

# Ruth

## *Repair & Reversal*

### Setting & Context

1. Judges, Ruth, and Samuel
2. Bethlehem, Moab, Fields and Harvest
3. God's activity in Ruth?

### Style & Structure

1. Prose narrative, poetry, parable, history,?
2. Literary Symmetry (Chiasm)
3. Intertextuality

### Literary Patterning

*Major themes are revealed through narrative structure and 'linguistic mirroring'*

1. Sons Lost (10 years): Naomi destitute... Son given... Naomi's life restored (10 generations)
2. Orpah says she will go with Naomi but does not... *Peloni almoni* (the redeemer) says he will redeem but does not
3. Meeting at the city gate: Ruth ignored... Meeting at the city gate: Ruth accepted
4. Ruth goes out from Naomi: Resolves lack of food... Ruth goes out from Naomi: Resolves lack of husband/ children
5. Ruth encounters Boaz at the field during harvest: Boaz provides grain/ promises protection... Boaz encounters Ruth at the field during harvest: Boaz provides grain/ promises redemption

## Repair, order, and meaning through structure

A 1:1-5 Sons lost/ Naomi destitute

B 1:6-22 Women return to Bethlehem  
-Orpah says she will come, but doesn't

C 2:1-23 Field during harvest -(Deut. 24:19-22)  
-Boaz provides grain -Ruth goes out from Naomi

C' 3:1-18 Field during harvest -(Deut. 25:5-10)  
-Boaz provides grain -Ruth goes out from Naomi

B' 4:1-12 Women redeemed in Bethlehem  
-Peloni Almoni says he will redeem but doesn't

A' 4:13-17 Son given/ Naomi's life returned

## Intertextual Themes

Gen 1-4 (Adam, Eve, Cain & Abel)

Gen. 12-13 (Abraham & Lot)

Gen. 19:30-38 (Lot & his daughters)

Gen. 38 (Judah & Tamar)

Deut. 24:19-21; Lev. 23:22 (Gleaning for the poor, fatherless, and widows)

Deut. 25:5-10 (Levirate marriage)

Judg. 19-21 (Dehumanization of women & disintegration of the nation)

Lev. 25:23-28 (Redemption of land)

Prov. 7:5-10 (The foreign woman)

Prov. 31:10 (The woman of valor)

## Chapter 1

1:1-2- In the days of the judging of the judges there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the fields of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the fields of Moab and remained there.

- The judging of the judges (Judg. 21:25)
  
- A famine in the land and a sojourn (Gen. 12:10)
  
- A man in Bethlehem of Judah (Judg. 1:2; 2:11)
  
- The significance of names
  
- Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah (1 Sam. 17:12; Mic. 5:2)
  
- The fields of Moab (Deut. 23:4-5)

1:3-5- But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

- They “lifted up” wives (2 Chr 11:21; 13:21; 24:3; Ezra 9:2, 12; 10:44; Neh 13:25)
- Moabite women (Num. 25:1-3; Rev. 2:14)
- Ten years ( Gen 16:1–3)
- Her two “children”

1:6-7- Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the fields of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the Lord had visited his people and given them food. So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

- “Returning” (*shuv*) to the land
  
- The Lord visited (*paqad*) his people (Ex. 4:31)
  
- She arose, she set out, they walked on the road to return

1:8-14- Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go, return each of you to her mother’s house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!” Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. And they said to her, “No, we will return with you to your people.” But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me from you that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me.”

- Kindness to the dead (*chesed shel emet*)
  
- “May Yahweh grant” or “Yahweh will grant”? (2 Sam. 7:10-11)
  
- Naomi’s bitterness
  
- Ruth “clung” to her (Gen. 2:24; Deut. 10:20; Josh. 22:5; Jer. 13:11; 2 Sam. 20:2)

1:15-17- And she said, “See, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and to her gods;

return after your sister-in-law."But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to abandon you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."

- Returned to her gods
- Reversing Lot's choice to separate (Gen. 13:9-11)
- Your people... my people. Your god... my god

1:18-19- And when Naomi saw that she was indeed resolved to go with her, she said no more. So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was thrown into an uproar because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

- Tumult in the city (*1 Sam. 4:5; 1 Kings 1:45; Deut. 7:23*)
- *Is this Naomi?*

1:20-22- She said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for Shaddai has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the LORD has returned me empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and Shaddai has brought calamity upon me?” So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the fields of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

- Bitterness from Shaddai (Job 27:2)
- Whose “return”?
- The barley harvest (Lev. 23:10)