

Ruth 4:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said,
We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come
into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did
build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah,
and be famous in Beth-lehem:

Analysis

Community blessing: '**And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses**'. The entire assembly affirms their witness role, creating legally unassailable transaction. Their blessing continues: '**The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel**'. This remarkable blessing compares Ruth to the matriarchs who built Israel—high honor for a Moabite convert. The community recognizes God's hand in bringing Ruth to Israel and prays she'll be fruitful like the foundational mothers. '**And do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem**' prays for Boaz's prosperity and reputation in his hometown. The community's enthusiastic blessing shows acceptance of Ruth and joy at the redemption.

Historical Context

Rachel and Leah, though rivals in life (Genesis 29-35), together bore the twelve patriarchs who became Israel's tribes. Comparing Ruth to them represented highest possible honor—suggesting she would contribute foundationally to Israel's identity and future. This blessing proved prophetic: Ruth's great-grandson David and ultimate descendant Jesus Christ fulfilled it beyond imagination. Ephratah was

Bethlehem's ancient name, connecting this blessing to messianic prophecy (Micah 5:2) that Bethlehem Ephratah would produce Israel's ruler. Ancient blessings invoked fertility, prosperity, and reputation—the three elements mentioned here—as markers of divine favor.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the community's blessing illustrate the church's role in celebrating and supporting marriages?
2. What does comparing Ruth to Rachel and Leah teach about fully incorporating converts into covenant community with highest honor?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר וְכָל	הָעָם	אֲשֶׁר	בֵּשַׁעַר	וְהַזְקֵנִים
said	And all the people	that were in the gate	and the elders	
H559	H3605 H5971	H834	H8179	H2205
אֵל	הַבָּאָה	הָאִשָּׁה	אֶת	יְהוָה
We are witnesses	make	The LORD	the woman	that is come
H5707	H5414	H3068	H802	H413
בְּיָת	כְּרָחֵל	וְכֵלֶאָה	אֲשֶׁר	בָּנוּ
into thine house	like Rachel	and like Leah	did build	which two
H1004	H7354	H3812	H834 H1129	H853 H8147
בְּיָת	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וַעֲשֵׂה	חַיִּיל	בְּאֶפְרַתָּה
into thine house	of Israel	and do	thou worthily	in Ephratah
H1004	H3478	H6213	H2428	H672
וְיָקָרָא	לְחָם:	בְּבֵית יְשׁוּעָה		
and be famous	in Bethlehem			
H7121	H1035			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 2:6 (References Israel): And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Micah 5:2 (References Israel): But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Psalms 132:6 (Parallel theme): Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.

Genesis 24:60 (Parallel theme): And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

Deuteronomy 25:9 (Parallel theme): Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.

Ruth 1:2 (Parallel theme): And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

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