1:5 The simple message is that marriage out of the faith and leaving God’s people- no matter how apostate they are- and going into the world, simply doesn’t bring blessing.

1:8,9 Naomi uses the term “Yahweh” freely to her Gentile relatives; she was quite open about her faith, even though the Moabites had their own gods.

1:16 In Jn. 20:18, the risen Jesus stresses to the disciples that their Father is His Father, and their God is His God. He appears to be alluding to Ruth 1:16 LXX where Ruth is urged to remain behind in Moab [cp. Mary urging Jesus?], but she says she will come with her mother in law, even though she is of a different people, and “Your people shall be my people, and your God my God”. This allusion would therefore be saying: ‘OK I am of a different nature / people to you now, but that doesn’t essentially affect our relationship; I so love you, I will always stick with you wherever, and my God is your God’.

1:17 To swear by a god meant that the swearer had accepted that god as theirs. The fact Ruth swears by Yahweh means that she had accepted Yahweh as her God; thanks to the quiet witness of her mother in law. Ruth came to really love the God of Israel. She willingly decided to forego re-marriage after her husband died for the wonder of the fact she had been allowed in to the commonwealth of Israel. As it happened, this is a story with a happy ending. But she was prepared for it not to be. Note that humanly speaking, Naomi’s life had been a disaster. If Ruth was looking for a God which gave His devotees present blessing, then it wasn’t Yahweh; for all she had seen of Him was in the life of Naomi and her family. That woman had lost all her men, and thus become a nobody in the eyes of society. Naomi wasn’t seeking any present benefit from her God; it must’ve been the relationship with God right now which Naomi had, His grace to her in spiritual terms, and the hope of the future Kingdom which must’ve so attracted her. And the attraction must’ve been in the example of Naomi, rather than in the pages of a book.

2:12 See on 3:7.

*A full reward*- 2 Jn. 8 quotes this in saying that the hard mental effort to know Christ and believe in Him will be given a ‘full reward’. Here a ‘full reward’ is given to Ruth for working hard all day gleaning in the fields. It may be that this allusion was because “the elect lady” addressed by John was in fact a proselyte widow, like Ruth. But the point is, we have to labour, as much as one might work hard gleaning in the field all day, in order to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

2:14 Offering bread and wine was a sign of fellowship and acceptance. The fact we are invited to do this by the Lord Jesus is a sign that He eagerly accepts us and seeks fellowship with us.

2:20 *Near kinsman*- Yahweh is repeatedly described in Isaiah as Israel’s *go’el*, redeemer (Is. 41:14; 43:14; 44:6,24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7,26; 54:5,8). The redeemer could redeem a close relative from slavery or repurchase property lost during hard times (Lev. 25:25,26,47-55). This is how close God becomes to us in Christ. Boaz was therefore manifesting God to Ruth by marrying her, in the same way as in Christian marriage the husband manifests Christ’s saving work to the wife (Eph. 5:23).

3:7 Ruth is a wonderful example of a spiritually ambitious person. It was unheard of in those times for a woman to propose to a man; yet by coming to him, uncovering his feet and laying under his mantle, she was stating that she wished to see him as a manifestation of God to her (:7,9 = 2:12). She went after him, following him (:10); the poor, landless Gentile aspired to be a part of a wealthy Jewish family, in order to fulfil the spirit of the Law. And she attained this.

3:16-18 It is hard to find women-only scenes in contemporary literature written during Biblical times. The women are presented in terms of the men with whom they inter-relate. Yet Elizabeth and Mary are recorded as having a conversation with no male present (Lk. 1:39-45); and there are other such passages in Scripture here in Ruth (1:6-2:2; 3:16-18; 4:14-17). In all these passages, the reader is invited to share the woman’s perspective. It can hardly be said that the Bible is somehow anti-women, in fact God’s acceptance of both male and female and deep recognition of the value of the human person, whether man or woman, marks it out as quite different from human literature of the time.

4:5 A man had to redeem the property of a dead relative in some cases by marrying his late brother’s wife; but this would have resulted in polygamy (Boaz surely had other wives), thus creating a situation whereby one principle had to be broken (in this case, of one man : one woman as ordained in Eden), in order to keep another principle (to raise up children in love to your deceased brother). God has made spiritual life not always so black and white- in order that our personal ethical debates, our prayerfulness and reflection upon God’s word, will result in our taking whatever decisions we do from a good motivation, rather than out of mere submission to a law we have no understanding of.

4:6 *Otherwise I will spoil my own inheritance*- He was concerned that if he had children by another woman apart from those he already he had, then his land which he would leave them as an inheritance would have to be split up between his existing children, and those children he would have by Ruth. It’s clear from 2:3 that the fields were split up into strips, each strip belonging to different people. The best thing was to have one large field, rather than strips here and there. This nameless relative didn’t want to spoil or break up his inheritance, he wanted to preserve it intact. He thought only of himself, not his brother. This man died and even his name wasn’t preserved; yet Boaz who did care for his brother and was prepared to spoil or split up his physical inheritance received as it were an eternal inheritance, in that through Ruth he became the ancestor of Jesus (4:21).

4:15 Hezekiah had lamented that he would die without a seed (Is. 38:12), and so did those who had also become (in their minds?) eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom (Is. 56:3-8). There was that human desire for a seed, a "house" to perpetuate their name. But they are promised a name in God's house (family) in the Kingdom, better than of sons and daughters in this life (Is. 56:5). This alludes here, where Ruth is described as being better than sons to Naomi. In other words, the Ruth: Naomi relationship, featuring as it did a willingness to deny marriage to unbelievers for the sake of the God of Israel, is a type of *our* relationship with God.