

Jesus' Ancestry

You have a beautiful family," the woman sitting next to Dorothy said as they sat in the doctor's waiting room. "They're so caring and attentive."

"That's my theater friend, Amber, and her daughter, Shantae," Dorothy said, nodding toward the two women at the counter as they returned the electronic pad they'd used to input Dorothy's information.

Dorothy, an otherwise healthy woman in her eighties, had fainted and fallen a few times, but thank God, had been in the house each time. With no children or siblings, she'd called Amber, who had come to rush her to the hospital. The doctor had said he thought Dorothy needed a pacemaker. She had returned for a follow-up appointment, when she'd receive a temporary heart monitor.

"As we age, life seems to get scarier," the woman said. "I live alone and am growing more concerned about how I will make it on my own."

"Do you know Christ personally, as Lord?" Dorothy asked. Dorothy testified about her Savior and her life, which had been challenging and often lonely, in no way improved by the health issues that plagued her more and more frequently as she aged. But Christ has been there every step of the way.

"I may need to get a pacemaker, and I don't know what tomorrow will bring," Dorothy said. "But I'm not fearful, and I have hope, because I have Christ."

- 1.** *How have you seen God bring hope to a dire situation?*
- 2.** *What does it mean to be a witness?*
- 3.** *How do you keep hope alive when life feels bleak?*

Boaz Redeems Ruth

Ruth 4:9–12 KJV

9 And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

10 Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day.

11 And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephrath, and be famous in Bethlehem:

12 And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.

Ruth 4:9–12 NIV

⁹ Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon."¹⁰ I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!"

¹¹ Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem."¹² Through the offspring the LORD gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah."

Boaz declared his intention to become their "guardian-redeemer" who would "ransom" the family property

and name (v. 9). Boaz first checked that a closer relative did not wish to fulfill this role, as would have been his right (Ruth 4:1–8). Boaz publicly declared to the people of Bethlehem that he would redeem Elimelek’s family and raise children. He stood in the city gate to announce “to the elders and all the people” that he was choosing to buy all the property of Elimelek’s widow, Naomi (v. 9).

Boaz also declared he would marry Naomi’s daughter-in-law, Ruth (v. 10). He did this “in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown.” Naomi’s words to Ruth are proven true, for Naomi said, “The man [Boaz] will not rest until the matter is settled today” (Ruth 3:18). Boaz’s actions and declaration of intent confirm Naomi’s hope and confidence in him. Boaz keeps his word to make the family whole once again.

The people at the city gate affirm Boaz’s declaration and add a prophetic blessing. The beginning of the blessing reviews the past: “May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel” (v. 11). Rachel and Leah were Jacob’s two wives who, along with their servants, gave birth to the twelve tribes of Israel. The blessing next acknowledges current circumstances: “May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem” (v. 11). Finally, the blessing looks forward to the future: “Through the offspring the LORD gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah” (v. 12). The hopes expressed by this blessing would be fulfilled.

4. *What does Boaz announce in verse 9, and who does he address?*

5. *What additional responsibilities does Boaz assume, and why are they significant (v. 10)?*

6. *How do the elders and the people respond to Boaz’s declaration?*

Boaz's and Ruth's Descendants

Ruth 4:13–17;

Luke 3:23, 31b–32 KJV

13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.

14 And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel.

15 And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him.

16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

17 And the women her neighbours gave it 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.

23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,

31 . . . which was the son of David,

32 Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed,

Ruth 4:13–17;

Luke 3:23, 31b–32 NIV

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. ¹⁴ The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel!

¹⁵ He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth."

¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. ¹⁷ The women living there said, "Naomi has a son!" And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

²³ Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry.

He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli,

³¹ . . . the son of David, ³² the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz,

which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson,

the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon.

God enabled Ruth and Boaz to have a child, and the family would continue. Boaz fulfilled his role as guardian-redeemer. The women of Bethlehem blessed Naomi's grandson (v. 15). In that culture, a child represented security for the future. When Obed grew up, he would work and bring in the family income. Naomi, as a widow with no income of her own, would have to rely on Obed.

The women acknowledge Ruth's loyalty toward Naomi. Even during Naomi's crisis, God was faithful to her. The women call Ruth a "daughter-in-law, who loves [Naomi] and who is better to [her] than seven sons" (Ruth 4:15). When Naomi holds Obed, the women proclaim, "Naomi has a son!" (v. 17). Even though she lost two sons, God used the birth of a grandson to redeem Naomi's family.

This story of redemption continues past Naomi's lifetime. The boy becomes a father to Jesse, who becomes the father of David. Through David's family line, God establishes a line of kings (2 Sam. 7:16). The third chapter of Luke shows that the kingly lineage extends a thousand years after David: "[Jesus] was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph" (Luke 3:23). Joseph was a descendant of David, Jesse, Obed, and Boaz (vv. 31–32). This was also a reason that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the town of His ancestors (Luke 2:1–5). Through Jesus, the kingship of David's family will never pass away. God used unusual and tragic circumstances to accomplish His purposes, not only for Naomi, but for the entire world.

7. *How does God prove faithful to Ruth and Boaz?*

8. *What does this story's continuation in Luke reveal about Boaz and Ruth's son, Obed? Why is he significant?*

9. *How do you see God working in your life, in light of Ruth's story?*

From Hopeless to Hopeful

When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit the United States, people from all walks of life felt bleak and hopeless. They were all terrified by the unknown and overwhelmed by the statistics of death and illness.

During the period of isolation, many were laid off from their jobs, and I was among them. In 2019, I felt like I had finally landed my dream job. I had spent years looking for opportunities to launch a new career, and I finally found the right job. But by August 2020, that dream was gone. There I was: at home, isolated, and jobless once more. I felt like there was no hope. My world had turned upside down overnight. Everything I had worked for was ripped away from me in an instant.

A little before this, I had started a home bakery business on the side. It wasn't much, a way to make some extra income. I never expected to do more than bake the occasional order of birthday cupcakes for friends and family. But in those initial weeks after my job termination, I was flooded with orders. Some friends ordered out of support, but then total strangers found my website and started submitting orders. Other people were sending job listings to me, along with a word of encouragement.

God used that time to remind me that He provides—and not always in the ways we expect. I had always struggled with the fear that people did not care about me. But then they came around me when I had nothing, and those fears vanished. In the days of feeling like a failure and worrying about money, God provided for me and bolstered my hope. He reminded me that I wasn't alone and that He could take care of my needs.

10. *What situation feels hopeless to you right now?*

11. *What keeps you from hoping in the Lord?*

12. *How can you remind yourself of His light when life feels dark?*

Seeking Hope, Finding God

When circumstances are challenging, it can be our first instinct to try to fix the situation ourselves. Then when things get worse, we feel helpless and hopeless. Part of this is cultural—American culture is very individualistic and self-reliant. But this isn't how the Bible instructs us to live. Instead of letting God be our last resort, we should turn to Him first—in any situation! He makes impossible situations possible and good situations even better!

► *When was the last time you turned to God for help? Do you go to Him first or only after you try to resolve your problems on your own? Why?*

KEY VERSE

And the women her neighbours gave it 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.
—Ruth 4:17 KJV

The women living there said, "Naomi has a son!" And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.
—Ruth 4:17 NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of November 25 through December 1

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Luke 3:23–38—We Belong to Christ's Family.
- Tue.** Psalm 128—A Household Built by God.
- Wed.** Ruth 1:1–18—Determined Loyalty.
- Thu.** Ruth 2:1–3, 17–23—An Act of Kindness.
- Fri.** Matthew 12:46–50—Bound Together by More than DNA.
- Sat.** Ruth 3:1–13—Daring Faith.
- Sun.** Ruth 4:9–17—God Has Not Abandoned You.