

Lineage of Christ

Focal Verses • Ruth 4:13 – 17

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will EXAMINE Jesus' human ancestry, REFLECT on the truth that God's Son connected with us by becoming human, and PRAISE God for working to fulfill the promise of the Messiah.

In Focus

Regina loved to study her family genealogy. She found it so interesting to learn about the different people in her past. Connecting with her history gave her a stronger sense of who she was on many levels.

As a result of her genealogy research, Regina discovered why she couldn't settle down. Like many of her ancestors, she shared an inherent need to be free. Regina didn't think commitment would ever be part of her vocabulary. One thing Regina didn't have in common with the people in her past was faith in God. She couldn't even commit to the people in her life. How could she commit to a God she couldn't even see? Michelle was probably the closest to a best friend that Regina had ever had. She was a Christian and had spoke about her faith to Regina on several occasions, but she was a hard case. Michelle was aware of her interest in genealogies, so she challenged Regina.

Michelle told her, "If you research the genealogy of Jesus and still come to the conclusion that He's not really the Messiah, then I'll never bother you about your unbelief again."

Regina accepted the challenge. Two weeks into her research, she accepted Jesus as her personal Savior and Lord. Ironically, Regina discovered that real freedom requires commitment. Now, Regina tells people how her love of genealogy led her to Christ.

Have you ever studied your family tree or genealogy? What is one powerful thing your learned?

Keep in Mind

"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)

Say It Correctly

Moabite – Mo-UH-byte

KJV

Ruth 4:13–17

4:13 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 borne 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.

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NLT

Ruth 4:13–17

4:13 So Boaz took Ruth into his home, and she became his wife. When he slept with her, the LORD enabled her to become pregnant, and she gave birth to a son.

14 Then the women of the town said to Naomi, “Praise the LORD, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous in Israel.

15 May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!”

16 Naomi took the baby and cuddled him to her breast. And she cared for him as if he were her own.

17 The neighbor women said, “Now at last Naomi has a son again!” And they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David.

The People, Places, and Times

Marriage. To understand the diverse ancestry of Jesus, one should familiarize themselves with some Old Testament laws and customs. One custom is the practice of “levirate marriage.” This was a law to ensure that a woman whose husband died before they had children would still be able to have children by marrying the brother of her deceased husband. The child born into that union would be considered the offspring of the woman and her late husband. (Deuteronomy 25:5–6). A custom is the practice of arranged marriages. In the ancient Near East, it was customary for parents or elders of the family to arrange the marriage of the daughters and sons.

Background

If the book of Ruth were to be described in one word, that word would be “devotion.” Widowed Naomi, with her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, were traveling back to their home in Israel. Naomi decided it would be best for her daughters-in-law to return to their parent’s home in hopes that they would marry again. At Naomi’s urging, Orpah conceded, but Ruth is determined to stay with Naomi. “And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me” (Ruth 1:16–17, KJV). Ruth had a deep devotion to Naomi.

When they returned to Bethlehem, Ruth gathered corn left by the reapers in a field belonging to a wealthy man named Boaz. Boaz inquired who the young lady was, and when he found out, he encouraged Ruth to continue gleaning in his field. He also instructed the young men not to touch her. Boaz told Ruth he’d heard about her devotion to Naomi and said the Lord would bless her (2:1–12).

Naomi told Ruth that Boaz was a close relative and would make a good husband for her. Naomi’s match-making skills were successful—Boaz and Ruth were married (3:4–13). Tamar and Judah, mentioned in the genealogy of Christ, were also ancestors of Ruth and Boaz (4:12).

The New Testament is about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of our Savior. The Old Testament lays the groundwork for the birth of the Messiah. It’s a bridge connecting the humanness of Jesus, the son of Mary and Joseph, to the supernatural Christ the King, the Son of God. Delving into the human genealogy of Christ far surpasses the mystery of uncovering our own family ancestry. As we search name by name—from Abraham to Boaz to Solomon—we realize that all the pieces fit together and give us a perfect picture of Christ.

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At-A-Glance

1. Boaz and Ruth's Marriage (Ruth 4:13–14)
2. Naomi's Grandson (vv. 15–17)

In Depth

1. Boaz and Ruth's Marriage (Ruth 4:13–14)

According to the Law of Moses, a Moabite was forbidden to enter the house of God. Moabites were idolaters and descendants of Lot. They didn't worship the God of Israel. Perhaps because Ruth had already married into the family (she was married to one of Naomi's two sons who died in Moab), the marriage between Boaz and Ruth was permitted. The union answered Boaz's prayers and was blessed by the elders and all who witnessed it (vv. 11–12). This woman who was an outsider becomes an important part of Jesus' family lineage.

Ruth and Boaz conceived a child (v. 13). Thus, Naomi became the child's grandmother. When Naomi died, her estate would go to her grandson. His birth gave Naomi a kinsman to carry on the lineage of Elimelech. Later, he would become the father of Jesse and the grandfather of King David. Jesus, our Savior and kinsman, was born from this same lineage.

2. Naomi's Grandson (vv. 15–17)

In this part of the Israelites' history, the people believed that if the aged married someone in their youth, the aged would benefit from the energy of the youth. The women in Bethlehem also believed that Naomi's grandson would revitalize her life and restore her youthfulness if she nursed him. Therefore, Naomi nursed the infant.

The son of Boaz and Ruth was named Obed, as suggested to Naomi by the women in their neighborhood. It was customary in those days to name a child according to his circumstances. Obed means "servant," Obed likely cared for and served Naomi in her old age. Naomi loved Obed dearly. He no doubt filled the emptiness left by the death of her husband, Elimelech, and her two sons. The women around her knew this and proclaimed, "There is a son born to Naomi!" (Ruth 4:17).

Search the Scriptures

1. What did the women say that Naomi's grandson would be to her (Ruth 4:15)?
2. Who named Naomi's son (v. 17)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. In your own words, what does Jesus' ancestry mean to you?
2. How does it feel to know God made Ruth's blended family so important for his purposes?

Liberating Lesson

1. Many people enjoy the study of genealogies as a hobby. Do you think learning about your ancestors, their actions, and personalities will influence your values and beliefs? Explain.
2. How would you react to discovering that a few of your descendants were unsavory characters? Would you try to hide it or use it as motivation to be the best Christian you can be?
3. How can you use the topic of genealogy to share Christ with others?

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Application for Activation

When was the last time you actually read Matthew chapter 1, or read it without a groan? If you belong to Christ, then you come from royalty. Does that spark your interest? Start with Matthew 1:1, which details the beginning of the genealogy of Jesus, and do some research on King David. What questions would you want to answer about David if he were in your family tree? Then, do some more research. Use your Bible, but use other resources as well. Verse by verse and one name at a time, you'll discover thought-provoking facts about Jesus' ancestors and Jesus Himself.

More Light on the Text

Ruth 4:13–17, 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.

The introductory particle “so” can be translated as “in accordance with this,” referring to the preceding events or what had been agreed upon earlier. The Hebrew verb *laqach* (law-KAKH) means “to take or to marry.” The phrase “so Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife” is an important transitional expression. It concludes what has immediately preceded (4:1–12) and introduces Ruth’s conception, the child’s birth, and the response of the neighboring women to Naomi (vv. 13–17).

In a few words, the narrator summarizes the marriage life of Boaz and Ruth. It is clear that marriage is not the essential element of the narration. The emphasis is on the child.

The expression “he went in into her” is a Hebrew euphemism for sexual relations (see Genesis 16:2; 30:3; 38:8; Deuteronomy 22:13; 2 Samuel 16:21). “The LORD gave her conception” and she gave birth to a son (Ruth 4:13). The birth of the child contrasts strikingly with the years of death and barrenness described in chapter 1. The Bible often attributes fertility to God (see Genesis 21:1–2; 29:31; 30:2, 22; 1 Samuel 1:6; Luke 1:57).

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.

The women of the town of Bethlehem (see Ruth 1:19) are pleased with the child’s birth. They ascribe what has happened to the hand of the Lord. He deserves to be praised for what He has done for Naomi. He has not left her without a next of kin (or a redeemer). The redeemer was not Boaz, but the son just born. The phrase “near kinsman” was used for Boaz and a close relative in 3:12. Now, it is applied to the newborn. Naomi’s grandson would remove the reproach of childlessness from her and comfort her. The woman declared “that his name may be famous” (4:14), blessing the child.

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.

The text records that the child will bring much happiness to Naomi. By bringing restoration and nourishment into her life, he will mean much to her. Naomi has hope for the future and the prospect of the permanent continuance of her family. The word “restorer” (Heb. *shuwb shoob*) means “to return, turn, restore.” The child will return Naomi back to life or renew her life.

Ruth’s love for Naomi is evident to everyone. She left her family, home, and gods (see Ruth 1) out of love for Naomi and has given her a grandchild. She is “better to thee than seven sons,” meaning “she has done more for you than many sons” (Ruth 4:15). This is a striking statement that in a world where women were

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dependent on men, Ruth and Naomi helped to preserve one another and care for each other. This adopted family was closer than a natural family, and God blessed their perseverance and faith.

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

Naomi held the child close to her as a sign of adoption. This probably refers to the rite of adoption practiced in Israel (see Genesis 30:3–13; 48:5; 50:23). She became the boy's "nurse" (Heb. *'aman*, aw-**MAHN**), which means "a mother" or "guardian" (cp. Numbers 11:12). The same term is used in 2 Kings 10:1, 5 and is translated as "guardian" in the New Living Translation, meaning "legal guardian." Naomi became the boy's legal guardian.

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.

The women of the Bethlehem town (or the neighborhood) named the boy "Obed." "Obed" (Heb. *Owbed*, o-**BADE**) means "the serving one" or "the servant" (implying Jehovah). He would serve his grandmother by caring for her and causing her to rejoice. Beyond his grandmother, he would serve the Lord by being consecrated to Him.

The last words of verse 17 show the author's purpose in writing down these events: to show that the boy was the grandfather of Israel's greatest king, David. He was the ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1:1, 5). There were 42 generations between Abraham and Jesus.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Numbers 23–25

Psalm 25:1–3

TUESDAY

Numbers 26–27

Psalm 25:4–11

WEDNESDAY

Numbers 28–30

Psalm 25:19

THURSDAY

Numbers 31–32

Psalm 25:20–22

FRIDAY

Numbers 33–34

Psalm 26:1–3

SATURDAY

Numbers 35–36

Psalm 26:4–7

SUNDAY

Deuteronomy 1–4

Psalm 26:8–12