

Ruth 4:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him.

Analysis

Ruth's value declared: **'And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age'**. The women prophesy that the child will restore Naomi's vitality and provide for her in old age—promises that David's eventual care for his family would fulfill. Then the remarkable statement: **'For thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him'**. This extraordinary declaration values Ruth above the hypothetically perfect family (seven sons representing completeness). The women recognize Ruth's chesed (covenant love) as surpassing biological family ties. Her faithful, sacrificial love demonstrated covenant loyalty exceeding natural obligations. This validates Ruth's incorporation into Israel—she's not merely tolerated foreigner but celebrated as Israel's ideal.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern culture particularly valued sons as providers, protectors, and perpetuators of family name. Daughters married and left; sons remained and cared for parents. The declaration that one foreign daughter-in-law equals or exceeds seven sons represented ultimate commendation. Archaeological evidence shows ancient Mediterranean societies favored sons for economic and social reasons. That Bethlehem's women publicly declared Ruth 'better than seven sons'

demonstrated revolutionary recognition that covenant faithfulness transcends biology, ethnicity, and gender. Ruth the Moabite convert embodied covenant ideal better than biological Israelite sons might have. This foreshadows NT truth that spiritual family supersedes biological (Matthew 12:48-50).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does valuing Ruth above seven sons teach about covenant relationships transcending biological ties?
2. How does this demonstrate that faithful love (chesed) matters more than ethnic origin or biological connection?

Interlinear Text

אֶת	וּלְכֹלֵךְ לִי	בְּפֶשַׁע	לְמַשְׁ יִב	לָךְ	וְהִיא
H853	H3557	H5315	H7725	H0	H1961
	and a nourisher	of thy life	And he shall be unto thee a restorer		
יָלַד תּוֹ	אֲהַב תֶּךָ	אֲשֶׁר	כִּלְתִּיךָ	כִּי	שִׁבְתִּיךָ
H3205	H157	H834	H3618	H3588	H7872
hath born	which loveth		for thy daughter in law		of thine old age
בָּנִים:	מִשְׁבַּע הֵא	לָךְ	ט וְכֵה	הִיא	אֲשֶׁר
H1121	H7651	H0	H2896	H1931	H834
sons	to thee than seven		thee which is better		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 55:22 (Parallel theme): Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

Isaiah 46:4 (Parallel theme): And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

Genesis 45:11 (Parallel theme): And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

1 Samuel 1:8 (Parallel theme): Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?

Genesis 47:12 (Parallel theme): And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families.

Proverbs 18:24 (Parallel theme): A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.