

Ruth

Lesson #6 – Chapter 4

Read through Chapter 4 before beginning this lesson.

Chapter 4 brings together two main issues that are at work here in this story: the importance of passing on the family line (keeping a name in Israel) and the importance of keeping the land inheritance that is passed down from father to son. When Naomi's husband Elimelech died, his land inheritance passed on to his sons who bore his name. However, when they both died, not only was the family name destined to die out, but also the land inheritance would be passed on to whoever bought it. That is why Naomi sought out Boaz as a close relative to redeem the land and to marry Ruth, thereby ensuring that Elimelech's name and land inheritance would at least stay in the family. We must remember that for the Israelites, living in the land and passing on the inheritance to the next generation was the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt and then later when they wandered in the desert for 40 years, they looked forward to the day when they would live in the land God had promised to give them. Maintaining the land and maintaining a name in the land was a vital part of their relationship with God.

1. In 3:18 Naomi encourages Ruth with the words, "Wait, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out; for the man will not rest until he has settled it today." As Chap. 4 opens what do we see Boaz doing (vss. 1-2)?
2. What is the first piece of business that Boaz broaches with the close relative (who remains unnamed) and the elders of the city in vss. 3-4? See Lev. 25:25, which explains the reason why Naomi, with no husband or sons to provide for her, needed to sell the land.
3. What does the close relative think of the business proposal (vs. 4)?
4. What next piece of business does Boaz bring up in vs. 5? How does the close relative react to this information (vs. 6)? Why?
5. The deal is closed! What custom do they follow to formalize the pact (vs. 7-8)?

6. Before the elders, Boaz publicly states his intentions and motives concerning Naomi and Ruth. What details does he give in vss. 9-10?
7. The elders of the city pronounce 3 blessings upon Boaz for the kindness he has shown to Naomi (vss. 11-12). What was the first blessing they gave Boaz?
8. Who were Rachel and Leah and how did they build the nation of Israel? See Gen. 28:13-14; 29:31-30:24; 35:18; Ex. 1:1-7.
9. How did the second blessing the elders give become a reality? See Ruth 4:17 and Matt. 1:6, 16.
10. Vs. 12 contains the details of the third blessing. Who is Perez and what are the circumstances surrounding his birth? Also trace his connection to Bethlehem. See Gen. 38:6-30; 1 Chron. 2:5, 18, 50-54; Ruth 4:18-22.
11. As you read vs. 13 what truths about God are you reminded of? See also Gen. 21:1-3; 25:21; 30:22; Ps. 113:9; and 127:3.
12. How can those truths about God be a comfort to those with and without children?
13. What words of encouragement do the women of Bethlehem have for Naomi upon the birth of her grandson? See vss. 14-15.
14. What privileged role will Naomi play in the next phase of her life? See vs. 16.
15. In vss. 16-17 we see Naomi's spiritual and emotional restoration made complete. When we first meet her in Ch. 1 she is bitter about the state of her life, but through the love and care of Ruth and the unfolding of God's provision for her we see her now in Ch. 4 as a useful and blessed member of the community. What lessons can you learn from Naomi's life that can help you as you live out your own life?

16. Vss. 18-22 lists the genealogy of Boaz's family. How is this simple little family tree important to the rest of the Bible? (See Matt. 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38).

17. Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz had no way of knowing how God would use them to shape future events that He had planned. They were just living their lives and trying to be faithful to the God they loved and followed. We too have no way of knowing the significance of our lives or how God may use them for His purposes. How can Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz be an example to us of faithfulness, trusting God, and doing what is right without knowing the big picture for our lives?

18. God often moves on a timetable different than our own, but this book reminds us that He does move and work in our lives to bring us to the exact place He intends for us to be. How can this book be an encouragement to you to wait upon God's timing in your life?

19. Remember that the book of Ruth takes place during the times of the judges which is described in Judges 21:25 as a time when everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Yet in the book of Ruth, we have the example of Boaz and Ruth who did not follow what the rest of the nation was doing, but instead did what was right in God's eyes. How is that a motivation for you to live your life faithfully to God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation?