

“Jewish Life and Death”

Ruth 1:1-5

- *The importance of Jewish lineage, genealogy, and family history:*
 - It was important to prove their actual identity as a Jew. One who was a partaker of the blessings of Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21; Genesis 26:1-5) and a part of the people chosen by God (Deuteronomy 7:6-11). To be a Jewish citizen was to have a life totally committed to Yahweh (Joshua 24:14-15; Romans 2:28-29).
 - It was also important in the context of where you would live and the ordering of the Jewish culture. Each of the twelve tribes of Israel/Jacob were given certain parcels of land to steward for God and for His glory, (Genesis 35:22-26; Joshua 13-19) except for the tribe of Levi, who were the priests (Numbers 18:20-21). To inherit the land you must be able to prove that you were of that specific tribe.
 - The Jews took incredibly seriously the family unit because it brought God glory by being a holy people who obeyed Him and taught their children to worship and obey Him; it brought them familial continuity by a land/inheritance that would be kept for their bloodline, and it brought them hope of a future spiritual inheritance as well.
 - The Jews also knew that the Messiah was going to come from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:8-10; Revelation 5:5), therefore, making them passionate about the importance of generational continuity. The book of Matthew traces Christ’s genealogy back to the promise made to Abraham for the Jewish audience (Matthew 1:1-17) and the book of Luke trace’s Christ’s lineage back to the promise made to Adam for the Gentile audience (Luke 3:23-38).
 - It would have been a terrible thing in the Jewish culture to be left without an heir to carry on their name.
- Also the name of individuals had incredible significance in the Jewish culture as well. Oftentimes pointing to either an attribute of God or the character of the person.
 - *Elimilech*: My God is king *Naomi*: Pleasant, lovely, delightful *Mara*: The Lord has dealt bitterly *Mahlon*: To be sick *Chillion*: Failing/Annihilation *Boaz*: Strength *Yahweh*: I Am (self-existence/self-sufficient)
 - The term *Ephrathites* was originally just simply the name of those who were from Bethlehem (Genesis 35:18-19) but it also may have been used for those who were of great wealth or importance from the city of Bethlehem (Ruth 1:2).
- Old and New Testament worldview of death:
 - Naomi’s men had died and there was no one to carry on the name of Elimelech (Deuteronomy 25:5-10; 1 Samuel 24:21-22; Psalm 109:13-15; Ruth 4:13-22).
 - In the Old Testament there was a lot of uncertainty about death. Death was a slightly more terrifying thought for an Old Testament Jew, as opposed to the Christian today, because of the limited revelation of what was to come, (Psalm 88:4-7 & 10-12) but we still see a hopefulness of God to rescue from the clutches of death (Psalm 49:10-12 & 15; Psalm 16:10-11) and that they understood there would be a judgment (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).
 - The New Testament tells us that death has been defeated (Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57) and that for the Christian death is gain (Philippians 1:21-23). But that does not mean that death and loss is easy for the true believer (Philippians 2:27; John 11:32-37; Revelation 21:4).