

Ruth Chapter 1

Christ-Centered Typology and Application

Ruth 1:1 - Bethlehem: The House of Bread

Now it happened, during the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. A man from Bethlehem, Judah, went to live in Moab with his wife and two sons.

Bethlehem means "house of bread." This reminds us of when Messiah, as a baby with His parents and siblings, left **Nazareth and traveled to Egypt** during a time of danger. A man from Bethlehem—Yehoshua was born in Bethlehem (**Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1**), **the house of bread, and He is the Bread of Life (John 6:35)**. The connection is clear: both stories involve leaving Bethlehem during famine or danger and eventually returning.

Mic 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.

Mic 5:3 Therefore will he give them up, until the time *that* she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

Mat 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king,

Ruth 1:2 - The Names Reveal the Typology

The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name was Naomi, and his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. They went to the land of Moab and stayed there.

The Hebrew names are loaded with meaning and reveal the typology of this passage:

- **Elimelech = "My God is King" — A righteous man, pointing to Yehoshua the Messiah, the King**
- **Naomi = "Pleasant one" — Represents the nature of the Messiah and His church, the bride**
- **Mahlon = "Sickness"**
- **Chilion = "Consumption" or "pining away"**

The **names of the two sons together** illustrate "weakness fading and dying." They **symbolize the old covenant and the law, which could not bring life, only death.**

Romans 7:10 states, "The commandment which was to bring life, I found to bring death." The two sons die because the law cannot save—only the Messiah can.

Christ is the bridegroom (Elimelech). Naomi is the bride, the church, the called-out ones.

Ruth 1:3 - The Death of the Bridegroom

"Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons."

The Messiah died, and the church (Naomi, the called-out ones) was left in an unbelieving world with two sons—one sick and one dying. These sons symbolize the remnants of the old covenant, the law, and works that cannot save. Yet Naomi is not alone. As we shall see, Naomi represents the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who will lead the remnant back to Bethlehem, back to Christ, the house of bread.

Ruth 1:4-7 - Two Daughters: Israel and the Gentiles

Now they took wives from the women of Moab: the one was named Orpah, and the other Ruth. They lived there for **about ten years**. Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so the woman outlived her two sons and her husband. She then arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in Moab that the LORD had visited His people by providing them bread.

Here we see two daughters-in-law, representing two groups:

- Orpah — **Moabite name meaning "submission." She symbolizes Israel** under the law, who submits but eventually turns back. This reflects **Romans 11:25**: "**Blindness in part has happened to Israel** until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in." And **Ephesians 4:18**: "**Having their understanding darkened**, being alienated from the life of God." Orpah represents Israel, who heard the gospel but reverted to the old ways.
- Ruth — **Hebrew name meaning "friend" or "companion." She symbolizes the Gentiles**, the true seed of Israel, the church. **She clings to Naomi (the Holy Spirit, the Word of God)** and refuses to turn back. **She is the friend of God (John 15:15: "I have called you friends")**.

Naomi heard that **YAHWEH had visited His people by giving them bread—this is the Word of Life, the resurrection! The famine is over. Bread is available again.**

This drives them back to Judah, the land of "praise," the resurrected life of worship.

Ruth 1:8-12 - Kindness and the Search for Rest

"And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go, return each to her mother's house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt kindly with the dead and with me. The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband.' So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept."

Both Ruth and Orpah "**dealt kindly with the dead**"—they showed the fruit of the Spirit even toward those under the dead law. Naomi blesses them: "May you find rest, each in the house of her husband." This rest is found in Christ (Matthew 11:28-29: "**Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest**"). The husband's house is Yehoshua's house.

Naomi's kiss represents the Holy Spirit as Comforter, blessing and releasing them to choose their path.

Ruth 1:13-18 - The Choice: Turn Back or Cling

And they raised their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. And she said, 'Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; go back after your sister-in-law.' But Ruth said: 'Entreat me not to leave you or to turn back from following you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD do so to me, and more if anything but death separates you and me.'

Here we see the great divide:

- Orpah weeps but turns back — This represents Israel mourning but ultimately rejecting the Messiah. They heard the call but returned to the old ways, to their people and their gods.
- Ruth weeps but clings — This represents the church, the Gentile believers, mourning the suffering and death of the Messiah but refusing to abandon Him.

Ruth's declaration (verses 16-17) stands out as one of the most beautiful passages in Scripture. It closely resembles Peter's confession in John 6:68: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." Ruth expresses: "**Where you go, I will go.**"

Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God." This symbolizes the Gentile church's full allegiance to the God of Israel and to the Messiah.

The weeping represents the sorrow of witnessing death and suffering, but Ruth's clinging represents faith that does not let go, even in the face of loss.

Ruth 1:22 - Return to Bethlehem at Barley Harvest

So Naomi returned, accompanied by Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, who had come back from the land of Moab. They arrived in Bethlehem at the start of barley harvest.

This verse is loaded with resurrection typology:

- Bethlehem = "house of bread" = Christ
- They returned in April, the time of Christ's resurrection (which occurred on April 3, 33 AD)
- Barley was harvested in April—the first crop of the year, the firstfruits

Leviticus 23:10-11 commanded that the sheaf of firstfruits be waved before the LORD on the day after the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This was the barley harvest, the firstfruits offering.

1 Corinthians 15:20, 23: "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep... each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming."

Ruth and Naomi arriving in Bethlehem at the start of barley harvest symbolizes the church's arrival at the resurrection, the firstfruits, and the restored house of bread! The famine is over. The Bread of Life has returned. Resurrection life is now available.

Summary: Christ-Centered Typology in Ruth 1

- Elimelech (God is King) = Christ the Bridegroom
- Naomi (pleasant one) = The Church, the Bride; also the Holy Spirit as Comforter
- Mahlon and Chilion (sickness and death) = The old covenant and law that cannot save
- Orpah (submission) = Israel under the law, who hears but turns back (Romans 11:25)

- Ruth (friend/companion) = The Gentile church, who clings to the Word and refuses to turn back (**John 6:68, 15:15**)
- **Jhn 6:67** Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? **Jhn 6:68** Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.
- **Jhn 15:15** Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Bethlehem (house of bread) = Christ, the Bread of Life
- Barley harvest in April = The resurrection, the firstfruits (**1 Corinthians 15:20**)
Ruth Chapter 1 paints a beautiful picture of the gospel: the death of the bridegroom, the mourning of the bride, the choice between returning to the old ways or holding onto the Word of Life, and the return to Bethlehem at the time of resurrection and firstfruits. The famine is over. The Bread of Life has come. Those who cling to Him will find rest in the house of their husband.

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