

The Structure of Megillat Ruth – Self Study Guide

Part A

1. Open the Tanakh section to Megillat Ruth
<http://www.hatanakh.com/en/tanach/30.0.0?tanachLang=2>
2. Read the story in the four chapters of the book; note the topic lines above the Tanakh text. What can you learn about the progression of the book from the text and the topic lines? How does it begin and end?
3. Under the “audio/ video” tab on the left side of the page, find the video titled “The Book of Ruth- Structure and Meaning”. How does Atara Snowbell explain the progression and structure in the book?

Part B

When we examine every chapter individually in the book, and the structure they compose as a whole, we notice certain repeating themes, as well as a clear chiasmic structure that frames the book and creates symmetry and balance in the book.

Dr. Yael Ziegler points out this structure, in which the first chapter parallels the fourth, and chapters two and three correspond structurally and thematically.

Through an examination of the text of the book, complete the following, and describe what happens in each scene or section.

Chapter 1

- A) Introduction** (verses 1-5)
- B) Naomi and her daughters-in-law:** What is the topic of the discussion?
- C) Meeting at the city entrance:** What occurs in this scene?

Chapter 2

- A) Conversation between Ruth and Naomi:** What is the topic of discussion?

- B) Ruth and Boaz in the field:** What is the discussion? What does Boaz promise Ruth?
- C) Conversation between Ruth and Naomi:** What does Ruth tell Naomi?

Chapter 3:

- A') Conversation between Ruth and Naomi:** What is the subject of this conversation?
- B') Ruth and Boaz in the field (threshing floor):** What is the discussion? What does Boaz promise Ruth?
- C') Conversation between Ruth and Naomi:** What does Ruth tell Naomi?

Chapter 4:

- C') Meeting at the city entrance:** What happens at this scene?
- B') Naomi and the townswomen:** What is the general mood and tone in the relationship between Naomi and Ruth?
- A') Epilogue:** Who is listed here?

Part C

The textual formulations indicate that Boaz and Ruth are mirror personalities. Can you find any examples of this through the words and phraseology of the text?

Fill out the chart below with the Hebrew text from the megillah and emphasizing the linguistic similarities, using the sources to guide you.

| <u>Ruth:</u> | <u>Boaz:</u> |
|--------------|--------------|
| (ח א) | (ב כ) |
| (ח ב) | (ז ג) |

| | |
|--|---|
| | |
| Similar word used three times (ט ג ;ג, ט, ב) | Similar word used three times (ד ד ;ג, יב, ג) |
| (א' ג) | (ב ב) |
| (ז, ז, ז) | (ג ב) |
| (י' ג) | (כ ב) |

Read Dr. Yael Ziegler's article, "[Linguistic Mirroring: A Harmonious Story, Part I](#)" and check your answers in Appendix #2.

Part D

Open the chart "Megillat Ruth - Structure and Overview"

<http://www.hatanakh.com/en/articles/megillat-ruth-structure-and-overview>

What two planes are illustrated in this chart?

How does this chart add an additional layer onto the structure of Megillat Ruth outlined in Dr. Ziegler's article?