**Boaz Marries Ruth**

This week we will complete our study of the short book of Ruth. In the third chapter, Boaz agreed to marry Ruth, taking the place of her deceased husband who was a relative of Boaz. His promise was subject to clearing up the priority claim of another man who was a closer relative. Chapter 4 begins with Boaz going to the town gate to meet with the man. Boaz took ten town elders with him to be witnesses to the meeting. Boaz began by saying that Naomi was selling land that belonged to her husband Elimelech who had died in Moab. The man agreed to buy the land but declined once he knew that with the land purchase came the obligation to marry Ruth. He said that marrying her might endanger his estate. Such a marriage would be considered a levirate marriage according to the requirements of Deut. Chapter 25 and any children born of the marriage would be considered offspring of the deceased husband. Apparently the man had another wife and thought that his children’s estate could be compromised by a child of Ruth.

Boaz then announced that he would buy all the property of Elimelech and his sons, Kilion and Mahon. The elders asked God to bless Ruth as He had Rachel and Leah who were the matriarchs of Israel. They also prayed that Boaz’s family would be like that of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah. Boaz took Ruth as his wife and she gave birth to a son and the women of the town praised God that Naomi would be sustained in her old age. They named the child Obed who would become the father of Jesse who was the father of David. The chapter ends with the family lineage beginning with Perez and listing 8 generations of men who descended from him.

Genealogy was important to the nation of Israel and listings of descendants appear numerous times on the Bible beginning in Genesis as the offspring of Cain and Seth are shown. The line of Cain died out with the flood and the genealogy began again with Noah and his sons Shem, Ham and Japheth. It is important to note that the lineage of those 3 sons are separate so that Israelites can be traced back to Seth (see Gen. 10:21-29). Probably the 2 most important men in Seth’s line are Judah, patriarch of the kings and Levi, patriarch of the priests. In the New Testament, there are accounts of the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew and Luke. While Matthew’s listing begins with Abraham, Luke’s listing is in reverse order and goes all the way back to Adam.

It is noteworthy that the elders of Bethlehem mentioned Perez and Tamar. A closer examination of the listings in Matthew and Luke reveals another difference. While Luke’s version lists only the men descended from Adam, Matthew’s version lists 5 women who gave birth to sons who were in the line of Jesus. Those women are Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba (who is listed only as David’s wife) and Mary. Apart from Mary and Bathsheba, the women appear to all be Gentiles (note that Bathsheba’s first husband was a Hittite). The story of Tamar can be found in Genesis chapter 38 where she is described as the daughter of a Canaanite man named Shua. Rahab of course was the woman known as a harlot who was a Canaanite living in the town of Jericho. Ruth was from Moab which was not in Canaan nor was it a part of Israel so she was a Gentile. The mention of Bathsheba is interesting in that she is only shown as the wife of David, not by her own name and she compares unfavorably to Tamar, Rahab and Ruth. As our studies have shown over the last 3 weeks, Ruth was a woman of noble character. While Tamar sinned by sleeping with her father in law, she only resorted to that to preserve her husband’s line after Judah refused to offer her his third son. Judah admitted that she was more righteous than he was (see Gen. 38:26). While Rahab was a harlot, she did protect the Israelite spies and is known as a woman of faith (see Heb. 11:31). I cannot find any redeeming qualities in Bathsheba other than she was the mother of Solomon who was in the royal lineage of Jesus. As I have said on other occasions, God can draw a straight line with a crooked stick.

The inclusion of Tamar, Rahab and Ruth in the genealogy symbolizes God’s plan to graft the Gentiles into His kingdom. As we have previously discussed, Boaz is a type of Christ in his actions with Ruth. David Guzik noted the following about Boaz:

 The kinsman-redeemer had to be a family member; Jesus added humanity to His eternal deity, so He could be our kinsman and save us.

 The kinsman-redeemer had the duty of buying family members out of slavery; Jesus redeemed us from slavery to sin and death.

 The kinsman-redeemer had the duty of buying back land that had been forfeited; Jesus will redeem the earth that mankind “sold” over to Satan.

 Boaz, as kinsman-redeemer to Ruth, was not motivated by self-interest, but motivated by love for Ruth. Jesus’ motivation for redeeming us is His great love for us.

 Boaz, as kinsman-redeemer to Ruth, had to have a plan to redeem Ruth unto himself — and some might have thought the plan to be foolish. Jesus has a plan to redeem us, and some might think the plan foolish (saving men by dying for them on a cruel cross?), yet the plan works and is glorious.

 Boaz, as kinsman-redeemer to Ruth, took her as his bride; the people Jesus has redeemed are collectively called His bride