybe you’re a now widow or a widower, and your life feels empty – life doesn’t have the joy that it once had. Well, God can turn your mourning to joy.

My own mother-in-law is a wonderful illustration of this truth. Like Naomi, she is a widow, and like Naomi, she unexpectedly lost her son this past year. But in his wonderful ways and plans, God has brought my mother-in-law into a new situation with a new circle of godly friends. He has brought her into new surroundings, and she has new opportunities to serve the Lord. There is new joy in her life. God can turn mourning to joy.

## **Practical Applications**

### **1. Your link to Christ is more important than “living happily ever” after on this earth.**

Ruth is certainly a story that could have a closed with the words “and they lived happily ever after”! But instead the Holy Spirit chose to end the book with a genealogy! Why? The reason is Ruth’s link to Jesus Christ. Ruth became the great-grandmother of King David, and she became a significant link in the lineage of the coming Messiah. This link is far more important than just “living happily ever after” on this earth!

I believe there is a practical lesson here for us. We would all like to live “happily ever after” on earth, but that’s not the most important thing in life. Our relationship to Christ is far more important! Becoming a Christian and knowing Christ as your personal Savior is far more important than living happily ever after on this Earth.

Only when we have the right relationship with Christ will we live happily ever after in Heaven! Our link to Christ is far more important than living happily ever after on this Earth.

## **2. You, too, can be a happy grandparent!**

As some of you know, Margie and I became grandparents for the third time when little Ingrid was born 2 weeks ago. Years ago, when we thought about being grandparents, it was not such an exciting prospect -- at least not for me! To me, being a grandfather meant that I would be old and “over the hill”! But now that we actually are grandparents, it’s great!

Like Naomi, we are happy grandparents, and one of the big reasons that we’re happy is that we realize we can play a significant role in helping to raise our grandchildren for the Lord. Think of the input that Naomi had in Obed’s life. In verse 16 we read that she became his “nurse,” or his “nanny.” How many Bible stories do you think Obed learned from Naomi? Watching Obed growing in his faith in God must have made Naomi so happy! Well, the same can be true for us.

Even though our mobile society may have placed many miles between you and your grandchildren, you can still have a very significant input in the lives of your grandchildren. Of course you can -- and certainly will -- pray for them! You can send Bible story books, Bible stories on CD and Bible videos to them. You can write letters or emails to them, and call them on the phone. Margie reads Bible stories onto tape and then sends them to our granddaughter Callie, and Callie listens to the tapes as she goes to sleep. This is great! She’s learning the Bible stories! We’ve sent Bible videos as well. In fact, we send a children’s creation magazine to Callie and Connor (who is only one year old)! They can’t read yet, but they’re looking at the pictures and little by little they’ll learn the truth of creation from their childhood years on. And with the arrival of our newest grandchild, Margie will have the great joy of helping our son and daughter-in-law as a part-time “nanny” for Ingrid, since they live near us.

Perhaps you don’t have biological grandchildren. You, too, can be a happy grandparent! Perhaps you can teach little ones in Sunday School, or help in your church nursery. Another way you can be a happy grandparent is by “adopting” a family in your church. Perhaps you could “adopt” a family whose biological grandparents who are unbelievers, and you can help those parents raise their children for the Lord.

As grandparents, we may have a little bit more time than parents do, to think and to come up with ideas of what we can do to help our grandchildren to grow in their faith. You, too, can be a happy grandparent!