

Ruth 1:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her,
then she left speaking unto her.

Analysis

The narrative's response to Ruth's oath is remarkably brief: **"When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her."** The Hebrew phrase "she was stedfastly minded" (mitametzet hi, מִתְמַעֲצֶת הִיא) uses a participle form of amatz (אַמַּץ), meaning to strengthen oneself, be determined, or show courageous resolve. This same verbal root appears in Joshua 1:6-9 where God repeatedly commands Joshua to "be strong and courageous."

Naomi's cessation of speech—"she left speaking unto her" (vatechdal ledabber eileha, וַתַּעֲחַד לְדַבֵּר אֵלֶיהָ)—demonstrates her recognition of Ruth's irrevocable decision. The verb chadal (עָחַד) means to cease, refrain, or stop entirely. Naomi sees that further argument is futile; Ruth has crossed a threshold of commitment that cannot be reversed by persuasion. There's wisdom in Naomi's silence—she respects Ruth's agency rather than continuing to undermine a decision made with full knowledge and solemn oath.

This verse's brevity after Ruth's eloquent confession creates literary emphasis on Ruth's words standing unchallenged and authoritative. The narrative doesn't record Naomi's response or emotional reaction—only her acceptance of Ruth's determination. This silence underscores that genuine conversion speaks for itself through unwavering commitment. The theological pattern established here—Gentile inclusion through radical faith commitment—anticipates the gospel era when faith in Christ, not ethnic descent, determines covenant membership (Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 2:11-22).

Historical Context

The journey from Moab to Bethlehem that Naomi and Ruth now undertake together would cover approximately 50 miles of difficult terrain. For two widowed women traveling without male protection, this represented genuine danger from bandits, wild animals, and exploitation. Ruth's determination to accompany Naomi despite these risks demonstrated that her commitment wasn't naive sentimentality but courageous faith willing to face real hardship.

The judges period context (when this narrative occurs) makes Ruth's choice even more remarkable. She was joining a nation characterized by cyclical apostasy, enemy oppression, and moral chaos described in Judges 17-21. Unlike Abraham, who received specific divine promises when called to leave his homeland, Ruth had no such supernatural revelation—only the testimony of Naomi's life and faith in Yahweh. Her conversion resulted from observing covenant faithfulness in difficult circumstances rather than miraculous signs.

Ruth's determination (amatz) connects her to other biblical figures who showed courageous resolve in difficult callings: Joshua conquering Canaan, Daniel maintaining faithfulness in Babylon, Nehemiah rebuilding Jerusalem's walls. This quality of settled, irrevocable commitment characterizes genuine faith that endures beyond initial enthusiasm. The remainder of Ruth's story validates her determination—she follows through on every commitment made here, demonstrating the integrity of her conversion.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does Naomi's cessation of argument teach about respecting others' Spirit-led convictions even when we doubt the wisdom of their choices?

2. How does the text's emphasis on Ruth's "steadfast determination" challenge superficial or emotional approaches to Christian commitment?
3. In what areas might God be calling you to show the same irrevocable determination Ruth demonstrated, refusing all counterarguments to covenant obedience?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּרְא	כִּי	מִתְאַמָּץ	הָיָה	לָלֶכֶת	אֶתֵּן
When she saw	H3588	that she was stedfastly minded	H1931	H1980	H854
H7200		H553			
וַתֵּצֵא	לְ	אֵלֶיהָ:	לֵדַבֵּר		
with her then she left	H2308	speaking	H413		
		H1696			

Additional Cross-References

Acts 21:14 (Parallel theme): And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

Acts 2:42 (Kingdom): And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Ephesians 6:10 (Parallel theme): Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.