



Study Guide: Ruth – Chapter 4

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Ruth Chapter 4 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Ruth Chapter 4 serves as the climactic conclusion to the story of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz. It reveals the legal and social processes involved in redeeming land and family lineage in ancient Israel, while also highlighting God's providential care in preserving the family line that would eventually lead to King David and ultimately to Jesus Christ. This chapter demonstrates themes of redemption, loyalty, and divine orchestration in human affairs.

Context

The Book of Ruth is set during the period of the Judges, a time marked by social and religious instability in Israel. Ruth, a Moabite widow, has chosen to stay with her Israelite mother-in-law, Naomi, and embrace Naomi's faith. In Chapter 3, Ruth follows Naomi's instructions and approaches Boaz, a relative with the legal right to redeem Naomi's family property and marry Ruth. Chapter 4 unfolds the legal proceedings and social customs surrounding this redemption, illustrating the importance of family loyalty and covenant faithfulness in Israelite society.

Outline

The chapter opens with Boaz taking action to secure the redemption of Naomi's land and Ruth's marriage. He meets with the nearer kinsman at the city gate, where legal transactions were customarily conducted. After explaining the situation, the nearer kinsman declines to redeem the land because it would require marrying Ruth and potentially jeopardizing his own estate. Boaz then publicly declares his intention to redeem both the land and Ruth. The elders and witnesses confirm the transaction, and Boaz marries Ruth. The chapter concludes with the birth of their son, Obed, who becomes the grandfather of King David, thus linking this story to the Messianic lineage.

Verse-by-Verse Study



Verses 1-3: Boaz goes to the city gate, a place of legal authority, and invites the nearer kinsman to discuss the redemption of Naomi's land. This shows Boaz's respect for legal customs and his desire to do things properly.

Verses 4-6: Boaz explains the situation, including the need to marry Ruth to maintain the family line. The nearer kinsman initially agrees to redeem the land but withdraws when he learns it involves marrying Ruth, fearing it would endanger his own inheritance.

Verses 7-10: The custom of removing a sandal to confirm a transaction is described, symbolizing the transfer of redemption rights. Boaz publicly declares his commitment to redeem the land and marry Ruth, ensuring the continuation of the family name.

Verses 11-12: The elders and witnesses bless Boaz and Ruth, praying for prosperity and a lineage as significant as that of Perez, an ancestor of King David. This blessing underscores the importance of family heritage and divine favor.

Verses 13-17: Boaz marries Ruth, and she bears a son named Obed. The women of the town celebrate, recognizing Obed as a restorer of Naomi's family line. Obed's birth is significant as he becomes the grandfather of David, linking this story to Israel's royal history.

Verses 18-22: The genealogy traces the descendants from Perez to David, emphasizing the providential nature of Ruth's story in God's plan for Israel and the Messianic lineage.

Key Themes

Redemption is central to this chapter, both in the legal sense of reclaiming land and in the personal sense of restoring family and hope. Boaz acts as a kinsman-redeemer, a role that prefigures Christ's redemptive work. The theme of loyalty is also evident in Ruth's faithfulness to Naomi and Boaz's commitment to Ruth. Divine providence is woven throughout, showing how God works through ordinary human actions to accomplish His purposes, particularly in preserving the Messianic line.

Cross-References

The concept of the kinsman-redeemer is found in Leviticus 25 and Deuteronomy 25, where family members are responsible for redeeming property and preserving family lines. The genealogy at the end of Ruth 4 connects directly to 2 Samuel 7, where God establishes David's dynasty. The blessing of Perez recalls Genesis 38, highlighting God's unexpected



ways of working through imperfect circumstances. The theme of redemption also points forward to the New Testament, where Christ is portrayed as the ultimate Redeemer in Galatians 4 and Hebrews 9.

Application

Ruth Chapter 4 encourages believers to trust in God's providence even when circumstances seem uncertain. It challenges us to act with integrity and faithfulness in our relationships and responsibilities. The example of Boaz shows the importance of honoring legal and social obligations while demonstrating kindness and generosity. Ruth's story reminds us that God can use anyone, regardless of background, to fulfill His purposes. Finally, it invites us to see Christ as our ultimate Redeemer who restores and renews our lives.

Summary

Ruth Chapter 4 brings the story of redemption to a joyful conclusion, illustrating how God's providence operates through human decisions and legal customs. Boaz's role as kinsman-redeemer secures Naomi's future and establishes a lineage that leads to King David and the Messiah. The chapter highlights themes of loyalty, faithfulness, and divine orchestration, encouraging believers to trust God's plan and live with integrity. It stands as a powerful testament to God's ability to redeem and restore, even in difficult circumstances.