

The One Born in Bethlehem

Ruth 4:9-15

I love the Hebrew Scriptures. They're filled with history, poetry, allegory, and most of all, Good News. The book of Ruth is our subject, and the early Hebrews had the story of Ruth on the same scroll as the story of Judges. Judges powerfully demonstrates the chaos that arises when sin reigns and people do "that what is right in their own eyes" (Judg. 17:6). Yet during the rebellion, chaos, and self-destruction of Israel, God chose to redeem His people. Ruth was part of the same scroll as Judges and offers a message of redemption and hope for people in chaos. Ruth highlights God's goodness and His grace. The entire story is an allegory for sinners, for "Your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 54:5).

There are some wonderful parallels between the birth of Jesus and the birth of Obed (Ruth's son).

1. Joseph and Mary were blessed by an angel prior to the birth of their Son (Matt. 1:24).
Just as Boaz and Ruth were blessed by the elders of the city (vs. 9-14).
2. Mary experienced the favor of the LORD to miraculously conceive Jesus (Luke 1:28).
Ruth experienced the favor of the LORD to miraculously conceive Obed (v. 13)
3. Jesus was born in Bethlehem-Ephrathah just as the prophet Micah foretold (Micah 5:1).
Obed was born in Bethlehem-Ephrathah just as the elders foretold (v. 12).
4. The name of Jesus is famous all over the world (Acts 4:12).
The name of Obed became famous in Israel (v. 14)
5. Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of the world, known as "Christ the Redeemer" (Titus 2:14).
The LORD gave to Ruth a son, described as "her redeemer" (v. 14).

The events of Ruth, Boaz, and the birth of Obed occurs well over 1,000 years before the birth of Christ. The parallels of the two births continue. In verse 15, there is a vivid description of your Redeemer, Jesus.

¹⁵ May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."

I. The One born in Bethlehem is a restorer of real life – "may he be to you a restorer of life" (v. 15).

Define life may not be as easy as you think. Webster gives several definitions including: (a). the quality that distinguishes a vital functional being from a dead body; (b). the period from birth to death; and (c). a way or manner of living. It is this last definition that defines the biblical usage of one's life.

I came so you can have real and eternal life, more and better life than you ever dreamed of (Jn 10:10).

II. The One born in Bethlehem is a sustainer of old age – "may he sustain you in your old age (v. 15).

Our world is built around a culture of youth. Television, business, sports, entertainment, and other cultural venues all emphasize youth. Youth is fleeting, but oh how people attempt to keep it close.

"Do not lose heart. Outwardly we're wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed" (II Cor. 4:16).

Growing old either means a person becomes bitter or better. "Christ *in us* is our hope" (Col. 1:27).

III. The One born in Bethlehem is a provider of true love – "(she) who loves you has given birth" (v. 15).

Some people are under the mistaken notion that God the Father doesn't like us, but the Son does.

"For GOD so loved the world that HE gave us His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). You will never experience any greater love than that which you have from God the Father He gave you His Son.

"If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? (Rom. 8:32). Trust Him who redeems you!