

# The Epic Story of Redemption

## Ruth 4:13-22; Matthew 1:1-25

### Introduction

#### Review the Story (ch 1, 2, 3, 4)

The book of Ruth is set within the greater love story of Scripture, the epic story of redemption.

- Behind the scenes, working out his providential plan to bring King David, and eventually King Jesus, is the Almighty.
- He is working in the midst of the dark days of the judges. He is not finished!

#### Ruth's Conclusion: God Has Not Forgotten Us

- The royal line will not be destroyed.
- God filled Naomi's emptiness with satisfaction, and then there is a genealogy pointing to God's ongoing work.
- The genealogy is vital to understanding what is taking place in Ruth – a bigger story is being told.
- This genealogy is later reflected in **Matthew's genealogy**.
- After we examine the conclusion of Ruth, it is worth considering Matthew's introduction, in order to see more fully the staggering providence of God, and the glory of Jesus, our Redeemer.

The narrator shows us *four ways God was at work* among the lives of Naomi, accomplishing his far-reaching purposes through them:

#### #1: God Provides a Son for Boaz and Ruth (4:13)

This verse is loaded – a wedding and a baby stated in one verse!

- Boaz “took her” (a marriage), and she “conceived” (a baby).
- The redundancy emphasizes the Ruth's new status.
  - “the Moabite.”
  - She called herself the “foreigner” (2:10).
  - She identified herself as being lower than a servant (2:13).
  - She then elevates herself to the level of “servant” when proposing to Boaz (3:9).
  - But here in chapter 4, she is “Ruth, the wife of Boaz.”
  - She has a brand new status, owing to the sovereign grace of God.

“the LORD gave her conception.”

- The two needs in the book of *Ruth* consist of food and fertility.
- How have those needs been met? By the Lord's intervention. (1:6; 4:13).
- In both cases, the message is clear: God has not forgotten us.

The Lord's involvement in the birth of this child is not just an important statement for the love story of Boaz and Ruth, it is also an important note in the grand story of the Bible.

- Gen 21, **Sarah** cannot conceive until the Lord intervenes (**Genesis 21:1**). Isaac is born.

- Genesis 25, **Rebecca** is barren. But the Lord answers Isaac's prayer and Rebecca conceives, giving birth to Jacob and Esau (25:21-26).
- Genesis 29-30, God enables both barren **Leah and Rachael** to have children, the mothers of the people of God.
- **Ruth**. She was not able to conceive in **Moab**, but now the Lord enables her to have a son.
- Later, **Hannah** is barren, but the Lord grants her the ability to have a son: **Samuel**. This Samuel will herald the coming of King David (1 Samuel 1:19-20).
- In each case, God is saying: "Keep your eye on this child! He will play a vital role in accomplishing my purposes."
- This theme, as we will note in a moment, **continues in the New Testament.**

The narrator wants us to know that **Ruth belongs to this significant group of women in salvation history, just as the women at the city gate prayed (4:11).**

"What role will this child play in the advancement of God's purposes?"

## #2: God Provides a Redeemer for Naomi (4:14-16)

The women around Naomi recognize this transformation.

- "Is this Naomi?" Naomi responded to the buzz in town by insisting that she be called "Mara" (bitter) instead of Naomi (sweet). But now, a reversal has taken place.
1. **The women first praise God saying (4:14).** God deserves the glory for this reversal.
    - a. A child who is also called a *redeemer*.
    - b. That is, the child will bless Naomi personally, and will continue the family line.
    - c. This child will save the day.
  2. **They convey a heartfelt wish that the child be "renowned in Israel." (4:14)**
    - a. **They set the bar high.** Others of us, "May you stay out of jail!"
    - b. However in this case, the child does become famous in Israel!
    - c. **Through this child, Obed, would come Israel's greatest King, David.**
  3. **The women then express their confidence to Naomi saying (4:15).**
    - a. The child will **restore** her life, by giving her renewed vitality and joy.
    - b. He will renew Naomi's heart by continuing the family line.
    - c. He will also "**nourish her**" in old age by providing the basic necessities of life
    - d. Remember the two basic needs at the end of chapter 1 were **food and children.**
    - e. This child will solve both problems because he is a redeemer.
  4. **Confidence is related to Ruth (15b).**
    - a. How can we be sure that this child will restore and nourish her? They point to Ruth.
    - b. The child will not merely serve a legal function, being the heir of Elimelech.
    - c. **Ruth has – in a sense – given him to Naomi.**
    - d. This relationship will be more than a typical grandmother, grandson relationship.
    - e. The child be concerned for the well being of Naomi.
    - f. God did not forget her.
    - g. And God's *hesed*, has been worked through the *hesed* of Ruth, who displayed remarkable love and devotion to Naomi from the beginning to the end this narrative.

**16:** Naomi's journey from emptiness to fullness is illustrated in the next sentence (4:16).

- She was empty, having no food and no child.
- Now, her arms are full – holding this little boy.
- His “nurse” speaks to her being a nanny or guardian; again, a note of the special relationship the two will have.

### #3: God Provides a King for Israel (4:17)

“He was the father of Jesse, the father of David” (4:17).

Obed is not the end of the story.

- To a young barren widow, God provided Ruth with a husband and a son.
- To an older and bitter widow, whose family line was on the verge of extinction, God provided Naomi with Obed.
- Now, to a nation on the verge of extinction, God provided a king, David.

**The book of *Ruth* is not just about two desperate widows, but a story about a desperation nation and the verge of annihilation.**

- Remember the last verse in Judges? “There was no king in Israel” (Judges 21:25).
- Remember the first person mentioned in *Ruth* – Elimelech, “My God is King” (Ruth 1:2).
- But Elimelech does not lead Israel out of darkness – far from it.
- Obed would be the grandfather of David.
- Obed would play a vital role in establishing the Davidic dynasty, in order to solve Israel’s problem.

One more important note about **verse 17**: the women named him.

This is the only time women (other than the mother) are present in the naming event.

- This does not mean that Ruth and Boaz had no influence on the name of Obed, but that this chorus of voices indicates the significance of the child.
- “Obed” – it is short for *Obadiah*, “servant of Yahweh”
- Obed would serve Naomi directly, but also the nation of Israel, and ultimately serve to continue the line to Jesus Christ, who would be the ultimate servant (Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Mark 10:45).

### #4: God Provides the Messiah for the World (Ruth 4:18-22; Matthew 1)

And there’s still more to the story, much more!

#### Ruth 4:18-22

- These ten names display God’s answer to the prayer for Boaz to be renowned in Bethlehem and for his house to be like that of Perez (4:11-12).
- Perez heads the royal line of Judah and it continues through a host of others, then to Boaz, Obed, Jesse, and finally, to David.
- The list is not exhaustive, but is meant to show the continuation of the line.

“**David**” the offspring of Jesse, was Israel’s most celebrated king.

- He was a military hero, who captured Jerusalem and defeated the Philistines (2 Sam 5).
- God promised that one of his sons would sit on the throne forever.
- The prophets declared him to be the paradigm for the future Messiah
- In Jesus, all of this comes to fulfillment.

- He is the greater David.
- The people in Jerusalem would shout to Jesus, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” (**Matt 21:9**).
- Paul opened up the book of Romans saying that Jesus “was descended from David according to the flesh” (**Romans 1:3**; see also **Acts 13:22-23**).

**Matthew’s** genealogy does not end with David, but David’s greater son, Jesus....

### **The Ultimate Redeemer and King: Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1-25)**

**History is not a collection of one wretched thing after another, going nowhere.**

- The story of Ruth is so important for reminding us that history is moving to the worship of Jesus Christ, who is the “root and descendent of David” (**Revelation 22:16**).

### **3 Implications of this Epic Story of Redemption**

#### **#1: Live in light of the truth that Jesus appeared in human history. (READ Matt 1:1-17)**

That is, live in light of the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ.

**David.**

- Jesus is the descendent of King David, whose line God promised to establish forever
- Jesus is the “Christ,” the Messiah (“Christ” is not his last name!).

**Abraham** is mentioned, through whom God promised to bless the nations (**12:1-3; 15:1-6**).

- These two giants point to Jesus, the promised King, who would bless the nations.

#### **#2: Rejoice in the fact that Jesus came to save sinners.**

See it in two ways...

#### **A. Good News in the Genealogy – some surprises! And you thought your family was dysfunctional!**

- **Tamar (1:3)**. Through sinful incest with her father-in-law Judah, Tamar gave birth to Perez and Zerah.
- **Rahab (v 5)**, a prostitute who spared the people of God, and **was the father of Boaz!**
- **Ruth**, the Moabite.
- **Bathsheba**, calling her “the wife of Uriah” (**v 6**). She’s brought into the family line through adultery and murder (**2 Samuel**).
- Then beginning with king Solomon, Matthew lists Israel’s kings up to the exile (**v 7-11**).
- The concluding set of 14 generations, goes from deportation to Babylon to the birth of Jesus Christ (**12-16**). There we find the fifth lady mentioned, **Mary (v 16)**.

**Rahab and Ruth were outsiders previously.**

- Tamar, Rahab and Bathsheba were associated with **sinful activity**.
- And yet, here they are in the genealogy of Jesus!
- **This entire genealogy actually includes men, women, prostitutes, adulterers, liars, murderers, Jews and Gentiles.**

**Why did Matthew begin his book with this genealogy?**

- For one, he is writing to a primarily Jewish audience...

- More importantly, he's saying something theologically: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (**1 Timothy 1:15**).
- If you are a Christian, realize that these are not just people in history – but these are your people!
- This is your story!
- You can add your name to this list!
- If you are not a Christian, then realize that Christ's grace is greater than your sin.
- God has provided the Savior you need.

## **B. Good News in the Birth Narrative**

### **Read 1:18-25:**

**20-21:** “**Jesus**” (v 1, 21, 25) is Greek for “Joshua” or “Yeshua,” meaning God saves.

- His name matches the angel's word, “He will save his people from their sins”

### **#3: Rest in Jesus' already-not-yet peace.**

- In the book of *Ruth*, we have read about the need for “refuge” and “rest” and how Ruth took refuge “under the wings” of Israel's God.
- We have read about Naomi's struggle.
- She thought God was against her, and at the end of the story she found out that God had not forgotten her.

As glorious as the story of Ruth is, we are told in Matthew that not only has God not forgotten us, but that God is actually *with us* (**Matthew 1:25**).

- By placing your faith in Jesus Christ, you find ultimate refuge, ultimate rest, and peace.
- He has come to give rest to the weak and weary, sick and sore.
- John Wesley said on his deathbed, “the best of all, God is with us.”
- Matthew begins with the assurance of his presence with us, and it closes with Jesus' promise, “I will be with you always” (**Matthew 28:20**).
- It is an “**already**” promise for all who trust in Jesus as Messiah -- through the Holy Spirit.
- But it is also a “**not yet**” promise.
- For one day, this promise will come to its climactic fulfillment.
- In the new heavens and new earth, John tells us that God will “dwell with us” and we “will be his people” and “God will be with us” as our God (**Revelation 21:3**).
- He will wipe all the tears from our eyes, and he will make all things new (v 4).

### **How would this Jesus appear in human history, providing this grace, peace, and joy for sinners? (23-25)**

- Matthew tells us that a “**virgin**” would conceive (**Matthew 1:23**).
- He reiterates this point in the narrative, “he knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus” (**1:25**).
- **A more significant son is born in Bethlehem with an even more remarkable birth.**

Remember the idea of God intervening in the life of barren women, in order to bring forth a significant son?

- Prior to Jesus' birth, the mother of John the Baptist, **Elizabeth** was barren (**Luke 1:7**). But the Lord sent an angel to tell her husband Zechariah that Elizabeth will bear a son, by the Lord's intervention. John the Baptist would prepare the way for the Messiah.
- And all of these significant conceptions in redemptive history (Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, Rachael, Ruth, Hannah, Elizabeth) prepare us for the most significant of all: the birth of Jesus.
- **The previous mothers were barren, but Mary is a virgin.**
- Jesus's birth was the most climactic conception of all time, **a conception not in the womb of a barren woman, but in the womb of a virgin.**
- The genealogy of Matthew, you might say, shows us the **human** nature of Jesus, but the virgin birth magnifies his **divine** nature.
- Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, united in one person.
- It is the mystery of the **incarnation**, the Word became flesh, the glory of Christmas.
- Paul said:

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (Galatians 4:4-7)

**Boaz was quite a redeemer, David was some kind of King, but Jesus Christ is unique.**

- He is the only one in the God-man category.
- He is the only one qualified to fully redeem us, to save us from our sins, to make us his beloved, and to give us such a glorious inheritance.

Live in light of the glorious birth of Jesus; rejoice in the saving grace of Jesus, and rest in the already-not-yet peace of Jesus.

*The Bride eyes not her garment,  
But her dear Bridegroom's face;  
I will not gaze at glory  
But on my King of grace;  
Not at the crown He giveth  
But on His pierced hand:  
The Lamb is all the glory  
Of Immanuel's land.*