

Ruth 4:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

Analysis

Naomi as nurse: **'And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it'**. Naomi's taking the child demonstrates grandmother's joy and possibly legal adoption symbolism—the child would legally be considered heir to Elimelech through this act. Laying in bosom indicates intimate nurture and affection. The role of 'nurse' (omenet, נָמֶלֶךְ) suggests both physical care and legal guardianship. Naomi, who returned 'empty,' now holds fullness itself—a grandson who will inherit and perpetuate her family line. God's redemptive transformation from emptiness to fullness is complete.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern adoption customs sometimes involved formal acts like laying child in bosom or placing on knees to indicate legal acceptance as heir. While the child was biologically Ruth's, he legally belonged to Mahlon's line through levirate marriage and possibly to Elimelech's line through Naomi's guardianship. Ancient nursing roles combined physical care with legal authority and responsibility, making Naomi both grandmother and guardian. Her joy contrasts dramatically with her bitter return (1:20-21), demonstrating God's faithfulness to transform mourning to dancing.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Naomi's journey from emptiness to fullness illustrate God's redemptive transformation?
2. What does her nursing role teach about multi-generational covenant blessing?

Interlinear Text

ח	וַתֵּקַח	י	נָעֻמִּי	אֶת	הַיֶּלֶד	וַתִּשֵׁת	הוּא	בְּחִיקָהּ	ה	וַתְּהִי	ל	וְ
	took		And Naomi	H853	the child	and laid		it in her bosom		H1961		H0
	H3947		H5281		H3206	H7896		H2436				

לְאִמָּנָת:
and became nurse
H539