

# Exegetical Notes for Ruth 3:6-15

## KEY

**Barber** = *Ruth: An Expository 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

6 So she went down to the threshing floor ==> and ==> did according to all that her mother-in-law had commanded her. [vv. 1-5]

7 When Boaz had eaten  
and drunk

==> and his heart was merry,

he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain;  
and she came secretly,  
and uncovered his feet  
and lay down.

8 And it happened in the middle of the night  
that the man was startled

and bent forward; ==> and behold, a woman was lying at his feet.

9 And he said, "Who are you?"

And she answered, "I am Ruth your maid.

So spread your covering over your maid,  
for you are a close relative."

10 Then he said, ==> "May you be blessed of the LORD, (my daughter).

You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first  
by not going after young men,  
whether poor or rich.

11 "And now, (my daughter),

do not fear. ==> I will do for you whatever you ask,  
for all my people in the city  
know that you are a woman of excellence.

12 "And now it is true I am a close relative;  
however,  
there is a relative closer than I.

13 "Remain this night,

and when morning comes ==> if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you.  
But if he does not wish to redeem you ==> then I will redeem you,  
as the LORD lives.

Lie down until morning."

14 So she lay at his feet until morning

and rose before one could recognize another;  
and he said,

15 "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."

Again he said,

"Give me the cloak that is on you and hold it."

So she held it,==> and he measured six measures of barley and laid it on her.

Then she [he] went into the city.

16 And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did it go, my daughter?"

And she told her all that the man had done for her.

17 And she said, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said, 'Do not go to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'"

18 Then she said, "Wait, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out; for the man will not rest until he has settled it today."

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

HEBREW TEXT (BHS):

- וַתֵּרֶד הַגֶּרֶן וַתַּעַשׂ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-צִוְתָהּ חֲמוּתָהּ: <sup>6</sup>
- וַיֹּאכַל בַּעַז וַיִּשֶׁתּוּ וַיִּיטֹב לָבוֹ וַיָּבֵא לְשֹׁכֵב בְּקִצָּה הָעֵרְמָה וַתָּבֵא בַלֵּט <sup>7</sup>  
וַתִּגַּל מִרְגְּלֹתָיו וַתִּשְׁכַּב:
- וַיְהִי בַּחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה וַיִּחְרַד הָאִישׁ וַיִּלְפַּת וְהִנֵּה אִשָּׁה שֹׁכֶבֶת מִרְגְּלֹתָיו: <sup>8</sup>
- וַיֹּאמֶר מִי-אַתְּ וַתֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי רוּת אֲמַתְּךָ וּפְרִשְׁתְּ כְנָפֶיךָ עַל-אַמְתְּךָ כִּי <sup>9</sup>  
גֵּאל אַתָּה:
- וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ לַיהוָה בְּתִי הֵיטִבְתְּ חֲסִידְךָ הָאֲחֵרוֹן מִן-הָרֵאשׁוֹן <sup>10</sup>  
לְבַלְתִּי-לָכֶת אַחֲרֵי הַבַּחֲוָרִים אִם-דִּל וְאִם-עָשִׂיר:
- וַעֲתָה בְּתִי אֶל-תִּירְאֵי כֹל אֲשֶׁר-תֹּאמְרֵי אֶעֱשֶׂה-לָּךְ כִּי יוֹדַע כָּל-שֵׁעַר <sup>11</sup>  
עַמִּי כִּי אִשְׁתְּ חֵיל אַתְּ:
- וַעֲתָה כִּי אֲמַנָּם כִּי אִם גֵּאל אֲנֹכִי וְגַם יֵשׁ גֵּאל קָרוֹב מִמְּנֵי: <sup>12</sup>
- לִינִי הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיָה בַּבֶּקֶר אִם-יִגְאָלְךָ טוֹב יִגְאָל וְאִם-לֹא יַחֲפֹץ לְגִאֲלֶךָ <sup>13</sup>  
וְגִאֲלִתִּיךָ אֲנֹכִי חַי־יְהוָה שְׁכָבִי עַד-הַבֶּקֶר:
- וַתִּשְׁכַּב מִרְגְּלוֹתָיו עַד-הַבֶּקֶר וַתָּקֶם בְּטָרִם יִכִּיר אִישׁ אֶת-רַעְהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר <sup>14</sup>  
אֶל-יְוָדַע כִּי-בָאָה הָאִשָּׁה הַגֶּרֶן:
- וַיֹּאמֶר הָבִי הַמְטִפַּחַת אֲשֶׁר-עָלֶיךָ וְאַחֲזִי-בָהּ וַתֹּאחֲזוּ בָּהּ וַיָּמַד <sup>15</sup>  
שֵׁשׁ-שָׁעָרִים וַיִּשֶׁתּוּ עָלֶיהָ וַיָּבֵא הָעִיר:
- וַתָּבוֹא אֶל-חֲמוּתָהּ וַתֹּאמֶר מִי-אַתְּ בְּתִי וַתִּגְדַּלְהָ אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר <sup>16</sup>

עֲשֶׂה-לָּהּ הָאִישׁ:

וְהִתְאַמֵּר שֵׁשׁ-הַשְּׁעָרִים הָאֵלֶּה נָתַן לִי כִּי אָמַר אֶל-תְּבוּאֵי רִיקָם<sup>17</sup>  
אֶל-חַמּוֹתָךְ:

וְהִתְאַמֵּר שְׁבִי בְתִי עַד אֲשֶׁר תִּדְעִין אֵיךְ יִפְּלֶה דְבַר כִּי לֹא יִשְׁקֹט הָאִישׁ<sup>18</sup>  
כִּי-אִם-כֹּלֶה הַדְּבַר הַיּוֹם:

### ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB):

6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law had commanded her.<sup>7</sup> When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came secretly, and uncovered his feet and lay down.<sup>8</sup> And it happened in the middle of the night that the man was startled and bent forward; and behold, a woman was lying at his feet.<sup>9</sup> And he said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth your maid. So spread your covering over your maid, for you are a close relative."<sup>10</sup> Then he said, "May you be blessed of the LORD, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first by not going after young men, whether poor or rich.<sup>11</sup> "And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence.<sup>12</sup> "And now it is true I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.<sup>13</sup> "Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as the LORD lives. Lie down until morning."<sup>14</sup> So she lay at his feet until morning and rose before one could recognize another; and he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."<sup>15</sup> Again he said, "Give me the cloak that is on you and hold it." So she held it, and he measured six measures of barley and laid it on her. Then she went into the city.

### 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:**

- III. Act Three: The Royal Line with Hope at Risk (3:1-18)
  - A. Scene One: Remedy Proposed (vv. 1-5) or *Naomi Proposes: A Husband for Ruth*
  - B. Scene Two: Reception or Rejection (vv. 6-15) or *Righteousness on a Threshing Floor*
    - 1. When Righteousness is Risky Business . . .
      - a. Prayerfully Listen to Godly Counsel (v. 6-7a)  
*Evident in Ruth's Heeding Naomi's Advice*
      - b. Patiently Trust God and His Timing (7b-9)  
*Evident in Ruth's Patience in Waiting for Boaz to Act*
      - c. Practice Loyalty (10)  
*Evident in Ruth's **Hesed** Toward Others*
      - d. Promote a Reputation of Integrity (11)  
*Evident in the lives of Ruth and Boaz*
      - e. Put-off Manipulation and Put on Faithful Obedience (12-13a)  
*Evident in Boaz's Knowledge of God's Word and Trust in His Sovereignty*
      - f. Protect the Honor of Others (13b-14)  
*Evident in Boaz's Protection of Ruth*
      - g. Provide for those in Need (15)  
*Evident in Boaz's Continued Provision for Ruth and Naomi*

**PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what's t/passage talking about):** Ruth carries out Naomi's plan...

**PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what's t/passage saying about what it's talking about):**  
...and is received by righteous Boaz.

**PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text):** Righteousness can be risky business

**CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON:** Through this passage we find some guidelines that will help us navigate our lives with confidence that ultimately nothing is at risk because God is in control. For us, risk becomes trust.

**SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE:** When Righteousness is Risky Business

## HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

### 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)

This is the second and central scene of Act 3.

For a detailed look at the structure see Bush pp. 160-61.

The word לָאֵל is featured prominently in this section, used 6 times (v. 9,12,13).

Does this roster of *double entendres* mean that the story-teller is simply seeking to titillate his audience? Emphatically not. His intent is much more serious than that. Having led his audience to participate in the mystery and ambiguity of the scene, he obviously means to say that it is of extreme importance whether or not here at the threshing floor things will go forward according to what Israelite custom and Israelite *hesed-living* calls for. Here is where the modern western audience must beware; Ruth is not to be read as though the sexually provocative scenes are "throw-ins" without any importance to the story's direction. What now happens at the threshing floor is as essential to the story-teller's purpose as what happened on the Moabite highway between Ruth and Naomi, or what happened in the harvest scene when Boaz praised an impoverished widow who was gleaning, or what will happen in the solemn civil hearing at the city gate. At each of these points in the story, a moment of choice is presented to both actors an audience, and at each of these points the choice is made in favor of what righteous living calls for. To comprehend the outcome of the threshing floor scene, we must be as clear as we can on what Israelite custom and law would call for, and we must observe the developing portrayal of these three remarkable people who are living in it. [Campbell, 132]

Before moving on to the next episode, we may reflect further on the nature of the marriage envisioned by Boaz and Ruth. It is important to note that nowhere in the dialogue between Naomi and Ruth or between Boaz and Ruth is there a hint of concern for progeny, that is, the preservation of the family a la the prescriptions regarding levirate marriages in Deut 25:5–10. If Ruth asks for "redemption" and if Boaz is determined to "redeem" her, the aim is not primarily the preservation of Mahlon's family name. Naomi's aim in devising the scheme was to end the destitution and disgrace of Ruth's widowhood and to provide greater security than she can offer to her in the house of her own husband. Since the Torah contains no specific prescription concerning situations like this, Naomi's scheme rests not on a legal obligation but on confidence in Boaz's sense of moral obligation to the family. In this matter she will not be disappointed. The lives of genuinely good people are not governed by laws but character and a moral sense of right and wrong. For Boaz Yahweh's covenant with Israel provides sufficient guidance for him to know what to do in this case.

### 3:6 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתֵּרֶד הַגֶּרֶן וַתַּעַשׂ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-צִוְתָהּ חַמּוּתָּהּ:  
her mother-in-law she had instructed according to all and she did to the threshing floor and she went down

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כְּכֹל - Bush notes on the footnote, page 158: With almost all recent commentators, the כְּ here is to be understood as the so-called *kaph veritatis*, expressing the nuance "exactly as, entirely as."

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ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

**So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law had commanded her.**

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

**So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law had commanded her.**

וַתֵּרֶד הַגֶּרֶן וַתַּעַשׂ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-צִוְתָהּ חַמּוּתָּהּ:

Takes us back to vv. 1-5 and introduces us to the narrative that follows in vv. 6-15.

### 3:7 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַיֹּאכַל בָּעֵז וַיִּשְׂתֶּה וַיֵּיטֵב לְבָבוֹ וַיָּבֵא לְשָׁכְבַּב בְּקֵצֵה הָעֵרְמָה וַתָּבֵא בִלְט  
in quietly and she came the heap at the end of to lie and he came his heart and he/it was good and drank Boaz and he ate  
וַתִּגַּל מִרְגְּלֹתָיו וַתִּשְׁכַּב:  
and she lay down his feet and she uncovered

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

**When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came secretly, and uncovered his feet and lay down.**

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

**When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry,**

וַיֹּאכַל בָּעֵז וַיִּשְׂתֶּה וַיֵּיטֵב לְבָבוֹ

Lit. "And Boaz ate and drank and his heart was good."

There are a number of ways in which the meaning of the Hebrew idiom may be expressed; for example, "he had a sense of well being" (Smith-Goodspeed), "he felt at peace with the world" (NEB), "he had a merry time" (Moffatt), "his heart was sweet," "his liver was happy," and "his eyes were bright," to suggest only a few ways in which happiness may be expressed in various receptor languages.<sup>1</sup>

The idiom expresses euphoria, well-being. Merry is a good translation. According to Bush, the Heb. is ambiguous as to whether this was a result of drinking wine.

Connected with the end of harvest in Isa. 9:2. Note some additional verses:

Proverbs 15:15 All the days of the afflicted are bad, But a cheerful heart has a continual feast.

Ecclesiastes 9:7 Go then, eat your bread in happiness, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works.

Ecclesiastes 10:19 Men prepare a meal for enjoyment, and wine makes life merry, and money

<sup>1</sup> Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A. (1991). *A translator's handbook on the book of Ruth* (2nd ed.). UBS Handbook Series (50). New York: United Bible Societies.

is the answer to everything.

Psalm 104:15 And wine which makes man's heart glad, So that he may make his face glisten with oil, And food which sustains man's heart.

Proverbs 31:6 Give strong drink to him who is perishing, And wine to him whose life is bitter.

Proverbs 9:5 "Come, eat of my food, And drink of the wine I have mixed.

Proverbs 20:1 WINE is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.

Proverbs 23:20 Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;

**he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain;**

וַיֵּבֵא לְשָׁכַב בְּקֵצֵה הַעֲרֵמָה

I.e. from threshing or on the threshing floor near the grain to protect it.

**and she came secretly, and uncovered his feet and lay down.**

וַתָּבֵא בַלַּיִט וַתְּגַל מֵרַגְלָיו וַתִּשְׁכַּב:

No indication of the time that passed. She, no doubt, waited until he was asleep and the fire grew dim.

### 3:8 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה וַיִּחַרַד הָאִישׁ וַיִּלְפַּת וְהָיָה אִשָּׁה שֹׁכֶבֶת מִרְגְּלֹתָיו:

at his feet      lying      a woman      and look there was      and he turned to find      the man      and he was startled      of the night      in the middle      and it was

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

**And it happened in the middle of the night that the man was startled and bent forward; and behold, a woman was lying at his feet.**

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

**And it happened in the middle of the night that the man was startled and bent forward;**

וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה וַיִּחַרַד הָאִישׁ

The word "startled" is often translated "trembled" (as in fear, cf. 1 Sam. 14:15; Isa. 4:5, 19:16; Ezek. 32:10). It is also used other ways (cf. Gen. 27:33; Exo. 19:18; Ezek. 26:16). Some scholars believe that Boaz trembled/awoke because his feet were uncovered and he felt the chill (Campbell, Hubbard). Bush disagrees and contends with others that he simply "awoke with a start" (this often happens when the subconscious senses that something is wrong or someone is in the room - examples).

The middle of the night is often a time of peril and fear in the OT (Exo. 12:23, 11:4, 12:29; Gen. 32:23; Job 34:20; Psa 91:4-5). It is contended by some (Sasson, Zenger) that there was a fear in the ancient near east associated with female night demons known as a "lillith." (?). This is read into the text and such fears and extrapolations are not indicated in the text itself. No doubt, however, that Boaz would have been startled with some degree of fright, after all, he was there to guard his bounty.

**and behold, a woman was lying at his feet.**

וַיִּלְפַּת וְהָיָה אִשָּׁה שֹׁכֶבֶת מִרְגְּלֹתָיו:

וְהָיָה = introduces 'a surprise clause.' From shock to surprise. From fear to astonishment.

At midnight, however, he shivered (*hārad*; NIV "something startled the man"), probably because of the chilling of the night air, and, groping for his covers,<sup>35</sup> he was surprised (Hb. *hinnēh*, "behold," left untranslated by NIV) to find someone lying by his legs (*margēlôt*). The narrative is telescoped at this point, not telling the reader how he recognized her as a woman.

Given the spiritual climate in the period of the judges, an average Israelite might have welcomed the night visit of a woman, interpreting her presence as an offer of sexual favors, but not so Boaz.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Block, D. I. (1999). *Vol. 6: Judges, Ruth*. The New American Commentary (689–690). Nashville:

Boaz can be likened to Joseph. Note the expansion by the Targum:

“But he restrained his desire and did not approach her, just as Joseph the righteous did, who refused to approach the Egyptian woman, the wife of his master, just as Paltiel bar Laish the Pious did, who placed a sword between himself and Michal daughter of Saul, wife of David, whom he refused to reproach” (Beattie, Targum of Ruth, 26–27).

### 3:9 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אַתְּ וַתֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי רוּת אֲמָתְךָ וּפְרִשְׁתָּ כְנָפֶיךָ עַל־אֲמָתְךָ כִּי  
because over your maid servant your wing and you shall spread your maid servant am Ruth I and she said who are you? and he said  
גֹּאֵל אַתָּה:  
you are redeemer

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

**And he said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth your maid. So spread your covering over your maid, for you are a close relative.”**

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

**And he said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth your maid.**

וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אַתְּ וַתֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי רוּת אֲמָתְךָ

Word "maid" here is different than the word used in 2:13. This is a socially higher term that indicates a class of women who are available (i.e. not married). Cf. Campbell who disagrees (124).

**So spread your covering over your maid, for you are a close relative.”**

וּפְרִשְׁתָּ כְנָפֶיךָ עַל־אֲמָתְךָ כִּי גֹאֵל אַתָּה:

Ruth is following Naomi's instructions that were in keeping with her desire: that Ruth find a home and a husband. The meaning here can be drawn from Ezek. 16:7-8:

7 “I made you numerous like plants of the field. Then you grew up, became tall, and reached the age for fine ornaments; your breasts were formed and your hair had grown. Yet you were naked and bare.<sup>8</sup> “Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; *so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness.* I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine,” declares the Lord GOD.

כְּנָף - lit. "wing" (so some translations) see use in 2:12. Protection and a hint of marriage.

The consonants in the Hebrew expression rendered in TEV as *marry me* may have two different meanings, depending upon the vowels which are associated with the consonants. With one set of vowel markings the meaning is “spread your skirt over your maidservant,” and with the other set of vowel markings the meaning is “spread your wings over your maidservant.” See the related comments on “protection” in 2:11–12. In general the meaning seems quite clearly to be

a request for protection, with the specific meaning of *marry me*, but most translators and commentators prefer to retain the literal idiom “spread your skirt over your maidservant.”\* In a sense, both components of meaning, union and protection, are present in the expression “spread your skirt over your maidservant,” so that the difference in meaning between the two possible ways of writing the vowels with the Hebrew consonants is not great.

One of the serious difficulties involved in a literal translation of the Hebrew idiom, “spread your skirt over your maidservant,” is that it is too easily interpreted as an invitation to sexual intercourse, and this seems to be out of keeping with the characters of the story. In most instances, therefore, it may be best to give the meaning of the idiom in the text and, if necessary, provide a literal translation in a marginal note.<sup>3</sup>

Third, out of the blue and without equivocation, Ruth requests that Boaz marry her. The idiom she used may be puzzling to the modern reader, but there was no question about its meaning in the Israelite context in which it was given. Literally *pāras ānāp* ‘al translates “to spread one’s wing over.” One recognizes immediately a play on 2:12, where *kēnāpīm*, “wings,” had served as a metaphor for the refuge that Yahweh, the God of Israel provides. Accordingly, one’s first impulse is to interpret this statement similarly. Ruth is hereby requesting (even demanding) that Boaz take her under his wing and assume responsibility for her security. But there is more to the demand than this. The word *kānāp* is gloriously ambiguous, referring not only to the wings of a bird but also to a skirt, the corners of one’s flowing garments (hence NIV). Literally then this statement could be interpreted as a request by Ruth to Boaz to cover her and protect her from the chill of the night. He is not the only one shivering. But there is still more to the demand, for in common Hebrew usage “to spread one’s wings over someone” was a euphemistic idiom for marriage. The gesture of a man covering a woman with his garment was a symbolic act, which according to Near Eastern custom signified “the establishment of a new relationship and the symbolic declaration of the husband to provide for the sustenance of the future wife.”<sup>40</sup> This is what Naomi had in mind when she proposed this scheme as a way of providing *mānôah*, “rest, security,” for Ruth in 3:2. In essence she challenges Boaz to be the answer to his own invocation of blessing upon her in 2:12. Remarkably, Boaz interpreted this immediately not as a demand for sex but as a proposition for marriage, a conclusion supported by his response in vv. 10–13.<sup>4</sup>

"She puts the issue to him as if she, a Moabite, is fully aware and fully at home with the Israelite custom." [Block]

This is clearly a request that Boaz take Ruth as his wife.

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3 Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A. (1991). *A translator's handbook on the book of Ruth* (2nd ed.). UBS Handbook Series (52–53). New York: United Bible Societies.

4 Block, D. I. (1999). *Vol. 6: Judges, Ruth*. The New American Commentary (691). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

### *Excursus on the question of the לֵוְיָ and levirate marriage*

Levirate marriage is prescribed in Deut. 25:5-10 and also comes to light in the story of Judah and Tamar (Gen. 38).

Bush writes that almost all commentators argue as follows (166ff):

- Ruth 4:5,10 show that Boaz's marriage to Ruth was a levirate type of marriage . . . Even though Boaz was not a brother in law . . .
- In 3:9 Ruth based her request that Boaz accept the levirate marriage responsibility on the fact that he is . . . 'redeemer.' Therefore, one of the legal responsibilities of the 'redeemer' was to perform the levirate marriage, even though the passages in the OT . . . dealing with the levirate never call the one responsible for this obligation a 'redeemer.'
- In chapter 4 the land belonging to Elimelech suddenly surfaces in the story, and Boaz calls upon the redeemer more closely related than he to act upon his rights and duties as a redeemer and buy back . . . this land.

That the parallel is not exact to Deut. is not a cause to toss out the idea that there were levirate concepts in practice, esp. during such a time as the judges. Naomi and Ruth may have known of the concept, but not all the details such as the order of the levirate responsibility.

As to the connection between marriage and redemption, much has been made of this - that this is the only place where both are drawn together. The levirate marriage law from Deut. 25 and the holiness code / redemption law from Lev. 25:25, 27:9-33 are codified together here. Perhaps this was one of the author's purposes in writing (bringing these together).

Genesis 38 - when the younger brothers of a dead man do not fulfill their responsibility siring a son from his childless widow, Tamar, she entices her father-in-law himself into fulfilling the duty. "Her success, and her father-in-law's statement about righteousness in 38:26 suggest that the purposes of levirate marriage were even in this manner properly carried out." [Campbell, 133]

The Deut 25:5-10 law on the subject, however, confines the responsibility to "brothers who live together," and even gives them the right of refusal. One possible conclusion: Genesis 38 and Ruth come from a time prior to the formulation of the Deuteronomic law, which limits the application of the law to a smaller and more intimate family circle and relaxes its stringency." [Campbell, 133]

The widening of the law to include more distant relatives was likely an extrapolation of the Deut 25 principle (the law's precedence over time).

Their purpose [law codes] was probably not to be comprehensive, but rather to be illustrative and didactic. Lack of a comprehensive law code together with localism and the sheer number of local sources for legal lore explains why frequently stories in the Bible portray a set of customary practices at odds with the formulations of the codes. We cannot expect absolute consistency between Deut 25:5-10 and the stories in Genesis 38 and Ruth, and the inconsistency may just as easily arise from differing local practice as from a difference in the time period represented. [Campbell, 134]

And:

Therefore the juxtaposition of redemption and levirate practices in Ruth is a natural one, on the basis of principle. The fact that we can find no legal code which put the two together is probably irrelevant and as much due to the paucity of our sources as to any other cause. [137]

Bush adds:

We must not regard the OT codes of law as comprehensive and all inclusive, intended to regulate the legal needs of life by a system of courts, lawyers, judges, and police. On the contrary, legal decisions were made by the town elders on the basis of local legal precedents, preserved primarily orally. These differed from those of other communities, even though communication between communities on legal matters doubtless created a certain degree of uniformity, particularly between towns in the same geographical area. . . . Their purpose was illustrative and didactic; consequently, they are anything but complete and comprehensive. As a further result, the customs and legal practices followed in the *narratives* in the Bible often do not agree with the legal formulations in the *codes*. In this light it is quite incorrect to conclude that Boaz's marriage to Ruth can have nothing to do with levirate marriage as prescribed in Deut 25:5-10, simply because the Deuteronomy passage specifies that the obligation rests upon "brothers dwelling together" (25:5), while Boaz is a more distant relative . . . It is further to be noted in this regard that we cannot expect terms used by ordinary people in narratives to be employed with the kind of legal precision that would be found in a law code. [168]

As to the *Goel*, the role of the redeemer was to recover or retain property, free slaves, etc. (see my previous notes on the *Goel*).

Yet this was not apparently the intention of Naomi, but rather the selfless provision of a house and husband for Ruth. But Naomi does connect the close relative relationship with the legal obligation (cunning / smart).



That statement resonated within me - without saying it I had felt the same way for years.

Go after - 2 meanings: 1) Aggressive harlotry (Prov. 7:22) such as that used by the prophets in describing Israel's idolatry (cf. James 4:4). 2) The pursuit of marriage (cf. Gen. 24:5,8,39; 1 Sam. 25:42).

Young men refers to those who are of the age and status whereby they can take and support a wife (they haven't been married before). This would indicate a man who is a little younger or perhaps as old as Ruth, not an older man such as Boaz.

Apparently Ruth had received marriage proposals--the Targum is surely in error with its addition, 'to commit fornication with them'--probably from the youths who harvested Boaz' crop (Hence the definite article which the LXX lacks). [Campbell, 124]

But Boaz answers this question in part himself by lauding Ruth for not going after other more desirable men. The expression "to go after" (*hālak 'ahārē*) is more commonly used in a religious sense of devoting oneself to other gods and following them in cultic procession, but it also describes the efforts one person makes to establish sexual relations with another (Prov 7:22; Hos 2:5 [Hb. 7]). Boaz qualifies the kinds of men Ruth might more naturally have pursued as "the young men" (*habbēhūrīm*) and "whether poor or rich" (*'im dal wē'im 'āšîr*). Derived from a root *bāhar*, "to choose," "young men" refers to choice young men, men in the prime of their strength and virility. In Amos 8:13 the word is paired with "the virgins" (*habbētûlôt*). The last expression, "whether poor or rich," functions as a merism for "anyone at all." Viewed as a whole, this sentence is remarkably deferential. Boaz is obviously not a withered old man (he is still able to put in a full day's work in the fields with his young workers and then stay at the threshing floor all night), and he is obviously not a poor man (he is characterized as a "man of standing" in 2:1, and he owns land and servants). He recognizes, however, that if Ruth would have married for status ("young man") or love ("poor") or money ("rich"), she could have gone elsewhere. Boaz himself may qualify on these counts, but he intentionally deflects the attention from the object of this "search" to the seeker.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Block, D. I. (1999). *Vol. 6: Judges, Ruth*. The New American Commentary (693). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

### 3:11 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וְעַתָּה בְּתִי אַל-תִּירָאִי כֹל אֲשֶׁר-תֹּאמְרִי אֶעֱשֶׂה-לָּךְ כִּי יוֹדַע כָּל-שֹׁעַר עַמִּי  
 my people all the assembly of knowing for I will do to you that you say/ask all you shall not be afraid my daughter and so then  
 כִּי אִשָּׁת חַיִּל אַתָּה:  
 you a woman of a woman that

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

**“And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence.**

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

**“And now, my daughter, do not fear.**

וְעַתָּה בְּתִי אַל-תִּירָאִי

Contrast to Boaz being "startled" in v. 8.

TEV shows the order of the sentences of the source text. The Hebrew order is: (1) “don’t be afraid”; (2) “I will do everything you ask”; (3) “all people know that you are a good woman.” However, the object of Ruth’s fear is not the possibility of Boaz’s refusing help to her, but the possibility that the people of the town will oppose her because she is of Moabite origin.\* A change in the order of clauses seems essential in order to make the relation more explicit than in TEV. One may translate, for example: “Dear woman, do not be afraid, for everyone in town knows that you are a good woman. I will do....”<sup>7</sup>

**I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence.**

כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-תֹּאמְרִי אֶעֱשֶׂה-לָּךְ כִּי יוֹדַע כָּל-שֹׁעַר עַמִּי כִּי אִשָּׁת חַיִּל אַתָּה:

Excellence of Boaz and Ruth in light of the tempting circumstances and lurid bad interpretations of Naomi's plan. The threshing floor was public and Boaz' reputation would have been on the line.

כָּל-שֹׁעַר עַמִּי = lit. "all the gate of my people." Cf. 4:10 where a sim. expression occurs (and 4:1 and 11 where the gate is the locale of the legal proceedings of the town). The Targum adds "the gate of the great Sanhedrin" demonstrating that the Jews saw legal significance in the gate.

<sup>7</sup> Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A. (1991). *A translator's handbook on the book of Ruth* (2nd ed.). UBS Handbook Series (54). New York: United Bible Societies.

"excellence" recalls the description of Boaz in 2:1 (also echoes Prov. 31:10-13).

## 3:12 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וְעַתָּה כִּי אֲמַנָּם כִּי אִם גֹּאֵל אֲנֹכִי וְגַם יֵשׁ גֹּאֵל קָרוֹב מִמֶּנִּי:

from/than me closer relationship a redeemer there is and/but also I a redeemer if that indeed it is true for/yes and now

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

**“And now it is true I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.**

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

**“And now it is true I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.**

וְעַתָּה כִּי אֲמַנָּם כִּי אִם גֹּאֵל אֲנֹכִי וְגַם יֵשׁ גֹּאֵל קָרוֹב מִמֶּנִּי:

Cf. Deut. 25:5-7. Boaz demonstrates his knowledge of the Law.

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The "kinsman-redeemer" is very imp. to understanding t/entire book.

גֹּאֵל (used in over 80 vv. / 10 vv. in Ruth).

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

**(b) It's a word that functions in a legal sense related to Israelite family law**

Within a family (clan) a *gō'ēl's* is the nearest relative who is responsible for the well-being of his closest kin. Relevant when the relative is in distress and can't get himself/herself out of a crisis.

**(c) In t/OT there are 5 aspects of t/redemptive function of a *gō'ēl***

1. To ensure that the hereditary property of the family stays in the family (Lev 25:25–30)
2. To ensure the freedom of individuals within the family by buying them back (redeem) when they were forced to sell themselves into slavery because of poverty (Lev 25:47–55)
3. To avenge a murder (Num 35:12, 19–27).  
Judicial. If your close kin was murdered you had t/right of execution.
4. To receive restitution on behalf of a deceased victim of a crime (Num 5:8). Financial settlement.
5. To ensure that justice is served in a court case involving a relative.

That is especially relevant this side of the cross.

Job 19:25 “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.

Psalms 119:154 Plead my cause and redeem me; Revive me according to Your word.

Jeremiah 50:34 “Their Redeemer is strong, the LORD of hosts is His name; He will vigorously plead their case . . .

What have we talked about as it relates to t/Gospel - key words and concepts like "justification" and "imputation".

Romans 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Romans 4:5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Romans 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

1 John 2:1–2 1 . . . if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins . . .

The Israelite provision for the *gō'ēl* 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]

I suppose in that temporal sense we ought to serve as redeemers for one another within the Church, the family of God.

We ought to defend one another. (weeping, rejoicing, serving, forgiving, loving, keeping no record of wrongs).

### 3:13 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

לִינִי הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיָה בַבֹּקֶר אִם־יִגְאָלְךָ טוֹב יִגְאָל וְאִם־לֹא יַחֲפֹץ לְגַאֲלֶךָ  
to redeem you he delights/wants but if not let him redeem good if he wants to redeem you n the morning and it will happen the night spend the night  
וְגַאֲלֶיךָ אֲנֹכִי חַי־יְהוָה שְׁכָבִי עַד־הַבֹּקֶר:  
until the morning lie down the life of YHWH I and I will redeem

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

**“Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as the LORD lives. Lie down until morning.”**

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

**“Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you.**  
לִינִי הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיָה בַבֹּקֶר אִם־יִגְאָלְךָ טוֹב יִגְאָל

Boaz trusts in God's providence.

**But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as the LORD lives.**

וְאִם־לֹא יַחֲפֹץ לְגַאֲלֶךָ וְגַאֲלֶיךָ אֲנֹכִי חַי־יְהוָה

"as the Lord lives" = standard oath formula common (30x) to Judges, Samuel, Kings (cf. 2 Sam. 9-20; 2 Kings 1-2). Hosea condemns its hypocritical use (4:15) and Jeremiah looks forward to the time when Baal worshipers repent and promise by YHWH's name and not Baals.

Meaning is: "As sure as YHWH is the living God, I will do as I promise."

**Lie down until morning.”**

שְׁכָבִי עַד־הַבֹּקֶר:

Bookends the beginning of the v. The word is lit. "lodge" and is devoid of sexual overtones (never used in that fashion in the OT).

Boaz acted responsibly in two ways: (1) He did not send her home in the middle of **the night**. He would protect her and he would touch her only if she could be rightfully his. (2) Also he protected the rights of her nearer kinsman.<sup>8</sup>

Boaz's statement to Ruth that she should stay there the rest of the night would imply that he wanted to protect Ruth from the dangers of the night, possibly an encounter with thieves or men who were drunk at the harvest season. Threshing and winnowing were not women's work, and Ruth's presence at the threshing floor could certainly lead to a misinterpretation of her motives. Had she been detected, people would have probably thought that she was present as a prostitute.<sup>9</sup>

In v. 13 Boaz tries to pacify Ruth with some immediate counsel: he advises her to spend the night there ("here" is implied but is not in the text). To guard against any sexual misinterpretation, however, he avoids the word *šākab*, preferring to speak of lodging or spending the night (*lîn*). He uses the same word that Ruth had used in 1:16 when she committed herself to lodging wherever Naomi would lodge. By his speech as a whole and his choice of words in particular, Boaz maintains the same kind of integrity that he had displayed in chap. 2. He will not take advantage of Ruth.<sup>10</sup>

Before moving on to the next episode, we may reflect further on the nature of the marriage envisioned by Boaz and Ruth. It is important to note that nowhere in the dialogue between Naomi and Ruth or between Boaz and Ruth is there a hint of concern for progeny, that is, the preservation of the family *a la* the prescriptions regarding levirate marriages in Deut 25:5–10. If Ruth asks for "redemption" and if Boaz is determined to "redeem" her, the aim is not primarily the preservation of Mahlon's family name. Naomi's aim in devising the scheme was to end the destitution and disgrace of Ruth's widowhood and to provide greater security than she can offer to her in the house of her own husband. Since the Torah contains no specific prescription concerning situations like this, Naomi's scheme rests not on a legal obligation but on confidence in Boaz's sense of moral obligation to the family. In this matter she will not be disappointed. The lives of genuinely good people are not governed by laws but character and a moral sense of right and wrong. For Boaz Yahweh's covenant with Israel provides sufficient guidance for him to know what to do in this case.<sup>11</sup>

Heeding both Naomi's (3:4) and Boaz's advice, Ruth lay back down at his feet (*margēlôt*) for the remainder of the night. In the wake of their midnight conversation neither Ruth nor Boaz probably slept much that night. Boaz's mind probably was preoccupied with plans for resolving the case in the morning and anxieties over whether he would be able to gain the right to Ruth's

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8 Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Ru 3:13). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

9 Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A. (1991). *A translator's handbook on the book of Ruth* (2nd ed.). UBS Handbook Series (55). New York: United Bible Societies.

10 Block, D. I. (1999). *Vol. 6: Judges, Ruth*. The New American Commentary (695). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

11 *Ibid.*, 696).

hand. No doubt these issues were also on Ruth's mind, but she had the added concern of getting away unnoticed in the morning. In order to preserve her reputation (note Boaz's concern expressed in v. 11) she would need to be gone before anyone could recognize her. To prevent suspicions about her activities at night on the threshing floor where Boaz slept, before dawn broke she got up and prepared to leave.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 697.

### 3:14 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַתִּשְׁכַּב מִרְגְּלוֹתָיו עַד־הַבֹּקֶר וַתָּקָם בְּטָרֶם יִכִּיר אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר

and he said his companion a man he could recognize at before and she got up until the morning at his feet and she lay

אֶל־יִוָּדַע כִּי־בָאָה הָאִשָּׁה הַגֵּרָוּן:

to the threshing floor the woman that she came it must not be known

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

**So she lay at his feet until morning and rose before one could recognize another; and he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."**

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

**So she lay at his feet until morning and rose before one could recognize another;**

וַתִּשְׁכַּב מִרְגְּלוֹתָיו עַד־הַבֹּקֶר וַתָּקָם בְּטָרֶם יִכִּיר אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ

May have only been a few hours.

יִכִּיר Cf. the word used 2x in 2:10 and 1x in 2:19 (word play).

**and he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."**

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־יִוָּדַע כִּי־בָאָה הָאִשָּׁה הַגֵּרָוּן:

We're not told who Boaz said this to (seems to be that he wanted her visit to remain a secret). It's grammatically possible that Boaz was saying this to himself (translated, "Boaz thought to himself, 'it must not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor!' - impropriety).

The Syriac has Ruth doing the talking.

### 3:15 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַיֹּאמֶר הָבִי הַמְטָפַחַת אֲשֶׁר־עָלֶיךָ וְאֶחְזֶי-בָּהּ וְתֵאָחַז בָּהּ וַיִּמַּד  
and he measured on her and she held and hold it on that is on you the cloak give/bring and he said  
שֵׁשׁ־שְׁעָרִים וַיֵּשֶׁת עָלֶיהָ וַיָּבֵא הָעִיר:  
into the city and she went on her and he put it six measures of barley

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

**Again he said, "Give me the cloak that is on you and hold it." So she held it, and he measured six measures of barley and laid it on her. Then she went into the city.**

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

**Again he said, "Give me the cloak that is on you and hold it."**

וַיֹּאמֶר הָבִי הַמְטָפַחַת אֲשֶׁר־עָלֶיךָ וְאֶחְזֶי-בָּהּ

"hold it" = "get a good grip on it." Cf. the use of the word in Jacob gripping Esau's heel (Gen. 25:26); in Moses gripping the serpent's tail (Exo. 4:4); in Samson's grip on the city gate (Judg. 16:3; in Joab holding Amasa's beard as he prepares to stab him (2 Sam. 20:9); in Adonijah's grip on the horns of the altar, fearing Solomon's vengeance (1 Kings 1:51).

**So she held it, and he measured six measures of barley and laid it on her.**

וְתֵאָחַז בָּהּ וַיִּמַּד שֵׁשׁ־שְׁעָרִים וַיֵּשֶׁת עָלֶיהָ

Six measures, not measured by the Ephah (from 29-48 lbs) as this would weigh between 175 and 285 lbs. (depending on the calculation). Perhaps an Omer which was 1/10th of an Ephah. However, Omer is masculine and the numeral six here is feminine. Some commentators opt for a unit of measure which was 1/3 of an Ephah (58-95 lbs). Probably best to leave the amount of each measure undetermined (Eg. "six scoops"). It would have been generous and not too much for her to carry.

**Then she went into the city.**

וַיָּבֵא הָעִיר:

Textual Issue. Most Hebrew MSS have "he went into the city." English translations are divided. Seems that the reading preferred would be "he" connecting Boaz to 4:1 and showing that he was intent on taking action.

This scene closes on a confusing note. According to the Masoretic text, the last sentence in v. 15 has Boaz going back to the town. This is unexpected, not only because Ruth is the one who has just been preparing to leave the threshing floor, but also because Boaz has more work to do there. Recognizing this problem, the Syriac and Vulgate versions have changed the masculine verb form (*wayyābō*) into a feminine form (*wattābō*), a reading followed by most modern translations. The NIV (also NRSV) is surely right in preserving the masculine, however, not only on the principle of *lectio difficilior* (the more difficult reading is preferred), but also as the narrator's way of highlighting Boaz's eagerness to resolve the issue that has been raised overnight. The narrator assumes the audience/reader knows that Ruth will have left after Boaz had poured the grain on the cape and placed it on her shoulder. But without a statement concerning Boaz, there is no transition from his location at the field in chap. 3 to his presence in town in chap. 4.<sup>13</sup>

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13 Block, D. I. (1999). *Vol. 6: Judges, Ruth*. The New American Commentary (698). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.