

Ruth

Lesson 6

Preserving the Line of the King: the Levirate Marriage

Introduction

Philippians 3:8-10

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

I. The Principle & Practice of the Levirate Marriage.

(1) The Levirate Marriage in the Law.

Ruth 1:11-14

Deuteronomy 25:5, 6

The levirate marriage: The brother of the deceased man would marry the widow and the children would inherit in his name. He was considered a redeemer (goel) of the property and family. He would have a number of duties:

- Buy back property that the family had sold
- Provide an heir for the deceased brother by marrying the brother's wife and producing a child with her.
- Buy back a family member who had been sold into slavery due to poverty.
- Avenge a relative who had been murdered by killing the murderer.

(2). A Prior Poor Example

Genesis 38

Judah had three sons by his Canaanite wife: Er, Onan and Shelah. Judah's eldest son married Tamar. Er died and Onan refused to fulfill his duties. He did not want to diminish his inheritance. Therefore, God killed Onan. Then Judah refused to give the 3rd son, Shelah to Tamar and she acted to deceive Judah, thus preserving the line.

As opposed to this prior poor example, the levirate marriage was to be an act of selflessness, a gracious act – that was contrary to human nature.

- (3) The Greater Purposes of the Levirate marriage.
- a. To save from extinction and poverty
 - b. **To preserve the line of the Promised Messiah.**
 - c. Preserve the land/property in the Nation of Israel.

II. The Prophecy to Judah

Genesis 49:1

And Jacob called his sons and said, 'Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days.'

Genesis 49:8-12.

Genesis 49:10

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.

The scepter was an ornate staff or rod that is a symbol of royal authority. A lawgiver is one who issues statutes. With the words, Jacob predicted that a royal line would arise from Judah's descendants.

Shiloh is an interesting and obscure word. It probably means the one "To Whom It Belongs." The rightful King. The One to whom all royal authority belongs. When He comes He will be the end of the line. And the tribe of Judah will have an everlasting Lawgiver in its ranks. Shiloh is therefore a name for the coming Messiah King.

It was from the tribe of Judah that this One would come. This was a glorious prophecy for Judah.

Ruth's Situation: There are no brothers, but there is a near kinsman... Boaz. Will he help her?

For Further Thought

What examples can you think of, of things that God calls us to do that may run counter to our natural inclinations and require some sacrifice on our part?

What quality of Boaz is most attractive to you? Why?

In thinking of people in your life – are there qualities in their lives that speak to you of the Lord, and show love in action?