

The Book of Ruth – 11 A Child Is Born!

Context: [Ruth 4:11- 22](#)

Hook!

Why do we have a part of our Bible called The Old Testament. Andy Stanley recently came under criticism for suggesting that Christians ought to be “[unhitched](#)” from the Old Testament. I do need to say that after receiving a wave of criticism he did backtrack somewhat on that statement. But it is a valid question. If someone were to ask you, “What is the purpose of the Old Testament?”, I wonder what you’d say?

Let me give you a thought that you may have never thought of: *The Old Testament is a story of the labor pains, the struggle, the almost-near-miscarriages of a nation intended to give birth to a child – a child that would be the Savior of the world.*¹

There were many times that the birth of this Child was in mortal jeopardy. One of those times is described in the Bible as “the time of the judges”. There was no leadership in Israel. There was no king. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes; and what was right in their eyes included desperate immorality, murderous inhumanity, widespread idolatry, chaos and spiritual darkness. Theologians call it the “dark days of Israel”. But hope for Israel was not found in Gideon, Barak, Samson, Deborah – but hope for Israel was found in a foreigner to Israel, a Moabite refugee, a barren widow, who found refuge in the God of Israel and gave birth to a son!

☞ Without the story of Ruth, the period of the “Judges” is hopeless. **Ruth tells us the story of how God saves the royal line that will give birth to His king.** The account of the “Judges” tells us why there is a need for a deliverer, but without the story of Ruth we will never know how that is going to happen. Ruth is, in reality, another chapter in the story of Judges.

Review

Let’s review: this story takes place in the days of Judges, where it is said that everyone was doing what is right in their own eyes. A drought/famine in Bethlehem moved Elimelech to take his family to Moab in search of food. This choice leads to further death & disaster: he dies, along with his two sons. His wife, Naomi and one of her daughters-in-law, Ruth, a Moabite, return to Bethlehem in search of:

- a. Food; and
- b. Family

¹ [Revelation 12:1-6](#)

They find both by God's grace in a man named Boaz, who becomes their *kinsman-redeemer*. That's an important theme in this book. Boaz provides food and he does what is necessary, legally to marry Ruth, thus providing a family and an inheritance. In Ruth 4:10, Boaz claims Ruth for his wife.

Read: Ruth 4:11-22

Summary

In verse 13 we read of the marriage of Ruth and Boaz: "*So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.*" This 'baby announcement' is sandwiched by two blessings.

- a. When Boaz announced his intention to marry Ruth, the elders and townspeople offered a blessing to the newlyweds; and
- b. After the birth of Obed, the women offer blessing and thanksgiving to the Lord.

At the marriage announcement, the elders and the crowd wished Boaz and Ruth a destiny of prosperity and prominence like those of the famous ancestors Jacob, Rachel, Leah, and Perez. We soon learn that God responded graciously, not only with an heir, but a child that foresaw a great dynasty. After the women in verses 14-17 offered praise and thanksgiving to God for this child, the narrative gives us an inspired comment: ". . . *They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.*" (Ruth 4:17b, ESV).

The Main Point

Now this is important! That comment ("He was the father of Jesse, the father of David") was for us, the reader. Nobody at the time of Obed's birth knew the genealogy that was to come. God's Holy Spirit had the narrator put that in there for our benefit. That means that this is the point he wants us to get. At a time in Israel's history that was dark and hopeless, the narrator wants us to know there is hope. Obed would grandfather the greatest king in Israel's history. David would usher in "the golden age of Israel's history". In David would come the Savior of the world who would establish an eternal kingdom.

Naomi didn't know that. Boaz and Ruth didn't know that. Obed didn't even know that. You know that. You know through this comment that when the purposes of God seemed to be frustrated and all but lost, God brought hope.

Here's the point: **In the darkest days of Israel's history, God was working out His redemptive purposes.**

During this same time, God appeared to Gideon. Listen to what Gideon says, "*And Gideon said to him, 'Please, my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all his*

wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.'" (Judges 6:13, ESV)

What Gideon didn't know and what is hard for us to know, is that even in the darkest days, God is working out His redemptive purposes – and nothing can frustrate the purposes of God – NOTHING. Job said, *"I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."* (Job 42:2, ESV)

The Book of Judges is proof that man, left to his own devices, will self-destruct; but the addition of Ruth is proof that God's plans cannot be prevented.

Application

On the darkest day in the history of the world, all the forces of evil gathered in one place, on one day to bring an end to God's anointed Christ. On the darkest day in the history of the world evil men put to death Jesus, but as Peter said, *"God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it."* (Acts 2:24, ESV).

In the mid-1700s, William Cowper wrote these words:

1. God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.
2. Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sov'reign will.
3. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.
4. Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.
5. His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flow'r.
6. Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

Naomi interpreted her events as God turning against her. Ruth interpreted her events as loss and emptiness, but in time both saw that God had a different plan – a plan to redeem His people, through a son of David, whom God would raise from the dead and bring salvation to the world.