

Exegetical Notes for Ruth 1:6-22

KEY

Barber = *Ruth: An Exegetical Commentary* (Cyril J. Barber). Chicago: Moody Press, 1983.

BBC = *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. Edited by John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Block = Block, Daniel I., *Judges, Ruth in the New American Commentary, Vol 6*. Edited by E. Ray Clendenen. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1999.

Bush = Bush, Frederick. *Ruth/Esther in the Word Biblical Commentary, Vol 9*. Edited by David H. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas: Word Books, 1996.

Campbell = Campbell, Edward F., *Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary in The Anchor Bible, Vol 7*. Edited by William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1975.

Harrison = *Introduction to the Old Testament* (R.K. Harrison). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969.

K&D = Keil, C.F. and Delitzsch, F. in the *Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 2*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

MBC = MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005.

PC = *The Pulpit Commentary: Ruth*. (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909.

Piper = *A Sweet and Bitter Providence* (John Piper). Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.

TWOT = *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (R. Laird Harris; Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce Waltke). Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. Two Volumes.

UBS = *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Ruth* (2nd ed.) (Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A.). New York: United Bible Societies, 1991.

Wood = *Distressing Days of the Judges* (Leon Wood). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975.

Wiersbe = *Be Committed. "Be" Commentary Series* (Wiersbe, W. W. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993).

Three Steps of Exegesis

1. **Translation.** Work through a transliteration of the text and translate the passage directly, if possible.
2. **Exegesis.** Detailed exegesis of the passage by way of a "shot-gun" approach, using various exegetical tools.
 - Work from critical commentaries to practical.
 - Word studies and cross-references (analogy of the faith).
 - Applicational analysis - applicational issues arising from the text.
 - Theological analysis - theological issues arising from the text.
3. **Structural Analysis.** Diagram the passage developing a detailed outline and central proposition.
 - Smooth away all of the wrinkles.
 - The process is to yield an accurate "statue" as I chisel away the debris.

Basic English Diagram

- 6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law
that she might return from the land of Moab,
for she had heard in the land of Moab ==>that the LORD had visited His people
in giving them food.
- 7 So she departed from the place where she was,
and her two daughters-in-law with her;
and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.
- 8 And
Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law,
“Go, return each of you to her mother’s house.
May the LORD deal kindly with you
as you have dealt with the dead
and with me.
- 9 “May the LORD grant that you may find rest,
each in the house of her husband.”
- Then
she kissed them,
and they lifted up their voices and wept.
- 10 And they said to her, ==> “No, but we will surely return with you to your people.”
- 11 But Naomi said, ==> “Return, my daughters.
Why should you go with me?
Have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?
- 12 “Return, my daughters!
Go, for I am too old to have a husband.
If I said I have hope, if I should even have a husband tonight and also bear sons,
13 would you therefore wait until they were grown?
Would you therefore refrain from marrying?
No, my daughters;
for it is harder for me than for you,
for the hand of the LORD has gone forth against me.”
- 14 And they lifted up their voices and wept again;
and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law,
but Ruth clung to her.
- 15 Then she said,
“Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back
to her people and her gods;
return after your sister-in-law.”

16 But Ruth said,
 “Do not urge me to leave you
 or turn back from following you;
 for where you go, I will go,
 and where you lodge, I will lodge.
 Your people *shall be* my people,
 and your God, my God.
17 “Where you die, I will die,
 and there I will be buried.
 Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse,
 if *anything but* death parts you and me.”
18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.
19 So
 they both went
 until they came to Bethlehem.

 And it came about
 when they had come to Bethlehem,
 that all the city was stirred
 because of them,
 and the women said, “Is this Naomi?”
20 And she said to them, “Do not call me Naomi;
 call me Mara,
 for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.
21 “I went out full,
 but the LORD has brought me back empty.
 Why do you call me Naomi,
 since the LORD has witnessed against me
 and the Almighty has afflicted me?”

22 So Naomi returned,
 and with her
 Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law,
 who returned
 from the land of Moab.
And they came to Bethlehem
 at the beginning of barley harvest.

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

HEBREW TEXT (BHS):

- 6 וַתִּקַּם הִיא וּכְלִתֶיהָ וַתָּשֶׁב מִשְׂדֵי מוֹאָב כִּי שָׁמְעָה בְשָׂדֵה מוֹאָב כִּי־פָקַד יְהוָה אֶת־עַמּוֹ לָחֶטֶת לָהֶם לָחֶם:
- 7 וַתֵּצֵא מִן־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה־שָׁמָּה וּשְׁתֵי כְלִתֶיהָ עִמָּהּ וַתֵּלְכֶנָּה בְּדֶרֶךְ לָשׁוּב אֶל־אָרֶץ יְהוּדָה: 7
- 8 וַתֹּאמֶר נַעֲמִי לְשְׁתֵי כְלִתֶיהָ לָכֵּן שָׁבְנָה אִשָּׁה לְבֵית אִמָּה יַעֲשׂ יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם עִם־הַמֵּתִים וְעִמָּדִי:
- 9 יִתֵּן יְהוָה לָכֶם וּמִצָּאֵן מְנוּחָה אִשָּׁה בֵּית אִשָּׁה וַתִּשְׁק לָהֶן וַתִּשְׁאַנָּה קוֹלָן וַתְּבַכֶּינָה: 9
- וַתֹּאמְרָנָה־לָּהּ כִּי־אֲתָדָן שׁוּב לְעַמִּי: 10
- וַתֹּאמֶר נַעֲמִי שָׁבְנָה בְּנָתִי לָמָּה תֵּלְכֶנָּה עִמִּי הַעוֹד־לִי בָנִים בְּמַעֲי וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְאֻנְשִׁים: 11
- 12 שָׁבְנָה בְּנָתִי לָכֵן כִּי זָקַנְתִּי מֵהַיּוֹת לְאִישׁ כִּי אִמְרָתִי יִשְׁלִי תִקְוָה גַם הָיִיתִי הַלֵּילָה לְאִישׁ וְגַם לְדָתִי בָנִים:
- 13 הֲלֵהֶן תִּשְׁבְּרָנָה עַד אֲשֶׁר יִגְדְּלוּ הֲלֵהֶן תַּעֲגֹנָה לְבִלְתִּי הַיּוֹת לְאִישׁ אֵל בְּנָתִי כִּי־מַרְלִי מְאֹד מִכֶּם כִּי־יִצְאָה בִּי יַד־יְהוָה:
- וַתִּשְׁנֶה קוֹלָן וַתְּבַכֶּינָה עוֹד וַתִּשְׁק עַרְפָּהּ לַחֲמוּתָהּ וְרוּת דָּבְקָה בָּהּ: 14
- וַתֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה שָׁבָה יְבַמְתָּד אֶל־עַמָּהּ וְאֶל־אֱלֹהֶיהָ שׁוּבִי אַחֲרַי יְבַמְתָּד: 15
- 16 וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת אֶל־תִּפְגַּעֵי־בִי לְעִזְבֹּד לָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרָיִךְ כִּי אֶל־אֲשֶׁר תֵּלְכִי אֵלָיִךְ וּבִאֲשֶׁר תֵּלִינִי אֵלָיִן עַמִּי עִמִּי וְאֱלֹהֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵי:
- 17 בִּאֲשֶׁר תִּמּוּתִי אֲמוֹת וְשֵׁם אֶקְבֹּר כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לִּי וְכֹה יִסִּיף כִּי הַמּוֹת יִפְרִיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ: 17
- וַתֵּרָא כִּי־מִתְאַמְצֶת הִיא לְלָכֶת אִתָּהּ וַתַּחְדֵּל לְדַבֵּר אֵלֶיהָ: 18
- 19 וַתֵּלְכֶנָּה שְׁתֵּיהֶם עַד־בָּאָנָה בֵּית לָחֶם וַיְהִי כַּבָּאָנָה בֵּית לָחֶם וַתְּהִי כָל־הָעִיר עֲלֵיהֶן וַתֹּאמְרָנָה הַזֹּאת נַעֲמִי:
- וַתֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶן אֶל־תִּקְרָאנָה לִּי נַעֲמִי קְרָאֵן לִּי מְרָא כִּי־הֵמֶר שְׂדֵי לִּי מְאֹד: 20
- 21 אֲנִי מִלֵּאָה הִלְכְתִּי וְרִיקָם הִשִּׁיבֵנִי יְהוָה לָמָּה תִקְרָאנָה לִּי נַעֲמִי וַיְהוּה עָנָה בִּי וּשְׂדֵי הָרַע לִּי:
- 22 וַתָּשֶׁב נַעֲמִי וְרוּת הַמוֹאֲבִיָּה כָלְתָהּ עִמָּהּ הַשָּׁבָה מִשְׂדֵי מוֹאָב וְהָמָּה בָּאוּ בֵּית לָחֶם בְּתַחֲלַת קֶצֶר שְׁעָרִים

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB):

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the land of Moab, for she had heard in the land of Moab that the LORD had visited His people in giving them food. 7 So she departed from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. 8 And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9 "May the LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband." Then she

kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. 10 And they said to her, “*No*, but we will surely return with you to your people.” 11 But Naomi said, “Return, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? 12 “Return, my daughters! Go, for I am too old to have a husband. If I said I have hope, if I should even have a husband tonight and also bear sons, 13 would you therefore wait until they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters; for it is harder for me than for you, for the hand of the LORD has gone forth against me.” 14 And they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

15 Then she said, “Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” 16 But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you *or* turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people *shall be* my people, and your God, my God. 17 “Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if *anything but* death parts you and me.” 18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

19 So they both went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came about when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was stirred because of them, and the women said, “Is this Naomi?” 20 And she said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21 “I went out full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?”

22 So Naomi returned, and with her Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, who returned from the land of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

PASSAGE / BOOK OUTLINE:

I. Act One: The Royal Line with Hope in Ruin (1:1-22)

- A. Scene One: Retreat from Bethlehem (vv. 1-2)
- B. Scene Two: Ruin in Moab (vv. 3-5)
- C. Scene Three: Returning to Bethlehem (vv. 6-22)

1. Leaving Moab (vv. 6-18)

- a. Naomi Decides to Return to Bethlehem (vv. 6-7)
- b. Naomi Exhorts her Daughters-in-law to Stay in Moab (v. 8)
- c. Naomi Kisses her Daughters-in-law Goodbye (v. 9)
- d. Ruth and Orpah Object (v. 10)
- e. Naomi's Insistence (vv. 11-13)
 - (1) She has no sons to offer
 - (2) God's hand is against her
- f. Orpah Leaves; Ruth Cleaves (v. 14)
- g. Naomi's Last Appeal to Ruth (v. 15)
- h. Ruth's Resolve and Repentance (vv. 16-17)
- i. Naomi Surrenders to Ruth's Resolve (v. 18)

2. Arriving in Bethlehem (19-22)

- a. The People Remember Naomi (v. 19)
- b. Naomi Tells of Her Suffering (v. 20-21)
- c. The Journey is Over (v. 22)

II. Act Two: The Royal Line with Hope Renewed (2:1-23)

- A. Scene One: Ruth Reaping (vv. 1-7)
- B. Scene Two: Ruth Rewarded - Part 1 (vv. 8-13)
- C. Scene Three: Ruth Rewarded - Part 2 (vv. 14-17)
- D. Scene Four: Ruth Reports (vv. 18-23)

III. Act Three: The Royal Line with Hope at Risk (3:1-18)

- A. Scene One: Remedy Proposed (vv. 1-5)
- B. Scene Two: Reception or Rejection (vv. 6-15)
- C. Scene Three: Resting in Providence (vv. 16-18)

IV. Act Four: The Royal Line with Hope Restored (4:1-17)

- A. Scene One: Resolving Legal Matters (vv. 1-12)
- B. Scene Two: Romance and Redemption (vv. 13-17)

Epilogue - Royal Rights and The Resultant Redeemer (4:18-22)

SERMON OUTLINE:

I. Act One: The Royal Line with Hope in Ruin (1:1-22)

- A. Scene One: Retreat from Bethlehem (vv. 1-2)
- B. Scene Two: Ruin in Moab (vv. 3-5)
- C. Scene Three: Returning to Bethlehem (vv. 6-22)

1. Leaving Moab (vv. 6-18)

a. Naomi Learns of God's Visitation: God's Sovereign Glory in Famine or Feast (vv. 6-7)

b. Naomi Thinks She Knows Best: God's Sovereign Glory in Spite of Ourselves (vv. 8-13)

(1) Naomi's Short-Sightedness (vv. 11-13)

(a) Physically: She has no sons to offer

(b) Spiritually: God's hand is against her

Dialogue 1 - Naomi speaks to Ruth and Orpah (8-9a)
Transition - Tears of Separation (9b)
Dialogue 2 - Ruth and Orpah Object & Naomi Overrules (10-13)
Transition - Tears of Separation (14)
Dialogue 3 - Naomi and Ruth (15-18)
Transition - Traveling to Bethlehem (19a)
Dialogue 4 - Naomi and the townspeople (19b-21)

Conclusion (22)

- c. Orpah Leaves; Ruth Cleaves: God's Sovereign Glory at Work in His Choice (vv. 14-15)
- d. Ruth's Confession: God's Sovereign Glory in a Sinner's Repentance (vv. 16-18)

2. Arriving in Bethlehem (19-22)

- a. The People Remember Naomi (v. 19)
- b. Naomi Tells of Her Suffering (v. 20-21)
- c. The Journey is Over (v. 22)

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what's t/passage talking about):

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what's t/passage saying about what it's talking about):

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text):

CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON:

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: When Going Back Means Moving Forward

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

This scene divides into 4 dialogues / conversations bracketed by an introduction and conclusion:

Introduction (6-7)

Dialogue 1 - Naomi speaks to Ruth and Orpah (8-9a)

Transition - Tears of Separation (9b)

Dialogue 2 - Ruth and Orpah Object & Naomi Overrules (10-13)

Transition - Tears of Separation (14)

Dialogue 3 - Naomi and Ruth (15-18)

Transition - Traveling to Bethlehem (19a)

Dialogue 4 - Naomi and the townspeople (19b-21)

Conclusion (22)

For a detailed look at the structure see Bush pp. 71-74.

1:6 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתָּקָם הִיא וְכַלְתֵּיהָ וַתָּשָׁב מִשְׂדֵי מוֹאָב כִּי שָׁמְעָה בְּשׂוּדָה מוֹאָב
Moab in the country-side of she had heard because Moab from the country-side of and she returned and daughters-in-law she and arose
כִּי־פָקַד יְהוָה אֶת־עַמּוֹ לָתֵת לָהֶם לֶחֶם:
bread to them to give his people YHWH that (he) considered

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the land of Moab, for she had heard in the land of Moab that the LORD had visited His people in giving them food.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the land of Moab,
וַתָּקָם הִיא וְכַלְתֵּיהָ וַתָּשָׁב מִשְׂדֵי מוֹאָב

Here the narrative focuses on Naomi. She is perhaps the central character (cf. Introduction). Verse 3 refers to Elimelech as her husband rather than the other way around.

for she had heard in the land of Moab that the LORD had visited His people in giving them food.
כִּי שָׁמְעָה בְּשׂוּדָה מוֹאָב כִּי־פָקַד יְהוָה אֶת־עַמּוֹ לָתֵת לָהֶם לֶחֶם:

Lord had visited = the famine was from the hand of God (cf. v. 1).

She wants to be where the Lord has blessed and under His blessing. The parallels with Joseph and Egypt (cf. Piper, 29 ff.).

Naomi learned that rain had come to her homeland. The famine was ended and God provided **food** (crops from the field and fruit from the trees). It was **the LORD** who had stopped the famine and given rain; it was not Baal, who the Canaanites believed was the god who sent rain. **Return** is a key word in Ruth. Hebrew forms of this word are used several times in this first chapter. Here is an apt illustration of repentance. Naomi reversed the direction she and her husband had taken. She turned away from **Moab** and the errors of the past. She turned her back on the tragic graves of her loved ones and headed **back** to **Judah**, her homeland.¹

¹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Ru 1:6–7). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

1:7 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֵּצֵא מִן־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה־שָׂמָּה וּשְׁתֵּי בָלְתֵיהָ עִמָּה
with her her daughters-in-law and the two (of) she was there which from the place and so she set out
וַתֵּלְכֶנָּה בַדֶּרֶךְ לָשׁוּב אֶל־אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה:
Judah to the land of to return on the way and they went

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

So she departed from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

So she departed from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her;

וַתֵּצֵא מִן־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה־שָׂמָּה וּשְׁתֵּי בָלְתֵיהָ עִמָּה

and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

וַתֵּלְכֶנָּה בַדֶּרֶךְ לָשׁוּב אֶל־אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה:

Probably have the 3 of them walking along toward the path that lead back to the Jordan River. In her mind they are walking with her part way before they say their goodbyes.

From what follows later in chapter 1, it seems quite clear that Naomi did not invite her daughters-in-law to follow her. She apparently only informed them of her intentions of going, and they took the initiative to go along with her. In order to point out clearly that the conversation, beginning with verse 8, began only after the journey had started, the latter part of verse 7 can be conveniently rendered as *to go back to Judah*. Perhaps the actual conversation took place at the border between Moab and Judah in the Jordan valley.²

² Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A. (1991). *A translator's handbook on the book of Ruth* (2nd ed.). UBS Handbook Series (11). New York: United Bible Societies.

1:8 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֲמִי לְשֵׁתֵי כַלְתֵּיהָ לִכְנֹה שׁוּבָנָה אִשָּׁה לְבֵית אִמָּהּ
her mother to the house each return go her daughters-in-law to the two (of) Naomi and she said
יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם עִם־הַמֵּתִים וְעִמָּדִי:
and with me with the dead you did as that lovingkindness with you YHWH may (he) do

לִכְנֹה - an imperative used to gain attention (Bush suggests "Well!" or "Well now!" as a colloquial rendering). The LXX uses the Gk. imperative "go!"

חֶסֶד - Lovingkindness.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go, return each of you to her mother’s house. May the LORD deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go, return each of you to her mother’s house.

וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֲמִי לְשֵׁתֵי כַלְתֵּיהָ לִכְנֹה שׁוּבָנָה אִשָּׁה לְבֵית אִמָּהּ

Why "mother's house?" Seems strange. In the OT a widow returns to her "father's house" (Eg. Gen. 38:11; Lev. 22:13). Suggestions: The fathers are dead; Mothers are named as they know how to console; it was a matriarchal society (!?). Bush calls these "strained or improbable or both" (75) suggesting that they are used for parallelism - Naomi wishes to emphasize that a widow ought to return to her mother rather than stay with her mother-in-law. In Songs 3:4, 8:2 and Gen. 24:28 there's indication that the mother's house was used to refer to the mother's role in matters pertaining to a maiden's marriage. Cf. Gen. 24:23-28.

It may be that there is here a trace of some early matriarchal organization such as the ancient Arabs had, in which the tent was normally regarded as the property of the wife.³

May the LORD deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם עִם־הַמֵּתִים וְעִמָּדִי:

The "dead" is simply "Naomi's way of referring in general to her two sons, now deceased" (Bush). They were faithful wives to her sons. Ten years.

³ Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A. (1991). *A translator's handbook on the book of Ruth* (2nd ed.). UBS Handbook Series (12). New York: United Bible Societies.

רַחֲמִים - Lovingkindness. "When this kind of attitude prevails in a home, bitterness, retaliation (verbal as well as physical), criticism, and all forms of conduct that tear at relationships are excluded." [Barber, 54]

The word **kindness** is the Hebrew word *hesed*. It is an important word in the Book of Ruth (cf. 2:20; 3:10) and throughout the Old Testament. It speaks of God's covenant loyalty to His people. It involves grace in that it was extended even when it was not deserved. Here divine will and human action went hand in hand. Both God and humans were doers of *hesed*.⁴

⁴ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Ru 1:8). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

1:9 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

יִתֵּן יְהוָה לָכֶם וּמְצֹאֵן מְנוּחָה אִשָּׁה בֵּית אִישָׁה וַתִּשָּׁק לָהֶן
for them and she kissed her husband (in) the house of each a resting place and may you find to you YHWH may he give
וַתִּשָּׂאנָה קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכְּינָה:
and they cried their voices and they lifted up

מְנוּחָה = "rest" -- signifies security; the blessing of not having to worry; no anxieties. Cf. Josh. 21:45 where this same word is used in a different setting.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

“May the LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband.” Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

“May the LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband.”

יִתֵּן יְהוָה לָכֶם וּמְצֹאֵן מְנוּחָה אִשָּׁה בֵּית אִישָׁה

Naomi's desire that her daughters-in-law end up finding other husbands. Might be possible in a polygamous culture, difficult in a monogamous one considering how important it was to a man in that culture that he have a wife that can bear children. Here you not only have two widows (no longer virgins) but you have two widows who are apparently barren. May have been wishful thinking on Naomi's part, but from her (short-sighted) perspective, it was about the best there was.

The phrase *make it possible* (Hebrew: “give”) may be rendered in a number of languages as a causative: “may the LORD cause you to marry again” or “may the LORD give you other husbands.”

The Hebrew word here rendered *home* literally means “resting place.” Elsewhere in the Old Testament it is employed as a reference to the promised land (Deut 12:9; 1 Kgs 8:56; Psa 95:11) and to Zion as the place where Yahweh dwells (Psa 132:8, 14). In this context the translation *home* is particularly appropriate, since the Hebrew word carries the meanings of peace and happiness as well as of security, all of which are regarded as the result of marriage (cf. 3:1). It is not enough to translate “have a house,” since widows could possess houses. What is referred to here is a home with a husband. The equivalent in some languages is “to live in a house with your husband.”⁵

5 Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A. (1991). *A translator's handbook on the book of Ruth* (2nd ed.). UBS Handbook Series (13). New York: United Bible Societies.

Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

וַתִּשָּׁק לָהֶן וַתִּשְׂאֲנָה קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכְּינָה:

How can they bear to now lose their beloved mother-in-law? There would be no guarantees that they would ever see her again.

Kissed as in a gesture of saying goodbye. Lifted up their voices and wept indicates weeping with loud sobs. The feminine plural suffix on קוֹלָן shows that all three wept (so Bush).

1:10 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֹּאמְרֵנהּ-לָהֶּם כִּי-אָתָּם נָשׁוּב לְעַמֵּיהֶם׃
and they said to her (no) but with you we want to return to your people

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

And they said to her, “No, but we will surely return with you to your people.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

And they said to her, “No, but we will surely return with you to your people.”

וַתֹּאמְרֵנהּ-לָהֶּם כִּי-אָתָּם נָשׁוּב לְעַמֵּיהֶם׃

1:11 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֻמִי שׁוּבָנָה בְּנֹתַי לָמָּה תֵלְכִנָּה עִמִּי הֲעֹוד־לִי בָנִים בְּמִעֵי
in my womb (are) sons still for me? with me do you want to go to what my daughters return Naomi and she said
וְהָיוּ לְכֶם לְאִנְשִׁים:
as husbands for you so they may be

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

But Naomi said, "Return, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?"

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

But Naomi said, "Return, my daughters.

וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֻמִי שׁוּבָנָה בְּנֹתַי

Why should you go with me?

לָמָּה תֵלְכִנָּה עִמִּי

Rhetorical question.

Have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

י הֲעֹוד־לִי בָנִים בְּמִעֵי וְהָיוּ לְכֶם לְאִנְשִׁים:

בְּמִעֵי ==> not the usual term for "womb" but a word meaning "intestines."

Referring to the custom of levirate marriage. Cf. Deut. 25:5-10. There were no other brothers who could marry them. What of Boaz? Perhaps Naomi wasn't thinking in terms of other relatives.

1:12 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

שׁוּבוּ בָנֹתַי לָכֵן כִּי זָקַנְתִּי מִהַיּוֹת לְאִישׁ כִּי אֶמְרֹתִי יֵשׁ-לִי תִקְוָה
hope there is for me I should say/think if to a man from being I am old for go my daughters turn back
גַּם הָיִיתִי הַלַּיְלָה לְאִישׁ וְגַם יִלְדֹתַי בָּנִים:
sons bear and also to a man/husband the night (if) I should be also

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

“Return, my daughters! Go, for I am too old to have a husband. If I said I have hope, if I should even have a husband tonight and also bear sons,

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

“Return, my daughters! Go, for I am too old to have a husband.

שׁוּבוּ בָנֹתַי לָכֵן כִּי זָקַנְתִּי מִהַיּוֹת לְאִישׁ

Idiom meaning too old to bear children, not to marry, per se. Customarily, Naomi would have been married in her early to mid-teens. She would have had her two sons by age 20. They would have married around age 16. Adding in the 10 years in Moab would leave Naomi in her mid to late 40s, likely past the age of child-bearing. Ruth and Orpah, on the other hand, would have been in their middle to late 20s.

If I said I have hope, if I should even have a husband tonight and also bear sons,

כִּי אֶמְרֹתִי יֵשׁ-לִי תִקְוָה גַם הָיִיתִי הַלַּיְלָה לְאִישׁ וְגַם יִלְדֹתַי בָּנִים:

Awkward verse break.

1:13 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

הֲלֵהְיוּ תִשְׁבְּרָנָה עַד אֲשֶׁר יִגְדְּלוּ הַלְהוּ לְבַלְתִּי
not would let yourself be hindered therefore? they were grown that until you would wait therefore
הַיּוֹת לְאִישׁ אֶל בְּנֵי תִי כִי־מֵר־לִי מְאֹד מִכֶּם כִּי־יֵצְאָה בִּי
against me for it went out than you very because it is more bitter for me my daughters not to a man belong
יַד־יְהוָה:
the hand of YHWH

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

would you therefore wait until they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters; for it is harder for me than for you, for the hand of the LORD has gone forth against me.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

would you therefore wait until they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying?
הֲלֵהְיוּ תִשְׁבְּרָנָה עַד אֲשֶׁר יִגְדְּלוּ הַלְהוּ לְבַלְתִּי הַיּוֹת לְאִישׁ

Perhaps she has in mind Sarah. However, even if a miraculous birth were granted, there is no precedent for miraculous growth to instant adulthood!

No, my daughters;

אֶל בְּנֵי תִי

Emphatic: *No, my daughters!!* Bush comments that this reveals how strongly the determination was for Orpah and Ruth to go with her.

for it is harder for me than for you,

כִּי־מֵר־לִי מְאֹד מִכֶּם

Difficult phrase. Could be translated "for things are very bitter for me because of you" (RSV; JB; GNB); "for things are far more bitter for me than for you" (NASB; NIV); "for things are too bitter for me for you (to share in)" (NAB). The first suggestion doesn't fit the context. Preferable would be that followed by the NASB.

for the hand of the LORD has gone forth against me.”

כִּי־יִצְאָה בִּי יְד־יְהוָה:

Much like Job Naomi recognized God's sovereignty (cf. Job 2:10).

Cf. "A Sovereign Bullet" illustration in Piper (p. 27 ff.).

Naomi has been criticized for suggesting that they return to pagan Moab. Wiersbe writes:

But something else was wrong in the way Naomi handled this decision: *She did not want her two daughters-in-law to go with her.* If it was right for Naomi to go to Bethlehem, where the true and living God was worshiped, then it was right for Orpah and Ruth to accompany her. Naomi should have said to them what Moses said to his father-in-law, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel" (Num. 10:29, KJV). Instead, Naomi tried to influence the two women to go back to their families and their false gods.

Why would a believing Jewess, a daughter of Abraham, encourage two pagan women to worship false gods? I may be wrong, but I get the impression that Naomi didn't want to take Orpah and Ruth to Bethlehem *because they were living proof that she and her husband had permitted their two sons to marry women from outside the covenant nation.* In other words, Naomi was trying to cover up her disobedience. If she returned to Bethlehem alone, nobody would know that the family had broken the Law of Moses.⁶

Some may say that this was consigning their souls to hell. But that's reading more of a strident NT theology into this OT text. That's not saying that she was beyond criticism as Wiersbe points out above.

The position of an unmarried woman was perilous. To be in the house of a husband was to be in a place of rest, according to the Jews. (cf. our rest in Christ). That opportunity was theirs in Moab. Not so much in Israel as it was against the law to marry an outsider.

Cox paraphrases Naomi's intent:

"I know and love you: and, had I sons, I would take you with me, that in their homes you might find the asylum every woman needs and craves. But I have none, nor am I likely to have any, nor could you wait for them if I had. And outside my household there is no prospect for you, for the men of Israel may not take to wife daughters of Moab. Alas it is more bitter for me to tell you this than for you to hear it. It is harder for me than for you that we must part. But the hand of the Lord has gone out against me. I have no hope for the future. I must walk in my darkened path alone. But you, you may find an asylum with the people of your own race. Your future may be bright. You will at least have one another. go, then, and return each to her mother's house."
[cited by Barber, 56]

At this point the full reality of what has happened and where they stand with Naomi, with Israel, and with Moab hits. We see this in the next verse.

⁶ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Be Committed*. "Be" Commentary Series (17–18). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

1:14 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתִּשְׁנֶה קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכְּינָה עוֹד וַתִּשָּׂק עֲרָפָהּ לְחִמּוֹתֶיהָ וְרוּת דָּבְקָה
she clung but Ruth for her mother-in-law Orpah and she kissed again and they cried their voices and they lifted up
בָּהּ:
to her

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

And they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

And they lifted up their voices and wept again;

וַתִּשְׁנֶה קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכְּינָה עוֹד

or "continued to weep."

When all seems hopeless what do we do. Do we exaggerate our hopelessness? Or do we continue to trust in the God of all hope? Cf. Proverbs 3:5-6.

and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

וַתִּשָּׂק עֲרָפָהּ לְחִמּוֹתֶיהָ וְרוּת דָּבְקָה בָּהּ:

Cf. verse 9 -- *Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.*

Verse 14, Orpah kisses Naomi while in v. 9 it was the other way around. This is the signal that the relationship between Orpah and Naomi is terminated. Cf. Gen. 31:8; 2 Sam. 19:40; 1 Kings 19:20.

The contrast is made greater in light of Ruth's clinging to Orpah. Apparently these two actions occurred at the same time. (waw + subject + verb, cf. Bush, 81).

And at this point Orpah leaves the scene never to be seen again.

1:15 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה שָׁבָה יְבִמְתִּיךְ אֶל-עַמֶּיהָ וְאֶל-אֱלֹהֶיהָ שׁוֹבִי אַחֲרַי
after return and to her gods to her people your sister-in-law she has returned look and she said
יְבִמְתִּיךְ
your sister in law

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

Then she said, “Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Then she said, “Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods;

וַתֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה שָׁבָה יְבִמְתִּיךְ אֶל-עַמֶּיהָ וְאֶל-אֱלֹהֶיהָ

וְאֶל-אֱלֹהֶיהָ - for the plural (plural of majesty when used of YHWH) it may also be understood as singular here as Chemosh was the national deity of Moab. However, Israel's neighbors were also decidedly polytheistic.

return after your sister-in-law.”

שׁוֹבִי אַחֲרַי יְבִמְתִּיךְ:

Ruth’s conversion is evidence of the sovereign grace of God, for the only way sinners can be saved is by grace (Eph. 2:8–10). Everything within her and around her presented obstacles to her faith, and yet she trusted the God of Israel. Her background was against her, for she was from Moab where they worshiped the god Chemosh (Num. 21:29; 1 Kings 11:7, 33), who accepted human sacrifices (2 Kings 3:26–27) and encouraged immorality (Num. 25). Her circumstances were against her and could have made her bitter against the God of Israel. First, her father-in-law died, and then her husband and her brother-in-law; and she was left a widow without any support. If this is the way Jehovah God treats His people, why follow Him?

Ruth dearly loved her mother-in-law, but even Naomi was against her; for she urged Ruth to return to her family and her gods in Moab. Since Elimelech and Mahlon were now dead, Ruth was technically under the guardianship of Naomi; and she should have obeyed her mother-in-law’s counsel. But God intervened and graciously saved Ruth in spite of all these obstacles.⁷

⁷ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Be Committed*. “Be” Commentary Series (20–21). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Cf. Jacob and Esau in Romans 9. (I would not dogmatically say that Naomi was reprobate, but that would appear to be the implication).

1:16 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת אֶל-תַּפְגְּעֵי-בִי לְעִזְבֹךָ לָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרַיָּךְ כִּי אֶל-אֲשֶׁר
to where for from after you to return to leave you do not press on me Ruth and she said
 תֵּלְכִי אִלָּי וּבְאֲשֶׁר תִּלְיִנִי אֲלִין עִמָּךְ עַמִּי וְאֱלֹהֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵי:
my God and your God are my people your people I will spend the night you spend the night and in where I will go you shall go

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you *or* turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people *shall be* my people, and your God, my God.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

What follows in the next 2 vv. is one of t/greatest statements of love & loyalty in all of Scripture. Wonderful statment of unconditional love and devotion (weddings - misses the context but applicable).

Chiasm here ==>

- 1st (16) Do not urge me to leave you
or turn back from following you
- 2d p (16) for where you go, I will go
and where you lodge, I will lodge
- 3d (16) **Your people shall be my people
and your God, my God**
- 4th (17) Where you die, I will die
and there I will be buried
- 5th (17) Thus may the Lord do to me
if anything but death parts you and me.

Your people shall be my people = I'm a gentile; a moabite but I will adopt your people, the Jews even if they won't adopt me.
and your God, my God = I will not only abandon t/land of Moab but t/idolatry of Moab also. .

Block writes ==>

[With radical self-sacrifice she abandons every base of security that any person, let alone a poor widow, in that cultural context would have clung to: her native homeland, her own people, even her own gods.](#)
 [Block, 641]

Block's comment on the structure of vv. 16-17:

"Structurally the speech breaks down into five two-line couplets whose flow and form may be illustrated as follows:"

*Aal-tipgě 'î-bî lě 'ozbēk
lāšûb mē 'aḥrāyik*

Do not pressure me to leave you,
To turn back from behind you.

*Bkî 'el- 'āšer tēlēkî 'ēlēk
ûba 'āšer tālîni 'ālîn*

For where you go I will go,
And where you lodge I will lodge.

*C 'ammēk 'ammî
wē 'lōhayik 'ēlōhāy*

Your people my people,
Your God my God.

*B' ba 'āšer tāmûtî 'āmût
wēšām 'eqqābēr*

Where you die I will die,
And there I shall be buried.

A' kōh ya 'āseh yhw h lî wēkōh yōsîp

Thus may Yahweh do to me and
thus may he add,

kî hammāwet yaprîd bēni ûbēnēk

Surely nothing but death will separate me and
you.

But the center couplet is the most impressive of all. Using a mere four words she answers Naomi's final plea to join Orpah in returning to the people and the god of Moab. With radical self-sacrifice she abandons every base of security that any person, let alone a poor widow, in that cultural context would have clung to: her native homeland, her own people, even her own gods. Like any Near Easterner of her time, she realized that if she would commit herself to Naomi and go home with her, she must also commit herself to Naomi's people (Israel) and to Naomi's God (Yahweh). Although some would interpret Ruth's declaration as a sign of conversion, it is better viewed as an affirmation of a transfer of membership from the people of Moab to Israel and of allegiance from Chemosh to Yahweh. How much she knew about the implications of claiming Yahweh as one's God we do not know. She had indeed been observing Naomi for more than a decade, but from what we have seen of her in this chapter she hardly qualified to be a missionary of orthodox Yahwistic faith and theology. But this is a start, a noble beginning.⁸¹ The observer may only pray that when she arrives in Bethlehem she will find individuals who will model true Yahwistic piety more perfectly. [Block, 641–642]

1st pair (v. 16) **Do not urge me to leave you
or turn back from following you**

No! (neg.).

2d pair (pos.) **for where you go, I will go
(v. 16) and where you lodge, I will lodge**

Not only will I follow you. I will live with you (implied idea is "I will care for you"). You've suffered. You have lost your husband. You're a widow. You are too old to bear children. I will care for you!

Isn't it something that t/same sufferings were Ruth's! She'd suffered // lost her husband // was a widow // while she was young up until this point t/Lord had closed her womb.

Selfless devotion means taking our eyes off our own afflictions to attend to those of others. Healing in humility.

3d pair (v. 16) **Your people shall be my people
and your God, my God**

One thing we need to be careful of (something Evang. are often guilty of) imposing a NT doctrine of conversion on the t/OT.

What I don't mean by that ==> OT was not "works salvation". Always by grace alone through faith alone (Abraham Rom. 4).

While t/object of that faith in t/OT was YHWH - God of Israel (1st person of t/Trinity); The basis for their salvation - even in t/OT was the yet-future-to-them death of X.

What I do mean is that we can't point to Ruth's statement here as a confession of faith that equates to a conversion moment.

Hear t/Fundamentalist Preacher: *"Here Ruth Confessed w/her mouth God as LORD and was wonderfully saved! And if there was an aisle, if there was an altar, she would have walked that aisle and knelt at that altar."*

We're in t/time of the Judges. Dark time in Israel's history. Lots of ignorance.

We don't know what t/state of Elimelech's devotion to t/God of Israel was // Naomi's.

Remember, 10 years had passed. What sort of instruction in t/Law of God was going on in the household of Elimelech and Naomi? We don't know.

T/author doesn't tell us (we have to read between t/lines some and that's something we have to be careful about).

There must have been some sort of continuing ID w/Naomi and t/worship of YHWH or Ruth wouldn't have said this. She's affirming that to join w/Israel was to join w/Naomi's people // Israel was to join w/Israel's God, YHWH.

Although some would interpret Ruth's declaration as a sign of conversion, it is better viewed as an affirmation of a transfer of membership from the people of Moab to Israel and of allegiance from Chemosh to Yahweh. How much she knew about the implications of claiming Yahweh as one's God we do not know. She had indeed been observing Naomi for more than a decade, but from what we have seen of her in this chapter she hardly qualified to be a missionary of orthodox Yahwistic [Jewish] faith and theology. But this is a start, a noble beginning. [Block, 642]

1:17 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

בְּאֶשֶׁר תָּמוּתִי אָמוּת וְשָׁם אֶקָּבֵר כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לִי וְכֹה יִסְיֵף
do more and so for me YHWH (he) may do so I will be buried and there I will die you die in where
כִּי הַמָּוֶת יִפְרִיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ:
and between you between me make a separation the death that

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

“Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

4th pair (v. 17) **Where you die, I will die
and there I will be buried**

This is a total, radical commitment. This is for life.

Where you were buried was of great importance. Even today we see that. Think about how signif. it is for t/remains of a missing soldier (Vietnam) to be recovered & buried on Amer. soil?

For a Jew to die & be buried outside t/land of Israel, t/Promised land, was to be under a curse (Amos 7:17).

Here's another contrast that we have to see.

Where was Elimelech? Where was t/deceased husband of Ruth?
Back in Moab.

Your people shall be my people; and your God, my God

Where you die (in t/land of your people), I will die;
and there (where your God is) I will be buried

She seals her pledge w/what's called an imprecatory oath ==>

5th (17) **Thus may the LORD do to me
if anything but death parts you and me.**

Till death do us part.

Culturally may have included a gesture (hand across t/throat).

Here we again have LORD. Who is Naomi's God? He is t/LORD.

The sacred name that's invoked as a witness. Typical of oaths ("Do you promise to tell t/truth; the whole truth and nothing but t/truth so help you, God").

Radical faith ==> Ruth stands alone; she has nothing. No support group; no promises of future blessing. She may have expected rejection. In her 20s she's committing herself to a life of an old woman.

As someone else noted, there may not be a more radical decision in all the memories of Israel!

1:18 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֵּרָא כִּי־מְתַאֲמָצֶת הִיא לָלֶכֶת אִתָּהּ וַתַּחֲזֵל לְדַבֵּר אֵלֶיהָ:
to her to speak and she ceased with her to go she (was) persistent and she saw

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

How does Naomi respond?

The dialogue turned into a monologue which resulted in Naomi's silence.

Some have interpreted her silence to mean she was upset; she turned away and tuned Ruth out. Nothing here that would necessitate that.

Naomi having heard t/beautiful confession saw Ruth's determination and said no more.

1:19 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֵּלְכְּנָה שְׁתֵּייהֶם עַד-בֵּאֲנָה בֵּית לְחָם וַיְהִי כְּבֹאֲנָהּ בֵּית לְחָם
to Bethlehem at the moment of coming and it happened to Bethlehem until coming them the two of them and they went
וַתְּהִי כָּל-הָעִיר עֲלֵיהֶן וַתֹּאמְרָה הַזֹּאת נָעֲמִי:
Naomi this? and they said because of them all the town and (it) was stirred

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

So they both went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came about when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was stirred because of them, and the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Verse 1 in reverse. Around 70 miles & several days of travel on foot.

"City" ==> Better translated "town" - Beth. no larger a few hundred.

"stirred" = comes from a Heb. root חָה (onomatopoetic - "hum; abuzz").

". . . and the women said" = [Feminine form of t/Heb. pronoun] it was t/women who were out and recognized her

"Is this Naomi?" rhetorical ? expecting a "yes" answer.

In biblical interpretation one thing that isn't always evident is tone of voice. Often, our understanding of words depends on things like voice inflection. (You are so needy w/different inflections)
That's why things like email get us in trouble sometimes.....

How do we take t/response ==> . . . and the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

ITN - sarcastically; ITN - pitifully; ITN - joyfully.

Indicators in the orig. text that it's t/latter.

The buzz among t/people of t/town would indicate excitement. Question itself indicates a joyful recognition. Could be understood: "Why look! It's Naomi!" Naomi means "pleasant" & here's a pleasant surprise.

1:20 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֹּאמֶר אֶלֵיהֶן אַל-תִּקְרָאנִי לִי נָעֻמִּי קְרָאנִי לִי מָרָא כִּי-יָמַר
for (he) caused bitterness Mara to me call Naomi to me do not call to them and she said
שְׁדַי לִי מְאֹד:
very to me Shaddai

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

And she said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Much like Job Naomi recognized God's sovereignty (cf. Job 2:10).

Hebrew "mara" = bitter. Moses & people of Israel following t/Exodus wandering in t/wilderness looking for water (15:23 - they couldn't drink t/waters of Mara - why? they were "bitter")

1:21 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

אָנִי מְלֵאָה הֵלַכְתִּי וְרִיקָם הָשִׁיבָנִי יְהוָה לָמָּה תִקְרָאנִי לִי נָעֻמִּי
Naomi to me you call to what YHWH he brought me back and empty-handed I went full I
וַיְהוּהָ עֲנָה בְּי וְשָׂדֵי הָרַע לִי
to me he has brought calamity and Shaddai against me answer and YHWH

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

“I went out full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

“I went out full, but the Lord has brought me back empty.” What a word play! Why did they leave Bethlehem a decade earlier? They were empty. Famine. Physical issue.

But she says "I went out full," = Full of hope. Moab represented a place where they could escape t/sufferings of famine. Rather than escape suffering they ran headlong into it.

. . . but the Lord has brought me back empty. = Full stomach but an empty heart. Misery in Moab.

I can just hear t/voices out there "defending God"

"No Naomi - it was your own bad choices. God was helpless in t/matter." "No Naomi - it was t/enemy who stole your joy." "No Naomi - God didn't do this; He would never have a hand in suffering or affliction."

John Piper ==> I would take Naomi's theology any day over the sentimental views of God that permeate so many churches today. Endless excuses are made for God's sovereignty. Naomi is unshaken and sure about three things: God exists, God is sovereign, and God has afflicted her. [Piper, A Sweet and Bitter Providence, 37-38]

Her theology of God's sovereignty was correct.

[Almighty 2x which is fitting]

God rules t/affairs of t/nations&t/flight of birds.(Dn. 2:21; Ma 10:29)

He directs t/winds and the lightening.

He even governs t/roll of t/dice (Prov. 16:33) - not an excuse to g.

He gives life and takes life away (Job. 1:21).

He works all things acc.to t/counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11).

He's as sovereign over t/pile of junk on your desk as He is over t/destiny of your own soul.

Her theology of God's sovereignty was correct. But her theology of God's providence / love and care for his children was lacking.

As Piper also observes, she wasn't yet at the place of Joseph.

She allowed her own bitterness to obscure how God worked through suffering to bring about the salv. of His people.

1:22 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתָּשָׁב נָעֲמִי וְרוּת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה כִּלְתָהּ עִמָּהּ הַשָּׁבָה מִשְׂדֵי מוֹאָב
Moab from the countryside the returning with her her daughter in law the Moabite and Ruth Naomi and so she returned
וְהֵמָּה בָּאוּ בֵּית לָחֶם בְּתֹחֶלֶת קִצֵּיר שְׁעָרִים:
barley of the harvest in the beginning to Bethlehem came and they

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

So Naomi returned, and with her Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, who returned from the land of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Even here there are some things to note . . .

Ruth the Moabitess

Returned (Ruth returned)

Barley Harvest.

Naomi and Ruth arrive in “the house of bread” just when the grain for bread is ready to be cut, that is, in late April or early March by our calendars.

Barley was the first crop to be harvested each year, the timing of their arrival meant that Naomi and Ruth could get settled at a time when food would be relatively plentiful and that they were around to lay up stores of each crop for the dry season.

Addition of "B.H." also points us forward to hope (chapter 2). In a barley field that Ruth will meet her Kinsman Redeemer.