

Exegetical Notes for Ruth 2:18-23

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.

Leggett = *The Levirate And Goel Institutions In The Old Testament With Special Attention to the Book of Ruth* (Donald A. Leggett) Cherry Hill, NJ: Mack Publishing Company, 1974. PDF digitized with permission by Ted Hildebrandt, Gordon College, 2006.

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

18 She took it up and went into the city,

(and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned.)

She also took it out and gave **Naomi** what she had left
(after she was satisfied.)

19 Her mother-in-law then said to her,

“Where did you glean today
and where did you work?
(May he who took notice of you be blessed.)”

So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said,

“The name of the man with whom I worked today is **Boaz**.”

20 **Naomi** said to her daughter-in-law,

“May he be blessed of the Lord who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead.”

Again **Naomi** said to her, =====>

“The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives.”

21 Then **Ruth the Moabitess** said,

“Furthermore, he said to me,
‘You should stay close to my servants until they have finished all my harvest.’”

22 **Naomi** said to **Ruth** her daughter-in-law,

“It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maids,
so that others do not fall upon you in another field.”

23 So she stayed close by the maids of **Boaz**
in order to glean until the end of the barley harvest
and the wheat harvest.

And she lived with her mother-in-law.

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

HEBREW TEXT (BHS):

וַתִּשָּׂא וַתָּבוֹא הָעִיר וַתִּרְא חַמּוּתָהּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר-לָקְטָהּ וַתּוֹצֵא וַתִּתֵּן-לָהּ¹⁸
אֶת אֲשֶׁר-הוֹתֵרָה מִשְׂבַּעָהּ: ¹⁹ וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ חַמּוּתָהּ אֵיפֹה לָקַטְתְּ הַיּוֹם
וְאָנָּה עֹשִׂית יְהִי מִכִּירְךָ בְּרוּךְ וַתִּגַּד לַחַמּוּתָהּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂתָּה עִמּוֹ
וַתֹּאמֶר שֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי עִמּוֹ הַיּוֹם בְּעֵז: ²⁰ וַתֹּאמֶר נַעֲמִי לְכַלְתָּה
בְּרוּךְ הוּא לִיהוּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עָזַב חֶסְדּוֹ אֶת-הַחַיִּים וְאֶת-הַמֵּתִים וַתֹּאמֶר
לָהּ נַעֲמִי קְרוּב לָנוּ הָאִישׁ מִגְּאֻלָּנוּ הוּא: ²¹ וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת הַמוֹאֲבִיָּה גַם
כִּי-אָמַר אֵלַי עַם-הַנְּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר-לִי תִדְבָּקִין עַד אִם-כָּלוּ אֶת כָּל-הַקֶּצִיר
אֲשֶׁר-לִי: ²² וַתֹּאמֶר נַעֲמִי אֶל-רוּת כַּלְתָּה טוֹב בְּתִי כִי תִצְאִי עִם-נַעֲרוֹתַי
וְלֹא יִפְגְּעוּ-בְךָ בְּשָׂדֵה אַחֵר: ²³ וַתִּדְבַּק בְּנַעֲרוֹת בְּעֵז לְלֶקֶט עַד-כָּלוֹת
קִצִּיר-הַשְּׂעִרִים וּקְצִיר הַחֲטִים וַתֵּשֶׁב אֶת-חַמּוּתָהּ

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB):

Ruth 2:18–23 (NASB95)

¹⁸ She took *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also took *it* out and gave Naomi what she had left after she was satisfied. ¹⁹ Her mother-in-law then said to her, “Where did you glean today and where did you work? May he who took notice of you be blessed.” So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, “The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz.” ²⁰ Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed of the LORD who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead.” Again Naomi said to her, “The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives.” ²¹ Then Ruth the Moabitess said, “Furthermore, he said to me, ‘You should stay close to my servants until they have finished all my harvest.’” ²² Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maids, so that *others* do not fall upon you in another field.” ²³ So she stayed close by the maids of Boaz in order to glean until the end of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

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)

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:

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)

D. Scene Four: Ruth Reports (vv. 18-23)

1. Reward: Naomi Sees and Savors (18)
2. Request: Naomi Wonders Where and Who (19a)
3. Response: Ruth Answers the Who (but not the what) (19b)
4. Revelation: Naomi Glories in God's Providence (20)
5. Reflection: Ruth Relates Boaz' Kindness (21)

6. Recommendation: Naomi is Concerned (22)

7. Resumption: Ruth Patiently Works and Waits (23)

- * God's providential care for us doesn't mean we don't put forth our own effort
- * God's providential care for us ought to move us toward greater worship
- * God's providential care for us includes our care for others
- * God's providential care for us assumes our patience
- * God's providential care for us encompasses our weakness

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what's t/passage talking about): Ruth's report of how she was rewarded by gleaning in Boaz' field

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what's t/passage saying about what it's talking about): coincides with God's providence: Boaz is a kinsman

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): God's providential care is revealed through what appears coincidental

CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON: God's providential care is revealed through what appears coincidental

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: Providence not Coincidence

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

This is an epilogue of sorts to the drama of Act 2 (closing out chapter 2). It is here that God's providence in leading Ruth to the field belonging to Boaz becomes evident to Ruth and Naomi.

The phrase "at the end of barley harvest" relates to the end of chapter 1 (both chapter one and chapter 2 end on a detail about the harvest).

Verse 18 correlates to v. 14 (left-overs). Verse 10 cf. to 19 (blessing). Verses 12,23 relate to v. 8 (sticking close to the women).

ABBA chiastic structure that falls between the introductory and concluding statements (i.e. v. 18 / 23).

A	v. 19a	Noami	Question (<i>Naomi asks Ruth who had blessed her</i>)
B	v. 19b	Ruth	Answer (<i>Ruth informs Naomi that it was Boaz</i>)
C	v. 20	Key Point	Statement (<i>Naomi declares that Boaz is kinsman redeemer</i>)
B	v. 21	Ruth	Statement (<i>Ruth adds that Boaz told her to stay with his workers until the end of the harvest</i>)
A	v. 22	Naomi	Evaluation (<i>Naomi agrees that Ruth ought to stay with Boaz' young women</i>)

2:18 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתִּשָּׂא וַתָּבֹא הָעִיר וַתֵּרֶא חֲמוּתָהּ אֵת אֲשֶׁר-לָקְטָהּ וַתּוֹצֵא וַתִּתֶּן-לָהּ אֵת
and she gave to her and she took out how much she had gleaned her mother in law and she saw to the town and she went And she picked up
אֲשֶׁר-הוּתְרָהּ מִשְׂבֵּעָה:
from her satiety what she had left over

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

And she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also took it out and gave Naomi what she had left after she was satisfied.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

And she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned.

וַתִּשָּׂא וַתָּבֹא הָעִיר וַתֵּרֶא חֲמוּתָהּ אֵת אֲשֶׁר-לָקְטָהּ

Note the picture painted by Barber (87 ff.).

She also took it out and gave Naomi what she had left after she was satisfied.

וַתּוֹצֵא וַתִּתֶּן-לָהּ אֵת אֲשֶׁר-הוּתְרָהּ מִשְׂבֵּעָה:

When Ruth brought home the ephah of barley grain, the results of her toil, Naomi saw the large amount. Also Ruth gave Naomi the extra portion she had saved from her lunch (cf. v. 14). Here was a widow who was not overlooked in the daily supply of food (cf. Acts 6:1). Naomi would be cared for by Ruth. [Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Ru 2:18). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.]

The last clause of the Hebrew text of verse 18 is literally “gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied.” This is a reference to what has already been stated in verse 14. A literal rendering of the Hebrew text may, however, lead to misunderstanding, since it could imply in some languages that Ruth was inconsiderate of Naomi and therefore had only reserved for Naomi what she did not want. It is better, therefore, to translate as “gave her the remainder of the food,” “gave her what she had left over from lunch” (NAB), or “gave her what she had

saved from her meal” (NEB). NEB employs a very useful device of placing the modifying clause concerning the food earlier in the verse and stating in the last clause merely “gave it to her.” [Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A. (1991). A translator's handbook on the book of Ruth (2nd ed.). UBS Handbook Series (39). New York: United Bible Societies.]

2:19 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ חַמּוּתָהּ אֵיפֹה לָקַטְתָּ הַיּוֹם וְאַנָּה עָשִׂיתָ יְהִי מִכִּירְךָ בְּרוּךְ
be blessed take notice (of) you may he be you did work and where the day you did glean where / here mother in law to her and she said
וַתִּגֵּד לַחַמּוּתָהּ אֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂתָּה עִמּוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר שֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי
I worked who the man the name of and she said with him who she had worked to her mother in law and she told
עִמּוֹ הַיּוֹם בְּעוֹז:
is Boaz the day with him

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

Her mother-in-law then said to her, “Where did you glean today and where did you work? May he who took notice of you be blessed.” So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, “The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Her mother-in-law then said to her, “Where did you glean today and where did you work?

וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ חַמּוּתָהּ אֵיפֹה לָקַטְתָּ הַיּוֹם וְאַנָּה עָשִׂיתָ

Hebrew parallelism. The redundancy of the question speaks to Naomi's amazement.

May he who took notice of you be blessed.”

יְהִי מִכִּירְךָ בְּרוּךְ

בְּרוּךְ from בָּרַךְ used about 330x in the OT. First used of Adam and Eve in Gen. 1:22,28.

Cf. Ehud Barak, the former Israeli Prime Minister (1999 to 2001) and current Minister of Defense and Deputy Prime Minister (under Binyamin Netanyahu).

Wondering about how often we use that term in prayer for others (i.e. "bless this person"). What do we mean by that? What does it mean to be "blessed?"

Spiritual and material benefits given by God to be enjoyed. Blessing the name of God is also the appropriate response of believers to all that God has done for them.

God is the source of all blessing - 1Ch 29:11-12 See also Ps 89:11

At creation he blessed humans with fertility and authority over the earth Ge 1:28-30

The disobedience of Adam and Eve caused God to remove his blessing Ge 3:16-19 See also Ge 6:5-7

After the flood God renewed his promise of blessing to Noah Ge 9:1-3 See also Ge 8:22; Job 5:10; Ps 65:9-13

The blessings promised to Abraham

The blessings included descendants and nationhood Ge 12:2-3 See also Ge 17:1-8; 18:18; 26:4; 35:11; Ex 1:6-7; Dt 1:10-11; 7:13; 1Ki 3:8; Ne 9:23; Isa 51:2

The blessings included land Ge 17:8 See also Ge 12:7; 26:3; Dt 1:8; 4:40; 11:8-12

The promises of blessing to Abraham were fulfilled in Jesus Christ Gal 3:16 See also Ac 3:25-26; Gal 3:29

Blessings promised to Israel

Blessings of fruitfulness and prosperity Dt 7:13-14 See also Ge 49:25; Lev 26:10; Dt 15:4; 28:8,12

Blessings of good health and long life Ex 23:25-26 See also Ex 15:26; Dt 7:15

Blessings of peace and victory over enemies Dt 28:7 See also Ex 23:22; Lev 26:6-8; Dt 7:24; Ps 29:11

The promise of being blessed by future restoration Jer 31:23 See also Isa 61:9; 65:17-25; Eze 34:25-31

The conditions of God's blessings

Fear of the Lord brings blessing Jer 32:40 See also Dt 6:1-3; 10:12-20; Ecc 12:13; Isa 50:10

Obedience to the Lord brings blessing Dt 11:26-28 See also Dt 28:1-14; 30:15-20

To bless God is to worship and adore him Ne 9:5 See also Ge 9:26; 14:20

People may bless one another in the name of the Lord

Nu 6:24-26 There is a close link between blessing and prayer. See also Ge 27:27-29; 49:1-28; Ru 1:8-9; 1Sa 2:20; 1Ch 4:10; Mt 23:39

[Manser, M. H. (1999). Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies. London: Martin Manser]

This particular word in the OT often stands in apposition to "curse."

Upon her return, Ruth is pressed by her mother-in-law as to the success of her day's activities. She shows Naomi what she has gleaned and mentions the name of her kind benefactor as being Boaz. Naomi breaks forth into praise and cries, "Blessed be he by the Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" (Ruth 2:20a). At this moment Boaz is unaware that his prayer to the Lord to reward Ruth (2:12) is to be granted and that he is to be the answer to that request. [Leggett, 182-83]

Cf. NT εὐλογεω. Connected to prayer and forgiveness (Luke 6:28, cf. Rom. 12:14). Also 1 Peter 3:9.

Psalm 41:1.

So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, “The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz.”

וַתִּגַּד לְחַמּוֹתֶיהָ אֵת אֲשֶׁר-עָשְׂתָה עִמּוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר נָשָׁם הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי עִמּוֹ הַיּוֹם בְּעֵז:

Another redundancy for literary effect. Saves the best for last / suspense (Boaz). Picture her saying it in an off-handed, non-nonchalant way. The readers know about Boaz, but at this point in the story Naomi does not.

What a coincidence! (back to 2:3).

Not totally unlike Paul's encounter with Philemon.

2:20 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֹּאמֶר נְעָמִי לְכַלְתָּהּ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לִיהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עָזַב חַסְדּוֹ אֶת-הַחַיִּים

the living his lovingkindness not forsaken who by YHWH he be blessed to her daughter in law Naomi and she said

וְאֶת-הַמֵּתִים וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ נְעָמִי קָרוֹב לָנוּ הָאִישׁ מִגְּאֻלָּנוּ הוּא:

he close relative/redeemer/next of kin the man for us is a close relation Naomi to her and she said and the dead

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed of the LORD who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead.” Again Naomi said to her, “The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed of the LORD who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead.”

וַתֹּאמֶר נְעָמִי לְכַלְתָּהּ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לִיהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עָזַב חַסְדּוֹ אֶת-הַחַיִּים וְאֶת-הַמֵּתִים

Ambiguous as to whether the antecedent of the "who" is YHWH or Boaz.

And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!” [English Standard Version]

Naomi told her daughter-in-law, “The LORD bless him! He continues to be kind to us—both the living and the dead!” [New Century Version]

“The LORD bless him!” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. “He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.” [New International Version]

Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed by the LORD, who has not forsaken his kindness to the living or the dead.” [Holman Christian Standard Version]

“May the LORD bless him!” Naomi told her daughter-in-law. “He is showing his kindness to us as well as to your dead husband. [New Living Translation]

This is not a grammatical issue but a contextual one. חַסְדּוֹ - Glueck argues for Boaz (cited by Bush) in

his "Hesed in the Bible." Argument is based on parallelism with 1:8 and in form with 2 Sam 2:5 (both are human agents). Bush writes that "most commentators have disagreed with Glueck and, with little comment or discussion, have stated that the antecedent must be Yahweh." [135]

Others argue that it must be YHWH based on the similar construction in Gen 24:27. Bush argues against this, however, and favors the "exact parallel" in 2 Sam. 2:5 (135-36) arguing further that it is "unquestionably Boaz" (136).

Bush also argues:

Now, as Rebera insightfully observes (BT 36 [1985] 324), it is most important for the development of the story to recognize that Naomi blesses Boaz, not Yahweh, for his *hesed* (see Comment on v 20). On the one hand, this signal indication of Boaz's willingness to "do hesed," i.e., to act sacrificially in a manner faithful to the obligations of his kinship, forms "the logical base upon which the entire strategy, with which the third act begins, depends for its success" (5T36 [1985] 324). On the other hand, this recognition is also important for the correct assessment of the stages in the story's resolution of the death and emptiness that have afflicted Naomi.

For Naomi, who at 1.20-21 delivers a scathing indictment of Yahweh as her oppressor to declare the munificence of his *hesed* conduct at 2:20 without any redress is to scuttle the plot and reduce everything that follows to a disappointing anticlimax. The vindication of Yahweh is not to be found in the utterances of Naomi but in the utterances of the women in 4.14 to whom Naomi addressed her indictment in 1.20-21. (Rebera, BT 36 [1985] 324)

Block opts for the view that YHWH is the antecedent of the "who" ==>

But this interpretation is doubtful, first because *yhw* is the nearer antecedent. Second, and more importantly, by this interpretation it is difficult to explain Naomi's specification of the nearer relative as *hā'îš*, "the man." One would have expected the simple pronoun *hû'*, "he," as at the end of the verse. On the other hand, if Yahweh is the one who has faithfully demonstrated *hesed*, then the reference to "the man" is necessary to distinguish the subject of the last two clauses of the verse from the subject of the preceding clause. Finally, an analogue to this text by this interpretation is provided by Gen 24:27. After Abraham's servant has discovered Rebekah as a potential wife for Isaac, he declares, "Blessed be the LORD ... who has not abandoned his *hesed* and his truth toward my master."

But what does Naomi mean when she says that Yahweh has not abandoned his *hesed* toward the living and the dead? First, *haḥayyîm*, "the living," in this context must refer to Naomi and Ruth, who survive of this family, and *hammētîm*, "the dead," to the deceased Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion. Together this pair of antonyms functions as a figure (merism) referring to the family as a whole. Second, the word *hesed* bears a much fuller sense than "kindness" as rendered by the NIV. This is the second time we have heard it from the lips of Naomi (cf. 1:8). As noted in the introduction, this is one of the key theological expressions in the book. It wraps up in itself an entire cluster of concepts—love, mercy, grace, kindness, goodness, benevolence, loyalty, and covenant faithfulness. As the following clauses indicate, here it involves Yahweh's covenant grace to this family. This speech represents a total turnaround from her despairing and accusatory words in 1:20–21. The expression she uses, *ʿāzab hesed*, "to abandon *hesed*," occurs

elsewhere in Gen 24:27 and Jonah 2:9 and represents the opposite of *'āsâ ḥesed*, "to demonstrate *ḥesed*," in 1:5. [Block, 673–674]

God uses us to bless others. We are His hands and feet. Rather than pray "be warmed, be filled" do something about the plight of others.

Again Naomi said to her, "The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives."

וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ נַעֲמִי קָרוֹב לָנוּ הָאִישׁ מִגְּאֻלָּנוּ הַזֶּה:

Could be translated "one of our redeemers." Cf. the parallel between the NT word "Salvation" which is not always soteriological.

גֹּאֵל (used in over 80 vv.). The word is used in different ways in Ruth (this is the first occurrence).

Primary meaning is to do the part of a kinsman - to redeem a relative from danger or difficulty (TWOT).

The kinsman-redeemer's role was to help recover the tribe's losses, whether those losses were human (in which case he hunted down the killer), judicial (in which case he assisted in lawsuits) or economic (in which case he recovered the property of a family member). Since Yahweh had granted the land to the Israelites as tenants, they could not sell it, and if they mortgaged a portion of it to pay debts, it was considered very important to regain ownership as soon as possible. In this way the land remained within the extended family as a sign of its membership in covenantal community. The importance of this inalienable right to land can be seen in Naboth's refusal to relinquish the "inheritance of my fathers" when King Ahab offered to buy his vineyard (1 Kings 21:2-3). In Mesopotamia (especially in the earlier periods) land was often owned by families rather than by individuals, so any individual would be limited in his ability to sell the property. [BBC]

Uses in Ruth

2:20	Close relative (Boaz)
3:9	Close relative (Boaz)
3:12	Close relative (Boaz)
3:13	Redeem (which of two relatives has the right to redeem Ruth)
4:1	Close relative (the relative closer than Boaz)
4:3	Close relative (the relative closer than Boaz)
4:4	Redeem (of the land that could be redeemed)
4:6	Close relative & redeem (the relative closer than Boaz and the land that could be redeemed)
4:8	Close relative (the relative closer than Boaz)
4:14	Redeemer (Boaz)

As for the closest relative, the usage covers for areas of responsibility:

Heading	Details	One Responsible	Passage
Financial Recovery	To buy back a field sold during hardship; to free one who sold himself into slavery during poverty	Closest relative	Lev. 25:25ff, 25:48ff
Property	To redeem property or non-sacrificial animals dedicated to the Lord; or to redeem the first born of unclean animals	The property owner	Lev. 27:11ff
Blood Avenger	To avenge the murder of a relative	Next of kin	Num. 35:12ff.
Salvation	God who will redeem His people (temporally and eternally)	God	Isa 43:1-3, etc.

Perhaps the best known instance of redemption of the poor is in the book of Ruth which is the most extensive OT witness for the law of levirate marriage. According to Deut 25:5-10, a widow without issue should be taken by her husband brother to perpetuate seed and thus insure the succession of the land which was bound to the male descendants. The near relative here is called a *yabam*. The root *ga'al* is not used. In the situation in Ruth two things are mentioned, the field and the levirate marriage. The near kin was willing to buy the field, but not to marry Ruth.

The point is that when Naomi in her poverty had to sell the field the next of kin was obligated to buy it back for her. This he was willing to do for his brother's widow without issue. The land would presumably revert to him anyway at at last. When he learned that he must marry Ruth and raise children who would maintain their inheritance, he refused and Boaz stepped in. But the two things, kinsman redemption and levirate marriage, are to be distinguished. The word *go'el* "redeemer," does not refer to the latter institution. [TWOT, 144]

Also see use in Job 19:25.

With this comment Naomi has raised another one of the most important notions in the book. Hebrew has two words commonly translated "to redeem." The first, *pādâ*, is used with reference to "redeeming" the firstborn (Exod 13:13–15) with a sheep or money (Num 18:15–17) or cultic offerings that could be "redeemed" with money (Leviticus 27). In such cases the object is always a human or an animal and is the work of a near male relative, usually the father. By contrast, the second, *gā'al*, may have an inanimate object. In contexts like this, *gō'el*, a participle form of the verb, functions as a technical legal term, related specifically to Israelite family law. As a kinship term it denotes the near relative who is responsible for the economic well-being of a relative, and he comes into play especially when the relative is in distress and cannot get himself/herself out of the crisis. The Scriptures note five aspects of a *gō'el*'s redemptive role: (1) to ensure that the hereditary property of the clan never passes out of the clan (Lev 25:25–30); (2) to maintain the freedom of individuals within the clan by buying back those who have sold themselves into slavery because of poverty (Lev 25:47–55); (3) to track down and execute murderers of near relatives (Num 35:12, 19–27); (4) to receive restitution money on behalf of a deceased victim of a crime (Num 5:8); and (5) to ensure that justice is served in a lawsuit involving a relative (Job 19:25; Ps 119:154; Jer 50:34). The Israelite provision for the *gō'el* is based upon an assumption of corporate solidarity and the sanctity of the family/clan: to offend a relative is to offend oneself. The custom of redemption was

designed to maintain the wholeness and health of family relationships, even after the person has died. [Block, 674–675]

There is a brightening in the attitude of Naomi from that of the deep discouragement she was in at the end of chapter 1 (cf. 2:1-3).

What of the land that we see later in 4:1 ff.? Block's comments there are helpful:

What had happened to Elimelech's land since he had taken his family to Moab and since he had died we can only speculate. It seems most reasonable that moving to Moab had been a last resort for Elimelech. Before he would embark on such a drastic (and shameful) course of action, he would have attempted every other alternative, including selling the land to an outsider (cf. Lev 25:25–30). Obviously the poverty continued; and after the money from the sale was used up, he seems to have been faced with two choices: sell himself into slavery (cf. Lev 25:47–55) or move to a place where food was available. In moving to Moab he chose the lesser of two evils.

Meanwhile ten years had elapsed. During that time Elimelech and his two heirs had died in the land of Moab, and back in Bethlehem it appears the land had fallen into the hands of someone outside the family. When Naomi returned with Ruth, she could not automatically reclaim the land and begin making her own living from it. Consequently she and Ruth are left with no options but to scavenge for food. It seems, however, that because of Boaz's generosity Naomi and Ruth had been assured of sufficient food for the near future, enabling the senior widow to turn her attention to the legal issues relating to the patrimonial holdings of her husband. [Block, 710]

2:21 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת הַמֹּאֲבִיָּה גַם כִּי־אָמַר אֵלַי עִם־הַנְּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־לִי תִדְבְּקִין

you shall stay close who for me with the servants to me because he said also the Moabite Ruth and she said

עַד אִם־כָּלוּ אֵת כָּל־הַקְּצִיר אֲשֶׁר־לִי:

which is for me all of the harvest if/that they have finished until

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

Then Ruth the Moabite said, “Furthermore, he said to me, ‘You should stay close to my servants until they have finished all my harvest.’”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Then Ruth the Moabite said,

וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת הַמֹּאֲבִיָּה

Note again "the Moabite." Some have been critical of this repeat / some translations omit. However this serves as emphasis on Ruth's gentile background and makes more graphic Boaz' hospitality (cf. 2:10). Also her full name (cf. Uriah the Hittite).

“Furthermore, he said to me, ‘You should stay close to my servants until they have finished all my harvest.’”

גַם כִּי־אָמַר אֵלַי עִם־הַנְּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־לִי תִדְבְּקִין עַד אִם־כָּלוּ אֵת כָּל־הַקְּצִיר אֲשֶׁר־לִי:

Cf. 2:8-9.

2:22 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וְתֹאמֶר נַעֲמִי אֶל־רוּת כִּלְתָּהּ טוֹב בְּתִי כִּי תֵצְאִי עִם־נַעֲרוֹתָיו וְלֹא

so that not with his maids you go out that my daughter it is good her daughter in law to Ruth Naomi and she said

יִפְגְּעוּ־בְךָ בְּשָׂדֵה אַחֵר:

another in field they touch you

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maids, lest others fall upon you in another field."

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maids,

וְתֹאמֶר נַעֲמִי אֶל־רוּת כִּלְתָּהּ טוֹב בְּתִי כִּי תֵצְאִי עִם־נַעֲרוֹתָיו

lest others fall upon you in another field."

וְלֹא יִפְגְּעוּ־בְךָ בְּשָׂדֵה אַחֵר:

The word Naomi uses here is stronger than the word that Boaz used in vv. 9 / 15. Naomi is concerned with Ruth's safety. " . . . it was possible she could be driven off by overzealous harvest hands or other gleaners greedy for the scanty leavings of the reapers." [Bush, 140]

However, the same word is used in 1:16 ("urge"). Uses in the OT range from violence to entreaty.

Good summary by my friend Evan Baltz:

Ruth finished the day's work and was diligent to sift out the grain and carry it home to Naomi. She even brought Naomi her leftover lunch. Look at Naomi's astonishment in verse 19. "Where did all of this grain come from? Wow! May the Lord bless the stranger who was so kind to you." Ah, but it was no stranger. It was Boaz. The cloud of Naomi's misery lifts. Rays of light begin beaming in on her previously grieved heart. Her eyes finally catch a glimpse of God's beautiful providence and His directing hand. Look at verse 20. Naomi immediately recognizes that Yahweh has been at work all along. Not all translations make this equally clear, so let's look at this section from the NASB so the

pronouns don't get confused.

May he be blessed of the LORD who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead.

It is Yahweh (the LORD) who has not withdrawn His kindness to the living—Naomi and Ruth, or to the dead—her deceased husband Elimelech. God has provided a plan to honor and save them. It was all coming so fast to Naomi. She is so excited she repeats herself. Then the reality of the situation finally comes to her. She at last remembers the significance of who this man Boaz is. He is their kinsman-redeemer. Boaz is the ga'al—the redeemer. A kin who can marry a widow and preserve the family—redeem it. The symbolism is coming through loud and clear, isn't it?

I love the New Living Translation here. “This is wonderful!” In essence, “Wow, we're saved! Stick with this man and stay in his field, because he will protect you and you will be safe.” Such it is with our redeemer, Christ Jesus. Ruth's dedication and humble, hard-working attitude was not short-lived either. Ruth continued to work daily in Boaz' field; all through the barley harvest and then through the wheat harvest. She continued in the grace of Boaz. She continued to be humble and diligent, and she continued to faithfully provide and care for her mother-in-law. That is what grace does.

Contrast your life to Ruth's so far. In what ways have you been like her? In ways have you not been like her? If you profess Christ as your Lord, does your reaction and attitude towards His unmerited grace display itself in your life and thoughts and theology? If not, ask God to help you be more like His example Ruth and;

1. Show more humility
2. Be more astonished at His grace
3. Have a greater desire to continue in that grace
4. Respect Him more and truly make Him “Lord”
5. Give Him more appreciation and thanks for what He has done for you and how He has directed your path.
6. Help you to continue to understand you are undeserving of such treatment, and
7. Keep you diligently doing His work, day by day.

2:23 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וּתְדַבֵּק בְּנַעֲרוֹת בְּעֹז לְלֶקֶט עַד־כְּלוֹת קְצִיר־הַשְּׂעִרִים וְקְצִיר הַחֲטִים

the wheat and the harvest of the harvest of the barley until the finishing of to glean Boaz with the maids of So she stayed close

וַתֵּשֶׁב אֶת־חֲמוּתָהּ

with her mother in law and she lived

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

So she stayed close by the maids of Boaz in order to glean until the end of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

So she stayed close by the maids of Boaz in order to glean until the end of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest.

וּתְדַבֵּק בְּנַעֲרוֹת בְּעֹז לְלֶקֶט עַד־כְּלוֹת קְצִיר־הַשְּׂעִרִים וְקְצִיר הַחֲטִים

This is a postscript to Act 2 (particularly to this last scene).

According to Deut. 16:9-12 and the Gezer Calendar the time between the the beginning of barley harvest to the end of the wheat harvest was normally 7 weeks. This concluded at Pentecost. The period would be from late April to the beginning of June. The point is that Ruth has gleaned for a long time - the time of harvest for both crops. Yet nothing has developed between her and Boaz. The man who holds so much promise for their destitute state has at this point provided food for a season.

And she lived with her mother-in-law.

וַתֵּשֶׁב אֶת־חֲמוּתָהּ

Inclusio to the chapter's opening. The readers also are to see that Boaz as a potential husband for Ruth isn't on anyone's mind at this point.

Application: Hope but no immediate resolution. 7 weeks was spent (nearly 2 months) with the "status quo". Sometimes things do not develop as to the relieving of our trials and tribulations as quickly and smoothly as we hope. We must be patient (James 1:2ff).