

Exegetical Notes for Ruth 2:8-17

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

8 Then Boaz said
to Ruth,
“Listen carefully,
my daughter.
Do not go to glean in another field;
furthermore,
do not go on from this one,
but
stay here with my maids.

9
“Let your eyes be on the field
which they reap,
and go after them.

Indeed, I have commanded the servants not to touch you.

When you are thirsty,
go to the water jars and drink
from what the servants draw.”

10 Then she
fell on her face,
bowing to the ground
and said to him,
“Why have I found favor
in your sight
that you should take notice of me,
since I am a foreigner?”

11 And Boaz answered and said to her,
“All that you have done for your mother-in-law (after the death of your husband)
has been fully reported to me,
and how you left your father and your mother
and the land of your birth,
and came to a people that you did not previously know.

12
“May the Lord reward your work,
and your wages be full from the Lord, (the God of Israel,)
under whose wings you have come to seek refuge.”

13 Then she said,
“I have found favor in your sight, my lord,
for you have comforted me
and indeed have spoken kindly to your maidservant,
(though I am not like one of your maidservants.”)

14 And at mealtime

Boaz said to her, ==> "Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar."

So she sat beside the reapers;
and he served her roasted grain,
and she ate and was satisfied
and had some left.

15

When she rose to glean,

Boaz commanded his servants, saying, ==> "Let her glean even among the sheaves,

and do not insult her.

16

"And also you shall purposely pull out for her *some grain* from the bundles
and leave *it* that she may glean,

and do not rebuke her."

17

So she gleaned in the field until evening.

Then she beat out what she had gleaned,
and it was about an ephah of barley.

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

HEBREW TEXT (BHS):

וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֵז אֶל־רוֹת הַלֹּוא שָׁמַעַת בְּתִי אֶל־תְּלֹכִי לְלִקֹּט בְּשָׂדֵה אַחַר וְגַם⁸
לֹא תַעֲבוּרִי מִזֶּה וְכֹה תִדְבָּקִין עִם־נַעֲרֹתַי: ⁹ עֵינַיִךְ בְּשָׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר־יִקְצְרוּן
וְהַלְכֹת אַחֲרֵיהֶן הַלֹּוא צִוִּיתִי אֶת־הַנְּעָרִים לְבִלְתִּי נִגְעֶךָ וְצִמַּת וְהַלְכֹת
אֶל־הַכֵּלִים וְשָׂתִית מֵאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁאַבוּן הַנְּעָרִים: ¹⁰ וְתִפֹּל עַל־פְּנֵיהָ וְתִשְׁתַּחֲוּ
אֶרְצָה וְתֹאמַר אֵלָיו מִדּוּעַ מָצֵאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינַיִךְ לְהַכִּירָנִי וְאַנְכִי נִכְרִיָּה: ¹¹
וַיַּעַן בְּעֵז וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הֲגֵד הֲגֵד לִי כָּל אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂית אֶת־חַמּוֹתֶךָ אַחֲרַי מוֹת
אִישׁוֹךְ וְתַעֲזֹבִי אֶבִּיד וְאִמֶּךָ וְאֶרֶץ מוֹלֶדְתֶּךָ וְתִלְכִי אֶל־עַם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִדְעֶתָ
תַּמּוּל שְׁלִשׁוֹם: ¹² יִשְׁלַם יְהוָה פְּעֻלָּתְךָ וְתִהִי מִשְׁכַּרְתֶּךָ שְׁלָמָה מֵעַם יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־בָּאת לַחֲסוֹת תַּחַת־כַּנְּפָיו: ¹³ וְתֹאמַר אֶמְצֵא־חֵן
בְּעֵינַיִךְ אֲדַנִּי כִּי נִחַמְתָּנִי וְכִי דִבַּרְתָּ עַל־לֵב שְׁפַחְתָּךְ וְאַנְכִי לֹא אֶהְיֶה
כְּאַחַת שְׁפַחְתֶּיךָ:

וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ בְּעֵז לֵעַת הָאֵכֶל גְּשִׁי הֵלֶם וְאַכַּלְתָּ מִן־הַלֶּחֶם וְטַבַּלְתָּ פִתֶּךָ: ¹⁴
בַּחֲמָץ וְתִשָּׁב מִצַּד הַקּוֹצִרִים וַיִּצְבֹּט־לָהּ קָלִי וְתֹאכַל וְתִשָּׁבַע וְתִתֵּר: ¹⁵
וְתִקַּם לְלִקֹּט וַיִּצֹו בְּעֵז אֶת־נַעֲרָיו לֵאמֹר גַּם בֵּין הָעַמָּרִים תִּלְקֹט וְלֹא
תִכְלִימוּהָ: ¹⁶ וְגַם שַׁלְתֶּשְׁלוּ לָהּ מִן־הַצְּבָתִים וְעִזְבַּתָּם וְלִקְטָה וְלֹא
תִגְעְרוּ־בָהּ: ¹⁷ וְתִלְקֹט בְּשָׂדֵה עַד־הָעֶרֶב וְתַחֲבֹט אֶת אֲשֶׁר־לִקְטָה וַיְהִי
כְּאִיפָה שְׁעָרִים:

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB):

⁸ Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but stay here with my maids.”⁹ “Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Indeed, I have commanded the servants not to touch you. When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the servants draw.”¹⁰ Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?”¹¹ And Boaz answered and said to her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know.”¹² “May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge.”¹³ Then she said, “I have found favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and indeed have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.”

¹⁴ And at mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.” So she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left.¹⁵ When she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not insult her.”¹⁶ “And also you shall purposely pull out for her *some grain* from the bundles and leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.”¹⁷ So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

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)
 - 1. Grace Revealed: Boaz The Gentleman (8-9)
 - 2. Grace Received: Ruth the Humble Foreigner (10,13)
 - 3. Grace Rewarded: Boaz and Ruth Under the Same Wing (11-12)
- C. Scene Three: Ruth Rewarded - Part 2 (vv. 14-17)
 - 1. Grace Realized: Boaz Provides for Ruth
 - a. Ruth's Rest (14)
 - b. Ruth's Rights (15-16)
 - c. Ruth's Reward (17)

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what's t/passage talking about): Boaz provides for Ruth's needs

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what's t/passage saying about what it's talking about): by granting her undeserved privileges that reflect her position under God's protective wing.

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Boaz provides for Ruth's needs by granting her undeserved privileges that reflect her position under God's protective wing.

CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON: God only fills empty cups

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: God Fills Empty Cups (Parts 1 & 2)

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

Bush treats vv. 4-17 separately -- see his structural chart on p. 110.

Here is an interchange between Boaz and Ruth. Boaz, as would be expected, initiates the conversation.

See the outline above for the rest of the context.

2:8 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַיֹּאמֶר בֹּעַז אֶל-רוּת הַלֹּוא שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּתִי אֶל-תְּלַכִּי לְלַקֵּט בְּשָׂדֵה
in field glean you shall not go my daughter have you heard not? to Ruth Boaz and he said
אַחַר וְגַם לֹא תַעֲבוּרִי מִזֶּה וְכֹה תִדְבְּקִין עִם-נַעֲרֹתַי:
with my girls you shall cling and here from this one you shall passover / leave not and also another

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but stay here with my maids.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen carefully, my daughter.

וַיֹּאמֶר בֹּעַז אֶל-רוּת הַלֹּוא שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּתִי

Lit. "have you not heard?" The Heb. uses a neg. question as an emphatic affirmation. Exclamatory effect of "listen carefully!" Same idiom in v. 9 and 3:1,2.

The Hebrew text adds an expression meaning “my daughter” after “Do you not listen?” In many receptor languages it is entirely proper for a man to speak to a woman as “my daughter,” especially if she belongs to a younger generation. At the same time it would be quite wrong to imply by such a form of address that Boaz was an old man. In some languages, of course, a literal translation of “my daughter” would be entirely misleading, since the reader would assume that Boaz was actually addressing his own daughter or was a member of the same family group related by marriage. In such a case, the marriage of Boaz and Ruth would not have been possible. What is required here is an appropriate term of address which would indicate a marked degree of sympathy and kindness, while avoiding any specific reference to a close relative or any suggestion of courtship.* In some languages one may have an equivalent in “my little woman” or “dear lady.” [Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A. (1991). *A translator's handbook on the book of Ruth* (2nd ed.). UBS Handbook Series (30). New York: United Bible Societies.]

(2) Boaz spoke to Ruth (Ruth 2:8). It was he who first spoke to her, for she would not have dared to speak to a man, especially one who was a stranger and “the lord of the harvest.” What right did a widow and an alien have to address a great man like Boaz? Yet he interrupted his

conversation with his foreman to speak to a poor stranger gleaning in his field.

Several years ago, my wife, younger daughter, and I visited Great Britain and found ourselves in Lichfield, where we learned that Queen Elizabeth was coming to dedicate a new school for exceptional children. We interrupted our plans and stood on the curb, waiting patiently for the motorcade, which finally appeared. We stood perhaps ten feet from the Queen as she slowly rode by with her lady-in-waiting, waving to the crowd in her distinctive manner.

Now, suppose she had rolled down the window and called, "Hello, Warren! Hello, Betty and Judy! I'll tell my guards to take care of you!" If that had happened, everybody would have been duly impressed with our importance and perhaps asked for our autographs. Imagine, here are three American citizens to whom the Queen speaks personally!

Queen Elizabeth has never spoken to me, and probably never will; but Almighty God has spoken to me in Jesus Christ and through His Word! "God ... has in these last days spoken to us by His Son" (Heb. 1:1–2, NKJV). In spite of all that a world of sinners has done to the Lord, He still speaks to us in His grace. He not only speaks the word of salvation, but He also gives us the guidance we need for everyday life. Just as Boaz instructed Ruth, so the Lord also shares His Word of wisdom to direct our daily lives. He is the "Lord of the harvest" and assigns to us our place in His field. [Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). Be Committed. "Be" Commentary Series (30–31)]

Do not go to glean in another field;

אַל-תִּלְכִּי לְלַקֵּט בְּשָׂדֵה אֲחֵר

These last 2 clauses seem redundant. See below.

furthermore, do not go on from this one, but stay here with my maids.

וְגַם לֹא תַעֲבוּרִי מִזֶּה וְכֹה תִדְבָּקִין עִם-נְעוּרָתִי:

תַּעֲבוּרִי מִזֶּה could be transl: "Do not go beyond the limits of this field." Cf. similar use in 2 Sam. 15:32/16:1.

Since Boaz is giving her special privileges he didn't want her wandering outside of his field into another's. See previous comments on how a field was set up by family. She had a right to glean, but not among the sheaves (cf. v. 15).

Boaz is telling Ruth to stick close to the women who were binding the cut grain into sheaves.

2:8-9. **Boaz** addressed **Ruth** as **my daughter** (cf. 3:10-11) in reference to the age difference between them. He was closer to the age of Naomi (cf. "younger men," 3:10). Boaz not only spoke of his faith in the Lord (2:4); his life corresponded with his words. When he told Ruth to continue gleaning in his field, he apparently meant that she should glean there throughout the several weeks of harvesting (cf. v. 23) barley (March-April) and wheat (June-July). Normally the gleaners would move in after the harvesters had left an area. But Ruth was invited to **follow along** with the **servant girls** as they worked in the reaping. Boaz assured Ruth that she would be protected from any remarks or other embarrassing incidents that might have come from the

male workers (cf. v. 15). When she got **thirsty**, she need not be concerned about drawing water. She could **drink from** that provided for the workers. In these several ways Boaz was providing for Ruth beyond what was required by the Law (cf. v. 16).¹

Note that Ruth is met with kindness . . . Not only that, but Boaz goes above and beyond in caring for her.

¹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Ru 2:8–9). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2:9 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

עֵינַיִךְ בַּשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר-יִקְצְרוּן וְהִלַּכְתָּ אַחֲרֵיהֶן הֲלוֹא צִוִּיתִי
I have ordered not (?) after them and you shall go that they reap on the field keep your eyes
 אֶת-הַנְּעָרִים לְבִלְתִּי נִגְעֶךָ וְצָמֹת וְהִלַּכְתָּ אֶל-הַבַּיִלִּים וְשָׁתִית מֵאֲשֶׁר
from where and you shall drink to the containers and you shall to and and if you get thirsty to touch you not the servants
 יִשְׁאֲבוּן הַנְּעָרִים:
the servants they have drawn

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

“Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Indeed, I have commanded the servants not to touch you. When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the servants draw.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

“Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them.

עֵינַיִךְ בַּשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר-יִקְצְרוּן וְהִלַּכְתָּ אַחֲרֵיהֶן

“Let your eyes be on the field which they [masc.] reap, and go after them [fem].”

Indeed, I have commanded the servants not to touch you.

הֲלוֹא צִוִּיתִי אֶת-הַנְּעָרִים לְבִלְתִּי נִגְעֶךָ

נגע - lit. "to touch" can mean "to strike violently" or "injure" "trouble" "molest" (Gen. 32:26; 2 Sam. 4:10; Jer. 12:14).

The statement I have ordered my men not to molest you is in Hebrew a question marked with a negative particle, but implying an affirmative answer. Therefore it can appropriately be translated as a statement. Most translators employ a perfect tense: I have ordered my men or “I have given them orders.” The Hebrew perfect tense expresses an action which is apparently accomplished at the very moment of the utterance—at least there is no indication of any prior statement by Boaz to the workers—so that in some languages one may translate correctly with the present tense: “Now I give orders to ...” To molest you is literally “to touch you,” but in this context it means “to harm” or “to trouble.” [Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A. (1991). A translator's handbook on the book

When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the servants draw.”

וְצִמָּת וְהִלְכְתָּ אֶל-הַכֵּלִים וְשָׁתִית מֵאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁאֲבוּן הַנְּעָרִים:

2:10 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתִּפֹּל עַל-פְּנֵיהָ וַתִּשְׁתַּחוּ אֶרֶץ וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מַדּוּעַ מָצָאתִי חֵן

favor I have found why to him and she said and ground and she bowed down on her face and she fell

בְּעֵינַיִךְ לְהַכִּירָנִי וְאַנְכִי נִכְרִיָּה:

am a foreigner and I so that recognizing me in your eyes

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground and said to him,

וַתִּפֹּל עַל-פְּנֵיהָ וַתִּשְׁתַּחוּ אֶרֶץ וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו

This gesture consisted of dropping to ones knees, touching the forehead to the ground (Bush, 122). Usually reserved for worship or great respect given to royalty. Cf. Gen. 23:7; 33:3. Shows gratitude / thankfulness.

Humility is so central. Cf. our attitudes of "entitlement". I "deserve" better. What do we deserve? If you don't expect anything you won't be disappointed. Proud people are not grateful for being treated well; they think they deserve it.

Is that how you feel as it relates to God's grace? Then why expect it of others. We are so proud.

"Grace is not intended to replace lowliness with pride. It's intended to replace sorrow with joy."
[Piper, 65]

“Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?”

מַדּוּעַ מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינַיִךְ לְהַכִּירָנִי וְאַנְכִי נִכְרִיָּה:

Here in 10b-13 is one of the most important discourses in the book. It's a question that goes beyond Ruth and Boaz to one that every believer asks of God. Nothing is more important than the answer we

get.

Theologically, there's a lesson here on how "foreigners" were chosen by God for salvation. Ruth found favor in Boaz' sight as a foreigner. She, a Gentile, would go on to be included in the line of the Messiah of the world, Jesus Christ. Cf. Romans 11.

2:11 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַיַּעַן בְּעֵז וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הִגַּד הִגַּד לִי כֹל אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂית אֶת-חַמּוֹתַי
with your mother-in-law that you have done all to me it was told be told to her and he said Boaz and he answered
אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אִישׁךָ וַתַּעֲזָבִי אָבִיךָ וְאִמֶּךָ וְאֶרֶץ מוֹלַדְתְּךָ וַתֵּלְכִי
and you went your birth and the land of and your mother your father and you left your husband the death of after
אֶל-עַם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדַעְתָּ תְּמוּל שְׁלֹשׁ יָמִים:
three days ago yesterday you did not know that to a people

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

And Boaz answered and said to her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

And Boaz answered and said to her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me,

וַיַּעַן בְּעֵז וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הִגַּד הִגַּד לִי כֹל אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂית אֶת-חַמּוֹתַי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אִישׁךָ

Although his foreman had not identified Ruth by name, as soon as he had identified her by status (a Moabitess) and affiliation (the daughter-in-law of Naomi) the lights went on. So this is the woman everyone in Bethlehem was talking about! The reports that he has heard have emphasized two details about her in particular: her extraordinary kindness to her mother-in-law and her extraordinary courage in accompanying her back. Her kindness is referred to simply as (lit.) “all that you have done for your mother-in-law” (kol ’āšer ’āšit ’et-hāmôtēkā). Later these actions will be characterized as *hesed* (3:1), but for the moment no designation is given.

[Block, 661–662]

and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know.

וַתַּעֲזָבִי אָבִיךָ וְאִמֶּךָ וְאֶרֶץ מוֹלַדְתְּךָ וַתֵּלְכִי אֶל-עַם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדַעְתָּ תְּמוּל שְׁלֹשׁ יָמִים:

Cf. "return" in previous section.

2:12 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

יְשַׁלֵּם יְהוָה פְּעֻלָּךְ וּתְהִי מִשְׂכָּרְתְּךָ שְׂלֵמָה מֵעַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 Israel the God of YHWH from / with full reward you and may He your work YHWH may (he) reward
 אֲשֶׁר-בָּאת לְחַסוֹת תַּחַת-כַּנְּפָיו:
 under His wings to take refuge who you came

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

“May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

“May the LORD reward your work,
 יְשַׁלֵּם יְהוָה פְּעֻלָּךְ

and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel,
 וּתְהִי מִשְׂכָּרְתְּךָ שְׂלֵמָה מֵעַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Does this mean that the writer wants us to think of Ruth's love for Naomi as a work that merits Boaz's favor and the favor of God? Does he want us to think of grace as a kindness we earn? I don't think so. If Ruth has earned the favor of Boaz (and of God), then we must think of her as a kind of employee rendering service to her employer—a service that is so valuable that he is indebted to pay her. She merits the pay. That's not the image the writer wants to create in our minds. Verse 12 gives another image that makes the employer-employee image impossible.

Boaz says in verse 12 that God is really the one who is rewarding Ruth for her love to Naomi. Boaz is only the instrument of God—as we will learn from Naomi in just a moment. But now notice the words, "The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" In spite of the word "repay" (which could be translated "reward" or "recompense"), this verse does not encourage us to picture Ruth as an employee of God providing needed labor that he then as employer rewards with a good wage. The picture is of God as a great winged Eagle and Ruth as a threatened little eaglet coming to find safety under the Eagle's wings. The implication of verse 12 is that God will reward Ruth because she has sought refuge under His wing." [Piper, 66-67]

Boaz then goes on to pronounce a blessing on Ruth, one that echoes Naomi's blessing on her as the women began their journey from Moab (2:12; 1:8). In that previous blessing, Naomi prayed that God would bless Ruth as she returned to her own people. Ruth refused to return that direction (1:10). Unlike Sarah and Abraham, Ruth has left home without divine blessing (Trible, 1978:177), though one suspects not without divine presence. Now through Boaz, Ruth has heard God's blessing. [Roop, E. F. (2002). Ruth, Jonah, Esther. Believers Church Bible Commentary (49). Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.]

under whose wings you have come to seek refuge.”

אֲשֶׁר-בָּאת לְחַסֹּת תַּחַת-כְּנָפָיו:

He used a figure of speech known as a zoomorphism, comparing part of God to some aspect of an animal. He said she had taken refuge under God's wings, like a chick under the wings of its mother hen (cf. Pss. 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4; Matt. 23:37). She was trusting in God's protection. Soon Boaz would be used by God to answer his own prayer. [Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Ru 2:12)]

Picture of protection. Cf. Psalm 36:8, 57:2, 61:5, 91:4.

Implication of how genuinely needy we all are.

Psalm 57:1 (notice the word "for"). Why does God show mercy? Because we seek refuge . . .

She esteems God's protection as superior to all others.

"If you plead God's value as the source of your hope instead of pleading your value as a reason for God's blessing, then his unwavering commitment to His own glory engages all his heart for your protection and joy." [Piper, 67]

Psalm 147:10-11.

Cf. abiding in Christ (John 15; Romans 6).

2:13 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֹּאמֶר אִמְצֵא־חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֲדֹנָי כִּי נִחַמְתָּנִי וְכִי דִבַּרְתָּ עַל־לֵב

on the heart of your you have spoken and for you have comforted me for my lord in your eyes may I find favor and she said

שִׁפְחָתְךָ וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא אֶהְיֶה כְּאַחַת שִׁפְחֹתֶיךָ:

your female slaves as one of I am not and I your female slave

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

Then she said, “I have found favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and indeed have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Then she said, “I have found favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and indeed have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.”

וַתֹּאמֶר אִמְצֵא־חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֲדֹנָי כִּי נִחַמְתָּנִי וְכִי דִבַּרְתָּ עַל־לֵב שִׁפְחָתְךָ וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא אֶהְיֶה
כְּאַחַת שִׁפְחֹתֶיךָ:

The piel of נָחַם is most often of comforting someone who is bereaved (Gen. 37:35). Can also have the sense of reassuring someone (cf. use in Gen. 50:21 of Joseph's reassuring his brothers of his intentions). The sense of bringing relief to someone who has gone out on a limb before you. Do you saw it off or extend a hand?

"have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants." = Ruth demonstrates humility.

In v. 10 Ruth's expression of amazement at Boaz's kindness was based on racial considerations; he had paid attention to her even though she was a foreigner. Now the issue is class: he has spoken kindly to her his *šiphâ* (NIV "servant"), even though she was not like his *šiphôt* (NIV "servant girls"). Hebrew employs several different words for female subordinates: *na'ârâ*, "young servant girl" (v. 5); *šiphâ*, "servant"; *'āmâ*, "maidservant" (3:9). Even though the words are often used interchangeably, their differing etymological roots invite a consideration of possible variations in meaning. Fundamentally *na'ârâ* reflects the young age of the woman without specifying her placement in the rank of servants. *šiphâ* is cognate to *mišpāhâ*, "clan,

family” (cf. v. 2), but this is of little help. According to Sasson *’āmâ* seems to have represented women who could advance to the status of wives or concubines. He plausibly considers a *šiphâ* a female servant of the lowest rank. She could be given as a gift to accompany a bride and, if her mistress proved barren, could bear a child on her behalf for the husband, although this would not change her status. By claiming the status of *šiphâ*, Ruth views herself as occupying the lowest rung on the ladder. But by insisting that she will never be (i.e., futuristic rather than the NIV present) like Boaz’s *šiphôt*, she places herself even lower. Ruth is totally amazed that differences of race or class could not stifle Boaz’s compassion toward her. [Block, 665–666]

How much of a break is there between vv. 13 and 14, and what happened in the space of this time, we don't know. She does glean in v. 15 and it seems that this was her first (cf. Boaz' instructions to the servants in 15b).

2:14 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

אָמַר לָהּ בַּעַז לֵעֵת הָאֲכָל גְּשִׁי הֵלֵם וְאָכַלְתָּ מִן־הַלֶּחֶם וְטָבַלְתָּ פִּתְּךָ
your morsel and dip from the bread and eat here come near the food at the time of Boaz to her and he said
בַּחֲמֶן וַתֵּשֶׁב מִצַּד הַקּוֹצְרִים וַיִּצְבֹּט־לָהּ
and he picked up and offered to her the gleaners at the side of and she sat in the wine/vinegar
קָלִי וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּשְׂבַּע וַתֵּתֶר:
and had some left over and was satisfied and she ate roasted grain

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

And at mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.” So she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

And at mealtime Boaz said to her,

אָמַר לָהּ בַּעַז לֵעֵת הָאֲכָל

Lit. "at the time of the noon meal" (this verse shows a passing of some time between vv. 13-14). Boaz has not exhausted his compassion for Ruth - he invites her to dine with him.

Meals had cultural significance, as they do in so many parts of the world even today. (Parallel to our meals as a church). Hospitality (Gen . 18:1-8); Special celebrations (Ps. 23:5; Mat. 22:1-14; Luke 12:36, 14:8); Confirmation of treaties and covenants (Gen. 31:54; Exo. 24:11). Cf. the Lord's Supper meal.

“Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.”

גְּשִׁי הֵלֵם וְאָכַלְתָּ מִן־הַלֶּחֶם וְטָבַלְתָּ פִּתְּךָ בַּחֲמֶן

"Come here" indicates that Ruth would have separated herself from the rest, as would be expected from a foreigner. Note that Boaz eats with his workers.

"The bread" = food specially provided for the workers. Likely a grain cake cooked in oil.

The word "vinegar" (wine-vinegar) = חֶמֶץ an alcoholic beverage (or a by product of fermentation) with a sour taste (Prov. 10:22) most likely used as a condiment (cf. mustard) to flavor the dry bread.

So she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left.

וַיֵּשֶׁב מֵצֵד הַקּוֹצְרִים וַיַּצְבֵּט-לָהֶקְלִי וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּשְׂבַּע וַתֵּתֶר:

Note that Boaz served Ruth "roasted grain" a staple in an Israelite's diet (1 Sam. 17:17, 25:18; 2 Sam. 17:28). Consisted of barley roasted on an iron plate over an open fire.

Note that she had some left. Emphasizes Boaz' generosity.

This was more than just feeding someone. Extraordinary care. A demonstration of Hesed.

In this context the expression the workers is literally "the reapers," but this is not restricted to the male servants. It is better, therefore, to employ a general expression such as the workers, rather than place Ruth exclusively with the male servants or segregate her with the female servants. Such a separation would likewise be inappropriate in view of the fact that Boaz passed the roasted grain to Ruth, who evidently was not sitting far from him. [Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A. (1991). A translator's handbook on the book of Ruth (2nd ed.). UBS Handbook Series (35). New York: United Bible Societies.]

The text offers no hint of any romantic attraction between Boaz and Ruth. Given the racial and social barriers that separated them, the thought would not have crossed Ruth's mind, and she could not have known that he was a kinsman of her deceased husband. As for Boaz, he was simply a good man, "sent" by God to show favor to this woman. The wings of God are not only comforting to Israelites; they offer protection even for despised Moabites. [Block, D. 667]

2:15 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וּתְקַם לְלִקֵּט וַיֵּצֵא בְעֵז אֶת־נְעָרָיו לֵאמֹר גַּם בֵּין הָעֲמָרִים תְּלַקֵּט וְלֹא

and not she may glean the sheaves between also saying his servants Boaz and he instructed to glean and she got up

תְּכַלְימוּהָ:

embarrass her

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

When she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not insult her.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

When she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not insult her.

וּתְקַם לְלִקֵּט וַיֵּצֵא בְעֵז אֶת־נְעָרָיו לֵאמֹר גַּם בֵּין הָעֲמָרִים תְּלַקֵּט וְלֹא תְכַלְימוּהָ:

This goes back to v. 7. See my notes on that verse.

Verses 15-16 stand together and each verse ends with a warning from the boss to his workers that they not resort to verbal mistreatment.

Insult ==>

4007 כָּלַם (kā·lām): v.; ≡ Str 3637; TWOT 987—1. LN 87.58–87.75 (nif) disgraced, be humiliated, put to shame, i.e., be of low status and little honor or respect, so have words or actions of shame thrust upon one (2Sa 10:5), see also domain LN 33.406–33.411; (hif) disgrace, humble, bring to shame, embarrass, mistreat (Ru 2:15); (hof) be mistreated (1Sa 25:15+); 2. LN 57.37–57.48 (hif) lack, deprive, formally disgrace, i.e., not have essential things necessary for normal or prosperous life, as an extension of being in a disgraceful condition of low status (Jdg 18:7); 3. LN 25.288–25.296 (hof) be despairing, i.e., be in an attitude with a lack of hope (Jer 14:3+)²

² Swanson, J. (1997). Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

2:16 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וְגַם שֶׁל־תִּשְׁלוּ לָהּ מִן־הַצְּבָתִים וְעִזְבָתָם וְלִקְטָהּ וְלֹא תִגְעֲרוּ־בָהּ:
rebuke her and not so she may glean and you shall leave from the bundles for her you must pull out and also

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

“And also you shall purposely pull out for her *some grain* from the bundles and leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

“And also you shall purposely pull out for her *some grain* from the bundles and leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.”

וְגַם שֶׁל־תִּשְׁלוּ לָהּ מִן־הַצְּבָתִים וְעִזְבָתָם וְלִקְטָהּ וְלֹא תִגְעֲרוּ־בָהּ:

The owner of the field commands his workers emphatically to permit Ruth to glean among the sheaves.⁸⁰ In fact, they must intentionally pull some of the stalks from the bundles and leave them lying for her to pick without effort. But the interpretation of the first sentence in v. 17 is complicated by the narrator’s use of two special words. The verb rendered “pull” by the NIV is apparently derived from a root *šll*, but the sense required by this context occurs nowhere else. Elsewhere *šālal* always means something like “to plunder, to take spoil/booty.” The word probably is derived from a different homonymic root, cognate to Arabic *šll*, “to draw [a sword],” or Akkadian *šalālu*, “to slide, slither [like a snake].” The object of the verb is unspecified (stalks of grain no doubt), but the items from which they are to be pulled are identified by a word occurring only here, *šēbātīm*, of uncertain derivation. The most likely Semitic connection is found in Arabic *dabtat*, “handful, sheaf.” In fact, commentators tend to follow Dalman in interpreting the word as “handfuls,” that is, “the ears of the sheaf which are grasped in the left hand while being cut with [a sickle in] the right.”⁸⁶ By this interpretation Ruth does not even need to cut or pull out the grain she is gleaning. As the harvesters cut the standing barley, they were to pull out some of the stalks and leave (*‘āzab*) them lying on the stubble for her.³

Normally, the people gleaning in a field would pick up only the heads of grain which were left behind by those who carried the sheaves to the barn or threshing floor. In this instance Ruth was given the special privilege of gathering among the sheaves or bundles or grain, and thus she was

3 Block, D. I. (1999). *Vol. 6: Judges, Ruth*. The New American Commentary (668). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

able to pick up what would normally have been picked up by the women servants. In this context, therefore, it may be helpful to have a supplementary note explaining precisely what the procedures were in ancient times, and thus the significance of Ruth's receiving permission to gather grain even where the bundles were standing.⁴

8963 I. שָׁלַל (šā·lāl): v.; ≡ Str 7997; TWOT 2399, 2400—LN 16 (qal) pull out, remove, i.e., the non-linear motion of removing an object from collection of objects (Ru 2:16+), note: in context, grain stalks from a bundle⁵

Note an Arabic cognate that means "to pull out" as pulling a sword from its sheath.

Emphatic sense: You most surely will do this.

Rebuke ==>

1721 גָּעַר (gā·'ār): v.; ≡ Str 1605; TWOT 370—1. LN 33.417–33.422 (qal) rebuke, reprimand, disapprove, i.e., to tell another that they have done wrong, with conviction or zeal, implying disapproval and a straining of relationship (Ge 37:10; Ru 2:16; Ps 9:6[EB 5]; 119:21; Isa 54:9; Jer 29:27; Zec 3:2; Mal 2:3+); 2. LN 33.323–33.332 (qal) command, formally, rebuke, i.e., tell a person or object what to do, implying zeal or conviction (Ps 68:31[EB 30]; 106:9; Isa 17:13; Na 1:4; Mal 3:11+)⁶

4 Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A. (1991). *A translator's handbook on the book of Ruth* (2nd ed.). UBS Handbook Series (37). New York: United Bible Societies.

5 Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

6 Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

2:17 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתִּלְקֹט בַשָּׂדֶה עַד־הָעֶרֶב וַתַּחֲבֹט אֶת אֲשֶׁר־לָקְטָה וַיְהִי כְאֵיפָה שְׁעָרִים:

barley about an ephah and it was what she gleaned [obj.] and she beat out until evening in the field and so she gleaned

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

וַתִּלְקֹט בַשָּׂדֶה עַד־הָעֶרֶב וַתַּחֲבֹט אֶת אֲשֶׁר־לָקְטָה וַיְהִי כְאֵיפָה שְׁעָרִים:

Don't miss Ruth's work ethic here. Boaz' generosity must not overshadow Ruth's industry.

Grace is not something to presume upon. Synergism in our work (cf. Phil. 2:12). Parallel to our sanctification (not our justification which has no real synergistic elements - we were dead) but in sanctification we are alive.

There was a threshing floor. She would beat out the stalks of grain on a threshing floor, a hard surface used by the community. Using a stick or rock to separate the grain from the chaff.

The Hebrew verb translated *beaten ... out* occurs elsewhere only in Judges 6:11 and in Isa 28:27, where it has this same literal meaning of threshing out small quantities of grain by knocking them loose from the stalk by means of a curved stick, club, or wooden hammer. One ancient version makes the instrument explicit by translating “she beat with a stick what she had gleaned.”* Another translation makes explicit both the instrument and the two events of hitting the heads of barley and driving out the grain: “she beat with a stick what she had gleaned and drove out the grains.” The latter translation is an excellent descriptive model for those languages which lack a technical term for “beating out.” In some instances, however, one must use a causative expression, such as “cause to fall out” or “cause to become loose.”

Though there is no indication of precisely where this threshing takes place, it no doubt was done in the field. The Hebrew expression which is rendered in TEV as *nearly twenty-five pounds* is literally “about an ephah of barley,” but there is no certainty as to what this measurement

implied. Some scholars believe that it was approximately 40 liters; others agree that the ephah was approximately 40 liters during the Hellenistic period, but cannot say what it was earlier.* Archaeological findings may some day provide us with reliable information, but with the information now available it is impossible to give an exact equivalent of the ephah of the time of Ruth.⁷

An אֵיפָה was a measure of dry goods. According to Ezek. 45:11 it was roughly equivalent to a 'bath' a measure of liquids. An ephah ranged in size over the history of Israel from from 22-36 liters. An ephah of barley would have weighed 30-50 lbs. Quite a feat for Ruth to glean and carry home. (As Campbell says, however, we not need to add to Ruth's virtues that she was strong as an ox!) This was about a months worth of the grain ration allotted to male workers. . . . ***about an ephah of barley!***

Speaks to encouragement. Cf. Cyril Barber's comments on pp. 81-84. We are all under the same wing (v. 12) and all need encouragement. The church needs to be a "safe place" for us to share our struggles and weep our tears w/o feeling ashamed. Cf. my bouts of depression / PAs.

God's grace and providence in leading Ruth to Boaz' field in the first place. Many may think that Boaz is treating Ruth like this because he has some sort of an agenda. She's a young eligible woman. Not at all indicated in the text. If anything, Boaz is treating her as a relative. He's exemplifying Paul's words to Timothy in 1 Tim. 5:2. He's also taking care of Naomi (he knows about her plight as well).

Who is this man! Naomi knows!

⁷ Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A. (1991). *A translator's handbook on the book of Ruth* (2nd ed.). UBS Handbook Series (37–38). New York: United Bible Societies.