

16. Boaz and Ruth lived in the time of the Judges, a dark and difficult time of spiritual and moral decay. How does this book show us the relationship between their character and how they were blessed by God? Is this something we should look for ourselves?

Read Ruth 4.17-21

17. Who is listed here as the father of Obed? (You will find the same in the other three genealogies of Obed in 1 Chron 2.11-12, Mtt 1.5 and Lk 3.32). Given what was said in question 2 why is this slightly surprising?

18. Look back at study 4 and the three promises to Abraham. How have we seen these three promises coming together in the Book of Ruth?

Pray

Pray that there would be a proper respect for the beginning of life as given by God. Give thanks for the way that early Christians challenged and changed the widespread acceptance of abortion (and infanticide), and pray that we might see similar changes today.

Pray for our children's work at St James and all involved in it. Pray that parents would bring up children in the love and fear of the Lord.

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Real Lives

Week 5 - Ruth part 5



Read Ruth 4.1-4

"Be wise as serpents, innocent as doves" (Mtt 10.16)

1. Look back at your answer to question 17 in the previous study. How was Boaz respecting the rights of his relative as he arranges to meet with him?

2. Ruth had asked Boaz to be her redeemer. In this situation the redeemer would father children with Ruth who would continue the line of Elimelech. Those children would eventually inherit the land of Naomi which is mentioned in verse 3. Does Boaz act dishonestly in not mentioning Ruth at the outset, or is he acting shrewdly in the hope of bringing about a particular outcome?

Read Ruth 4.5-10

3. If a man died childless leaving a widow then the law of God required a brother to father children with her to continue the line. This custom predated the law and Perez, the ancestor of Boaz, was born in this way (Gen 38). It seems very alien to us but what does it show about the importance of the continuance of the people of God in the Old Testament?

4. The law only required brothers to act so did not apply in the case of Ruth. But why does the other relative refuse to act? What did he see as the pitfall for him?

5. In verse 10 Boaz declares that he has bought a wife. Is this an instance of the Bible endorsing practices that are demeaning to women?

6. In this case whose idea had it been that Boaz redeem Ruth and why? Who had taken the initiative?

7. From what Boaz had said (Ch 3 v 10) might Ruth have chosen a different course of action?

(The Law also allowed Israelites to sell themselves to pay debts. They or a relative could later redeem them and if not they, and any land sold, would be set free at the next Jubilee, every 50 years.)

Our Redeemer

8. Redemption is one of the main ways in which the Bible describes our salvation. What was the price paid to redeem you? (Heb 9.12)

9. How does being redeemed also mean us becoming part of a new family (as happened with Ruth)? (Gal 4.4-5)

10. Do you feel any difficulty with the idea of being bought for a price?

Read Ruth 4.11-16

11. How does verse 13 describe Obed's coming to be?

12. Some might see this as just pious language but we find it elsewhere in the Bible. If the Lord gives conception (v13) what does this say about our understanding of the beginning of a human life?

(Note : all the genetic information that determine a person is present from conception, no new information is added later.)

13. Modern law is based on the assertion that before a certain point (people differ on the precise point) an embryo is just a collection of bodily matter which can be used or disposed of without concern. But what are the implications for such things as embryo research and abortion if the Lord gives conception?

14. Remembering what we saw about the character of Boaz and Ruth (and the word used to describe both) what is noteworthy about the blessing/prayer of the townsfolk in v11-12?

15. None of the historic people mentioned in v11-12 seem of particularly worthy character. Why then do the townsfolk mention them? What are they asking for in saying this?