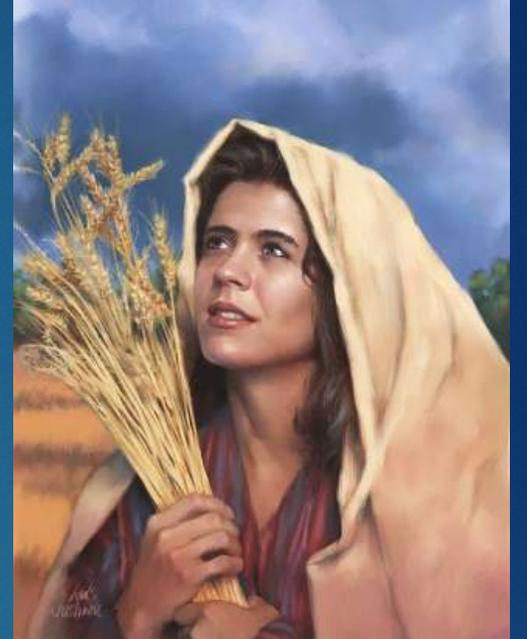


# The Book of Ruth

A STORY OF REDEMPTION AND HOPE FOR A FAMILY AND A NATION



# Quick Outline of Ruth

- ▶ Ruth **Basics**
  - ❖ Author, Date, & Purpose
  - ❖ Themes
- ▶ Ruth **Background**
  - ❖ Timeline
  - ❖ Historical Context
- ▶ Ruth **Breakdown**
  - ❖ Structure - Outline
  - ❖ Details – Detailed Breakdown
- ▶ Life Application

pur·pose

*/'pɜ:pəs/*

Noun

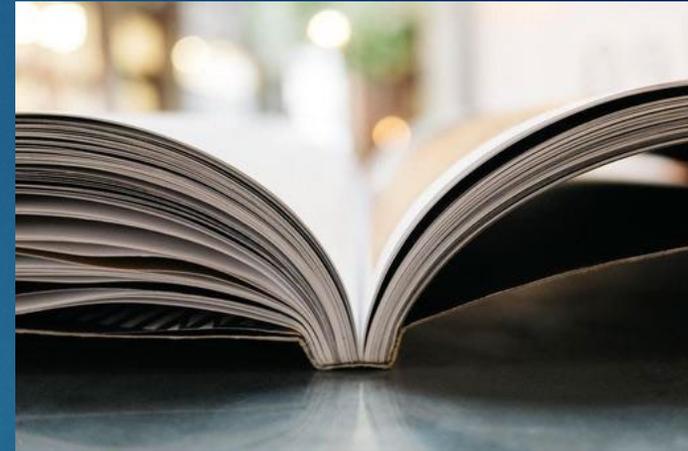
The reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists.

# Ruth Basics

WHO WROTE IT, WHEN, AND WHY? PRACTICING HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

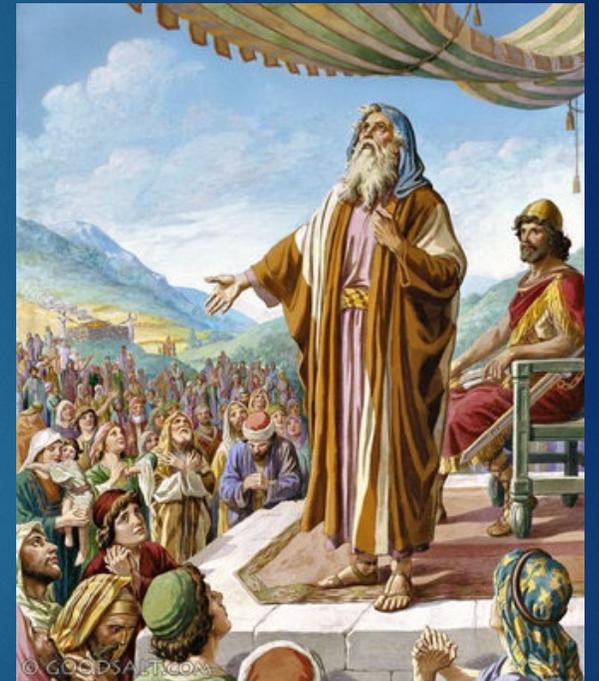
# Ruth Basics

- ▶ **Title:** “Ruth” is the title of the book because Ruth’s worthy character is the focus of the book (3:11).
- ▶ **Audience:** Israel, in the land of Canaan under a united monarchy (David), is reminded of how individual faithfulness (Ruth) can exist amid **national unfaithfulness** (the time of the Judges).
- ▶ **Time Frame:** The story of Ruth covers a period of about 11 years (1:4; 1:22; 2:23; 4:13-16)
- ▶ **Location:** The book opens with Ruth and Naomi in Moab (Ruth 1). The book closes with Ruth and Boaz in Bethlehem (Ruth 2–4).
- ▶ **Fun Fact 1:** Ruth is only one of 2 books in Scripture named after women (the other is Esther).
  - ❖ Esther was a Hebrew who married a Gentile, while Ruth was a Gentile who married a Hebrew.
- ▶ **Fun Fact 2:** The book of Ruth records no miracles and God never speaks—but He acts.
  - ❖ Esther, in a similar vein, records no miracles and does not mention God by name.



# Author and Date

- ▶ **Author:** Samuel, with final touches from prophets Nathan and Gad
  - ❖ The Talmud states that Ruth was written by Samuel. The book of Ruth was originally part of the last sections of the book of Judges. Since Samuel is the author of Judges, it would make sense that he is also the author of the bulk of the book of Ruth.
- ▶ **Date:** ca. 1010 BC
  - ❖ Samuel died before David was crowned king. Therefore, the finishing touches were added by the prophets Nathan and Gad early in David's reign since Solomon's name would have been listed in the genealogy (4:22) had it been written later.



Samuel

# Ruth's Position within Historical Books

- ▶ Joshua = the possession of a nation
- ▶ Judges = the unfaithfulness of a nation
- ▶ Ruth = the faithfulness of a person
- ▶ 1 and 2 Samuel = the beginning and expansion of a united nation
- ▶ 1 and 2 Kings = the peak and deterioration of the united nation

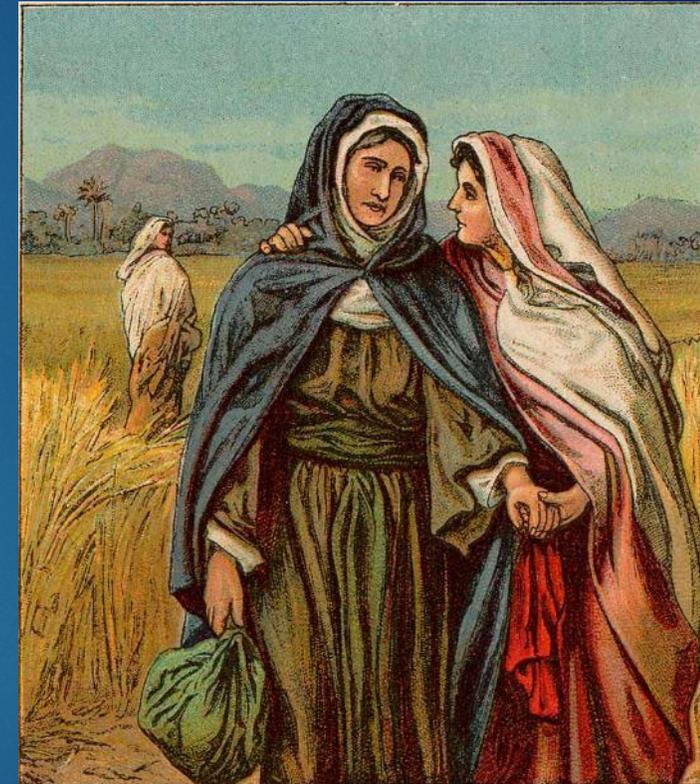
# Purpose

- ▶ Ruth was written as a contrast to the two epilogues in Judges 17–18, and 19–21, where the Jews were living like Canaanites. Ruth, originally the third epilogue of Judges, is the story of an outsider/foreigner living like a Jew.
- ▶ The three epilogues in Judges–Ruth are the stories of ...
  - ❖ Epilogue 1: Decline through idolatry (Judges 17–18)
  - ❖ Epilogue 2: Debasement through immorality (Judges 19–21)
  - ❖ Epilogue 3: Dedication through fidelity (Ruth 1–4): light amid darkness; faithfulness amid adversity



# Purpose (cont.)

- ▶ Prophetically and historically, the book of Ruth continues the fulfillment of God's covenant promises to Israel, and to Judah in particular (Gen. 49:10), of their coming King and Messiah.
- ▶ The inclusion of Ruth and Rahab in the genealogy of David (4:13-22) shows God's concern for the Gentiles (including women).
- ▶ Showing how Ruth, a Moabitess, came to be an ancestor of David, and ultimately, the Messiah, is a foreshadowing of the salvation to Jews and Gentiles alike in Christ (Matthew 1:1-6; Luke 3:23, 31-32).
- ▶ Finally, even though there are no "God said" or "God did" statements in the book, we see how God continually guided each event.
  - ❖ Even in the chaotic times of the Judges the Messianic line is not preserved by heroic feats of military deliverers but by the subtle hand of God working through the lovingkindness (*hesed*) of ordinary people.



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## RUTH'S WISE CHOICE

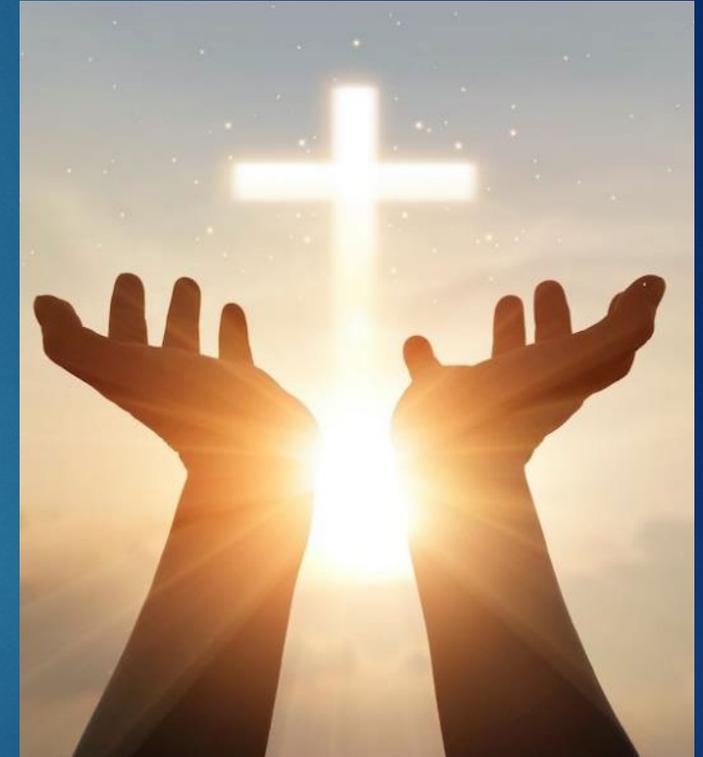
Ruth 1:14-22.

GOLDEN TEXT:—Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.

Ruth 1:16.

# Themes

- ▶ **Redemption** is a major theme throughout the book, with almost two dozen references to the word's various forms (such as redeemer, redeemed, etc.). In addition to the spiritual modes of redemption, we also observe its physical, legal (property, marriage, and heirs), and social (Naomi's deliverance from bitterness to fullness) elements.
- ▶ Ruth also demonstrates the importance of **being faithful** not only to God but also in our relationships with other humans as well. We see this in Ruth's loyalty to Naomi and in Boaz's kindness to the women, including his willingness to act as a "kinsman redeemer."
  - ❖ Our unselfish love for others fulfills the spirit of God's law (Lev. 19:18). As a result, we also see God's benevolent blessing on the faithful.
- ▶ Overall, the book of Ruth highlights the themes of loyalty, kindness, redemption, and the providence of God in the lives of ordinary people. Ruth's faithfulness and Boaz's generosity are rewarded, and their story becomes part of the lineage leading to the eventual establishment of the Davidic monarchy in Israel.



# Theme: Ruth Contrasted with Judges

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Ruth	Judges
Begins with <i>“when the judges governed”</i>	Four times Judges 17–21 states that <i>“there was no king in Israel”</i>
<b>Theme:</b> Redemption through a <b>godly couple</b>	<b>Theme:</b> Redemption through <b>deliverers</b>
Presents the <b>lineage</b> of a king	Depicts the <b>need</b> for a king
An <b>oasis</b> in the midst of a spiritual desert	A spiritual desert
<b>Obedience</b> leads to blessing	<b>Disobedience</b> leads to sorrow
Demonstrates faithfulness, righteousness, purity, and kindness	Deals with immorality and cruelty
Naomi and her family were from Bethlehem	Bethlehem’s evil Levites and concubines

# Key Verses

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- ▶ **Ruth 1:16-17 (NIV):** *“But Ruth replied, ‘Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.’”*
- ▶ **Ruth 2:12 (NIV):** *“May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”*
- ▶ **Ruth 3:10 (NIV):** *“The Lord bless you, my daughter,” he [Boaz] replied. “This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor.”*
- ▶ **Ruth 4:13-14 (NIV):** *“So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. The women said to Naomi: ‘Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel!’”*
- ▶ **Ruth 4:15 (NIV):** *“He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.”*

The logo for 'Key Verses of the Bible' features the words 'Key Verses' in a large, white, sans-serif font. A yellow key is positioned behind the letter 'V' in 'Verses'. Below this, the words 'OF THE BIBLE' are written in a smaller, yellow, all-caps, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a dark grey rectangular background.

**Key  
Verses**  
OF THE BIBLE

# Ruth Background

WHAT DOES HISTORY REVEAL? PRACTICING HISTORICAL ANALYSIS



# Time Period of Old Testament History

13

Creation

The Flood

Patriarchs

Bondage in Egypt

Wilderness Wanderings

Conquest of Canaan

(1375 – 1075 BC) **Period of the Judges** (Judges – Ruth), Ruth ca. 1130 BC

United Kingdom

Divided Kingdom

Captivity and Exile

Return and Restoration

# Timeline: Ruth and Judges

Date	Event
1406 BC <sup>1</sup>	Death of Moses; Joshua assumes leadership of Israelites
1405 BC	Israelites enter the Promised Land and begin the conquest (source: Book of Joshua)
1395 BC	Israel begins the settlement of the land (source: Book of Joshua)
1375 BC	Death of Joshua (source: Book of Joshua & Judges)
1375 BC	The period of the Judges begins (source: Book of Judges)
1130 BC <sup>2</sup>	Elimelech moves his family to Moab
1120 BC	Naomi returns to Bethlehem with daughter-in-law, Ruth (Ruth 1:4, 22)
1075 BC	The prophet Samuel as last judge (source: Book of Samuel)
1052 BC	Saul becomes Israel's first king (source: Book of Samuel)
1040 BC	Birth of King David (source: Book of Samuel)

- (1) 1 Kings 6:1 records that Solomon began to build the temple 480 years after the exodus from Egypt. Extra-biblical records indicate that the temple building began about 966 BC, placing the exodus around 1446 BC.
- (2) The story of Ruth began in the days when the judges ruled and there was a famine (1:1), but this famine is not mentioned in Judges. Therefore, by analyzing events in Bethlehem and the genealogy of David (4:18-22), who began his reign over Judah in 1010 BC, this would probably place the events of Ruth during the judgeship(s) of Jair, Jephthah, or Samson.

# Background: King David vs. King Saul

Books:

Judges

Ruth

Samuel

## Bethlehem (Judah)

Idolatry (17–18)  
Concubine (19:1-10)

Boaz, Ruth, Naomi  
(Bethlehemites)

David (Judah)

- David born and crowned King in Bethlehem
- Jesus born in Bethlehem
- Chosen by God

## Gibeah (Benjamin)

Concubine Murder (19:11-30)  
Moral Failure (20–21)

Saul (Benjamin)

- Reigned in Gibeah for 22 years
- Chosen by man (1 Samuel 8:19)

Monarchy Needed  
(Anarchy)



Monarchy  
Prepared

Monarchy  
Established



# Background: Bronze Age (2500–1200 BC)

16

- ▶ **Metalworking and Bronze Tools:** One of the defining features of the Bronze Age was the use of bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, a stronger and more durable metal alloy than copper. Bronze was rare and expensive, and used for tools and weapons. It led to more efficient farming, construction, and warfare.
- ▶ **Emergence of Urban Centers and Complex Societies:** The Bronze Age witnessed the rise of urban centers and the development of complex societies and civilizations. Cities grew in size and complexity, with centralized political authority, social stratification, and specialized labor roles emerging. The great kingdoms of the day included the Egyptians, Old Babylonians, Minoans, Mycenaeans, Hittites, and more.
- ▶ **Warfare and Militarization:** Military technology and tactics advanced rapidly, with the spread of bronze weapons such as swords, spears, and armor. Warfare played a prominent role in Bronze Age societies, with conflicts often driven by competition for resources, territory, and political power.
- ▶ **Trade and Cultural Exchange:** Bronze Age societies engaged in extensive trade networks, exchanging goods and resources over long distances. Trade routes facilitated the exchange of valuable commodities such as metals, luxury goods, and agricultural products, contributing to cultural exchange and economic development. Trade travelled from Southern England to Egypt, and from Spain to Afghanistan.
- ▶ **Religious and Ritual Practices:** Religion played a central role in Bronze Age societies, with elaborate religious beliefs and rituals shaping everyday life. Temples, shrines, and religious ceremonies were integral to Bronze Age societies, reflecting the importance of spiritual beliefs in guiding social behavior and cultural practices.

## Contents of the Uluburun shipwreck:

- Copper and tin ingots
- Canaanite jars and turpentine, glass ingots
- Weapons and tools
- Ostrich eggshells, ivory cosmetic boxes, trumpet, gold, and jewelry



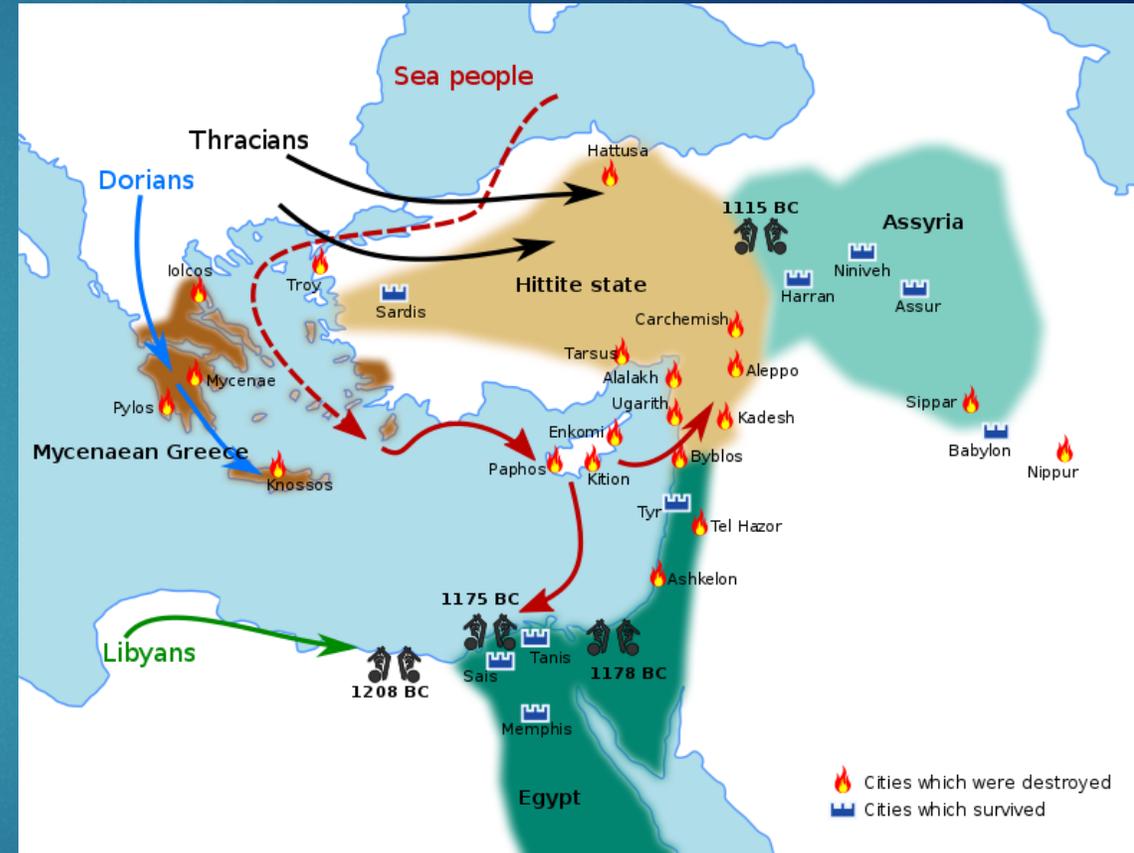
Replica of the Uluburun shipwreck late 14<sup>th</sup> century BC



# The Bronze Age Collapse (1250–1100 BC)

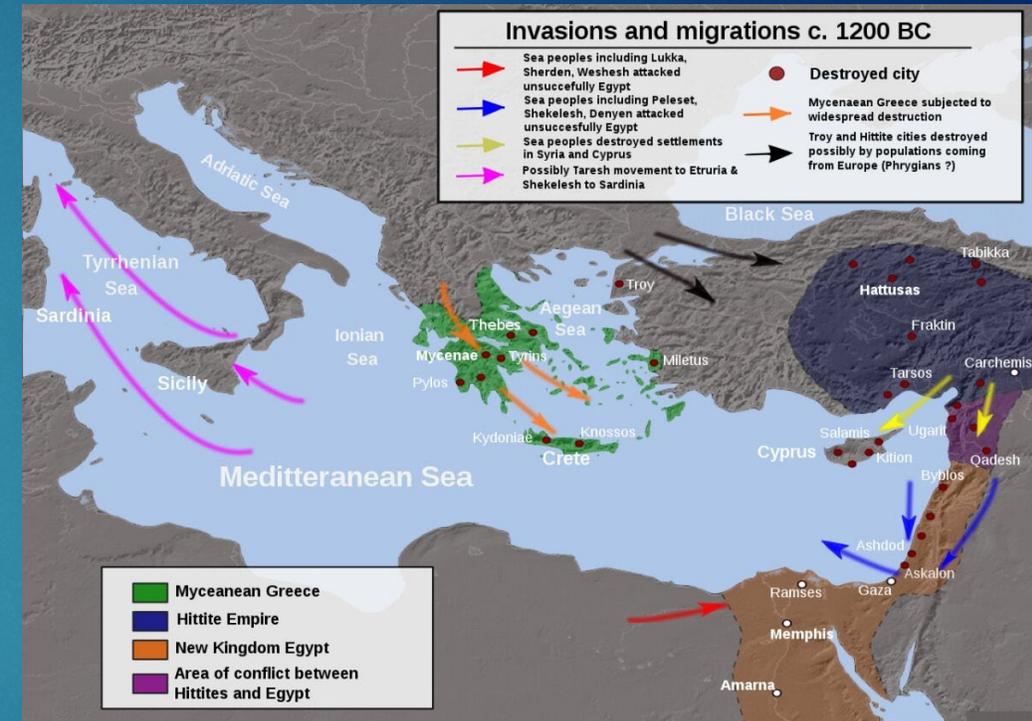
17

- ▶ The collapse of the Bronze Age occurred roughly between 1250 BC and 1100 BC. The reasons for this collapse involve a combination of factors:
  1. **Earthquakes and Droughts:** Scholars from Israel and Germany describe a megadrought and major earthquakes from 1250 to 1100 BC. This impacted agricultural practices and contributed to food shortages and famines.
  2. **Invasions and Migrations:** Earthquakes and droughts led to the arrival of new groups, such as the Sea Peoples, most likely Greeks from Crete (Minoans). They played a role in the collapse through invasions and migrations, such as attacking Troy and Israel (known as the Philistines).
  3. **Trade Disruptions:** The interconnected trade networks that facilitated the exchange of goods and ideas between civilizations were disrupted, further contributing to economic decline.
  4. **Technological Decline:** Only the top 1 percent could read or write; they lost that ability after the collapse. It took centuries for writing to return to Greece, which only occurred after the Phoenicians brought their alphabet.
- ▶ The collapse led to the disintegration of the Hittites, Mycenaeans, and others. It marked the transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age and set the stage for the emergence of new civilizations in the subsequent centuries.



# Background: Famine in the Land

- ▶ In Ruth 1:1-2, we learn that as a result of the **famine**, Elimelech’s family migrated east into the land of Moab, where his two sons married two women—Orpah and Ruth.
- ▶ In 2013, scientists from Tel Aviv University and Germany’s University of Bonn studied pollen grains, which are remarkably durable. They discovered that within the period of 1250–1100 BC, there was a sudden, dramatic decrease of Mediterranean trees that require large amounts of water—particularly pines, oaks, and carobs. In their place was a rise in the farming of dry-climate trees, such as olives.
- ▶ The period from the 13th to the 12th century BC is known for the mysterious “Bronze Age Collapse”—the upheaval of civilizations around the eastern Mediterranean. The Hittite Empire collapsed. The Egyptian Empire became greatly diminished, never to rise to its earlier days of prominence.
- ▶ Greece emerged entirely different. Wars broke out, migrations were rife, a strange “sea people” began marauding throughout the region, and the Philistines invaded and settled in large numbers alongside Israel.



# Famine in the Land (cont.)

- ▶ The migration of Elimelech’s family into the land of Moab due to the famine lasted a full 10 years—up until it was “*heard in the field of Moab that the Lord had visited his people and given them food*” (1:6 ESV).
- ▶ The biblical famine was lengthy and hard, and there is further indication of this, long before the migration into the land of Moab.
  - ❖ The sons of Elimelech and Naomi, who would have been young adults at the time of their journey, were named Mahlon and Chilion. *Mahlon* means “sick” (from a root indicating *weakness*), and *Chilion* means “wasting away,” or “pining”—both names that would fit well with the birth of malnourished children in a famine setting. Partway through their sojourn in Moab, both young men died, along with their father, leaving to widowhood the matriarch Naomi and their wives, Ruth and Orpah.
  - ❖ In the “blessings and curses” chapters of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, God told the Israelites before they entered the Promised Land that if they rebelled, they would face, among other things, brutal *famines*. Some of the specifics in these prophetic chapters are remarkable. Deuteronomy 28:40 states that, among the curses, the rebelling people *would have* olive trees, but that they would lose the fruit of them. (The researchers’ pollen samples showed that during the famine, there was a dry-climate surge in *olive tree* farming.)
- ▶ Source: <https://armstronginstitute.org/270-evidence-for-ruths-famine-from-ancient-pollen>



When water is scarce, the olive tree favors leaves over fruit.

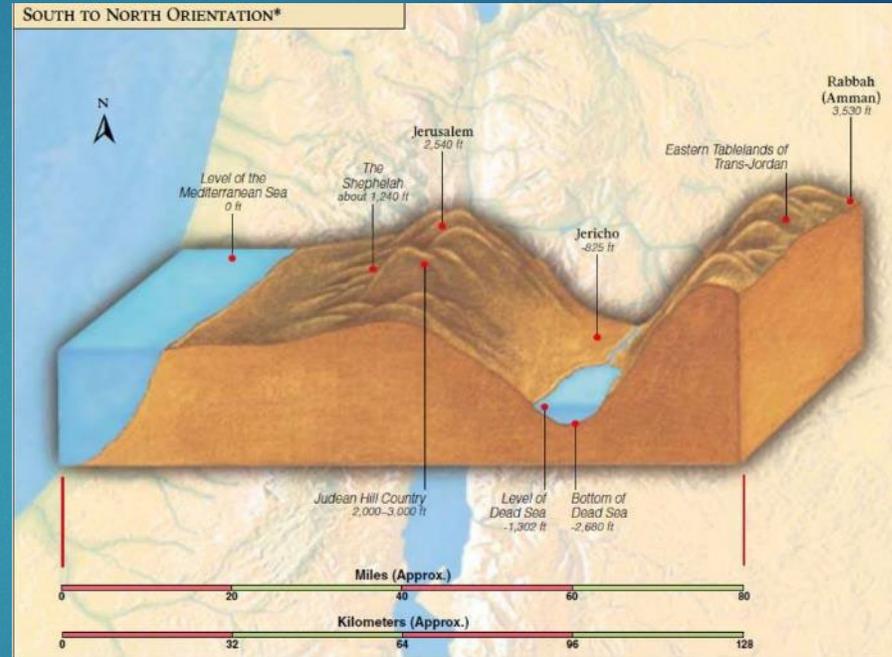
# Background: The Moabites

- ▶ The Moabites and Ammonites descended from the sinful actions of Lot and his daughters, as described in Genesis 19:30-38. Lot's two daughters, raised in Sodom and Gomorrah, both got him drunk on two separate nights, and they both slept with him, their reasoning being to further their family line because they could not find suitable men for husbands. Moab was the son of Lot's oldest daughter, Ben-Ammi, the son of Lot's younger daughter.
- ▶ The Moabites worshiped the pagan god, Chemosh.
- ▶ They have a history of unfriendly relations with Israel.
  - ❖ Balak, king of Moab, hires Balaam, the seer, to curse Israel (Numbers 21–25).
  - ❖ While refusing to verbally curse the Israelites, Balaam instead advised that Moabite and Midianite women be sent to lead the Israelite men astray. The debauchery and paganism that followed resulted in a plague in Israel that killed 24,000 people.
  - ❖ Consequently, no Moabite was allowed to enter the assembly of the Lord down to the 10th generation (Deuteronomy 23:3-6).
  - ❖ King Eglon of Moab subjected Israel for 18 years (Judges 3:12-30).
- ▶ Ruth was from Moab.



# The Land of Moab

- ▶ Moab occupied a plateau about three thousand feet above the level of the Mediterranean Sea, or 4,300 feet above the Dead Sea, and rose gradually from north to south.
- ▶ The territory occupied by Moab at the period of its greatest extent, before the invasion of the Amorites, divided itself naturally into three distinct and independent portions:
  - ❖ The enclosed corner or canton south of the Arnon, referred to in the Bible as *“country of Moab”* or *“field of Moab”* (Ruth 1:1,2,6).
  - ❖ The more open rolling country north of the Arnon, opposite Jericho and up to the hills of Gilead, called the *“territory of Moab”* (Deuteronomy 1:5; 32:49)
  - ❖ The district below sea level in the tropical depths of the Jordan Valley (Numbers 22:1).



Gilead  
Territory of Moab  
Country of Moab

# The Land of Moab (cont.)

- ▶ A journey between Moab and Bethlehem would take 7 to 10 days.
- ▶ The original territory of Moab—taken by the Amorites, and later taken by the Reubenites and Gadites—became known even under Israelite rule as the “land of Moab.”
- ▶ The land of Moab was indeed desirable, and this probably explains why the Great Famine that occurred during Joseph’s time and affected the lands of Canaan and Egypt, ultimately causing the family of Jacob to relocate to Egypt, did not affect Moab. (It would also explain why, centuries later, a family of Ruth would take residence in Moab to wait out a famine during the era of the Judges.)
- ▶ Deuteronomy 2:9 specifies that the Israelites were not authorized to take additional Moabite territory, but they did. Numbers 32:34-39 records what they took.
  - ❖ The **Gadites** built up Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, Atroth Shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, Beth Nimrah and Beth Haran as fortified cities, and built pens for their flocks.
  - ❖ And the **Reubenites** rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh and Kiriathaim, as well as Nebo and Baal Meon (these names were changed) and Sibmah. They gave names to the cities they rebuilt.



# Ancient Moabite Document

23

- ▶ Al-Balu's stele is a Moabite document. This stele, found in 1930 at Al-Balu', north of Al-Karak, contains an illegible hieroglyphic inscription.
  - ❖ This is close to the location where the book of Ruth takes place.
  - ❖ It dates back to the time of the Judges, between 1309 and 1151 BC.
- ▶ It was also possibly during the time of the Judges that Moab was attacked by Egypt. An inscription from Ramses II's Luxor temple (ca. 1279–1213 BC) contained the following statement: "Town that Pharaoh's arm captured in the land of Moab: Btrt."
- ▶ The Egyptian style of the three figures depicted on the stele may represent the coronation of a Moabite king with two attending deities.
  - ❖ The stele demonstrates that Egypt had significant military and cultural influence in the region.
  - ❖ Note the crescent above the shoulders of the central figure, approximately in the position where earrings would be worn. This may represent the god Hubal. The pre-Islamic god Hubal is very similar to the Indian god Shiva.



Al-Balu' Stele

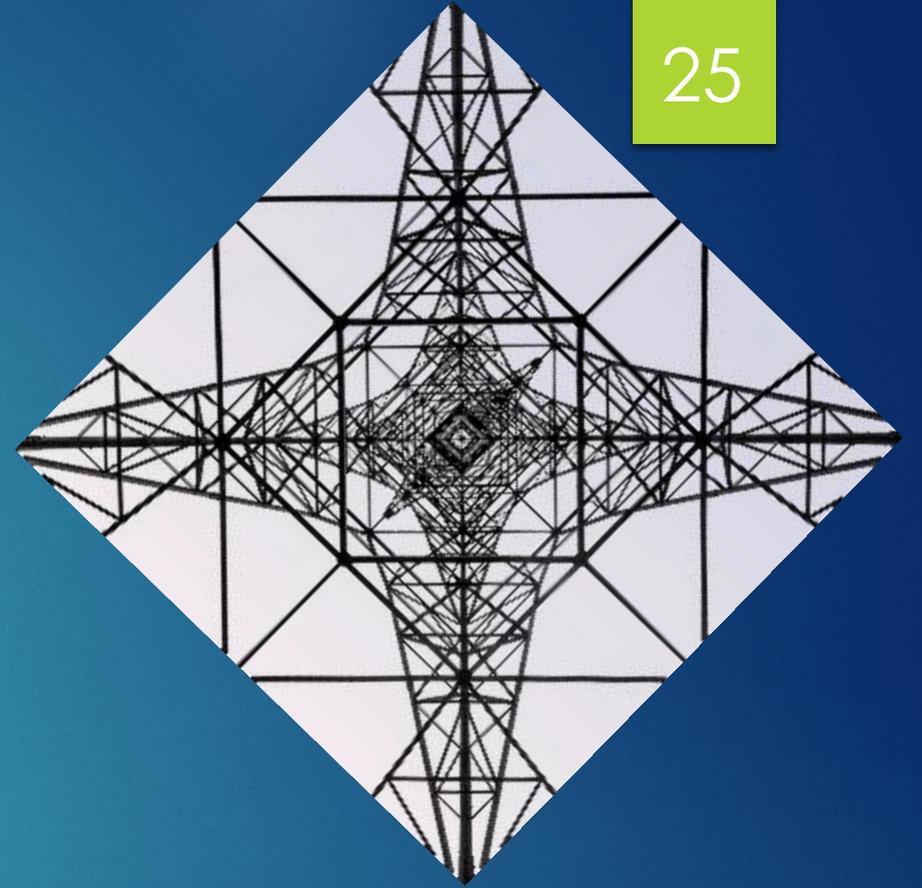
# Background: Bethlehem

- ▶ Bethlehem means “house of bread,” which draws attention to the fertility of the area. It was known for wheat, barley, olives, almonds, and grapes.
- ▶ Bethlehem is located about 6 miles south of Jerusalem.
- ▶ The earliest reference to Bethlehem appears in the Egyptian Amarna correspondence (ca. 1380 BC). In one of his six letters to Pharaoh, Abdi-Heba, the Egyptian-appointed governor of Jerusalem, appeals for aid in retaking Bit-Lahmi (Bethlehem) in the wake of disturbances by Hebrew mercenaries. He writes:
  - ❖ “Now even a town near Jerusalem, Bit-Lahmi by name, a village which once belonged to the king, has fallen to the enemy ... Let the king hear the words of your servant Abdi-Heba, and send archers to restore the imperial lands of the king!”



Aerial view of Bethlehem, 1937

❖ Source: “*Oxford Archeological Guides: The Holy Land*”, Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, pp. 198–199 (1998)



# Ruth Breakdown: Structure

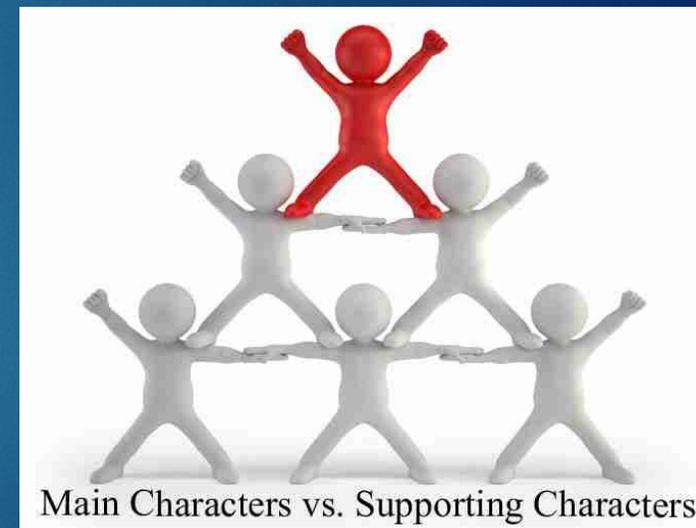
HOW IS IT ORGANIZED? PRACTICING LITERARY AND THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

# Ruth – Lovingkindness & Redemption

Ruth 1–2		Ruth 3–4	
Ruth’s Love and Faithfulness <i>Demonstrated</i>		Ruth’s Love and Faithfulness <i>Rewarded</i>	
Ruth and Naomi		Ruth and Boaz	
Faithfulness Brings: Food and Protection		Faithfulness Brings: Legacy / Messianic Ancestry	
<i>Role: Daughter/Widow</i>	<i>Role: Gleaner</i>	<i>Role: Petitioner</i>	<i>Role: Mother</i>
<i>Action: Deciding</i>	<i>Action: Serving</i>	<i>Action: Resting</i>	<i>Action: Rejoicing</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Death of Family (1:1-5)</li> <li>• Ruth and Naomi plan their return (1:6-22)</li> <li>• <b>Ruth’s Resolve:</b> <i>“Your people will be my people and your God my God”</i> (1:16)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ruth cares for Naomi (2:1-23)</li> <li>• <b>Ruth’s Response:</b> <i>“let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters”</i> (2:17)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boaz cares for Ruth (3:1-18)</li> <li>• <b>Ruth’s Request:</b> <i>“Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family”</i> (3:9)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth of Family                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Boaz redeems Ruth (4:1-12)</li> <li>- Ruth has a son (4:13-17)</li> <li>- Genealogy of David (4:18-22)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Ruth’s Reward:</b> A son – Obed, the grandfather of David (4:16)</li> </ul>
<i>Location:</i> Moab	<i>Location:</i> Fields of Bethlehem (Beginning of Harvest)	<i>Location:</i> Threshing floor of Bethlehem (End of Harvest)	<i>Location:</i> In the House of Boaz
No Future and No Hope	Immediate Blessings	Future Blessings	Great Future and Hope

# Three Main Characters

- ▶ **Naomi** — means *pleasant*
  - ❖ Husband and two sons die in Moab
  - ❖ Changed her name to *Mara*, which means *bitter*
  - ❖ She begins the book empty and hopeless, and ends the book renewed and with a new son
- ▶ **Ruth** — suggests *friendship*
  - ❖ A young Moabite widow
  - ❖ By faith, she leaves her country, people, and gods to follow Naomi and her God
  - ❖ She is listed in Jesus's genealogy (Matthew 1:5)
- ▶ **Boaz** — probably means *in him is strength*
  - ❖ An older, wealthy relative of Naomi
  - ❖ An upright man, concerned about Naomi, and generous to Ruth
  - ❖ Marries Ruth and becomes an ancestor of Jesus



# Key Word: *Hesed*

- ▶ The Hebrew word *hesed* (lovingkindness) appears three times in the book of Ruth.
  - ❖ Naomi asks the Lord to give *hesed* to Ruth and Orpah as they have shown *hesed* to Naomi (1:8).
  - ❖ Naomi comments that Boaz has shown *hesed* to both her and Ruth (2:20).
  - ❖ Boaz commends Ruth for the *hesed* in her marriage proposal on the threshing floor (3:10).
- ▶ So, what exactly is lovingkindness? It includes three attributes:
  - ❖ **Covenant:** The word is often used in the context of a covenant. It has been suggested that *hesed* be translated as “covenantal love” because it is something that God shows to his people. For God declares that He will show “*lovingkindness [hesed] to a thousand generations, to those who love Me and keep My commandments*” (Exodus 20:6, NASB).
  - ❖ **Loyalty:** “*I remember concerning you, the lovingkindness [hesed] of your youth, The love of your betrothals...*” (Jeremiah 2:2 LSB).
  - ❖ **Compassion:** “*In an outburst of anger I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting lovingkindness [hesed] I will have compassion [racham] on you,’ says the LORD your Redeemer*” (Isaiah 54:8 NASB1995).
- ▶ Throughout Ruth, *hesed* is the main factor in various acts of loyalty and compassion.

# Instances of *Hesed* in Ruth

- ▶ Ruth wants to return to Bethlehem with Naomi, and Naomi allows her to do so (1:11-18)
- ▶ Ruth volunteers to glean to support both her and Naomi (2:2)
- ▶ Boaz greets his workers, *“The Lord be with you.”* (2:4a)
- ▶ Boaz’s workers greet Boaz with *“The Lord bless you.”* (2:4b)
- ▶ Boaz shows extraordinary concern and care for Ruth while she gleans in his field because she is Naomi’s relative (2:8-16)
- ▶ Naomi blesses Boaz by saying, *“The Lord bless him!”* (2:20)
- ▶ Ruth proposes marriage to Boaz on the threshing floor (3:1-9)
- ▶ Boaz acts honorably in the marriage proposal (3:10-13)
- ▶ Boaz gives Ruth grain (3:14-15)
- ▶ Boaz offers the anonymous kinsman-redeemer the opportunity to redeem Naomi and Ruth (3:12; 4:1-8)
- ▶ Boaz redeems Naomi’s property and Ruth in front of the town elders (4:9-10)
- ▶ Boaz marries Ruth (4:13)

# Ruth Breakdown: From Tragedy to Destiny

RUTH 1–4

# Quick Overview: Ruth (1–4)

- ▶ **Chapter 1:** Naomi, her husband, and their two sons move from Bethlehem to Moab due to a famine. While in Moab, Naomi's husband dies, as do her sons after they marry Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah. Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem, urging her daughters-in-law to stay in Moab. Orpah chooses to stay, but Ruth insists on accompanying Naomi, saying, *"Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God"* (Ruth 1:16 ESV).
- ▶ **Chapter 2:** Ruth gleans (gathers) in the fields of Boaz, a wealthy relative of Naomi. Boaz notices Ruth's kindness towards Naomi and offers her protection and assistance. Ruth gratefully accepts his help and continues to glean in his fields throughout the barley and wheat harvests.
- ▶ **Chapter 3:** Naomi devises a plan for Ruth to approach Boaz and request his protection as a **kinsman-redeemer**. Ruth follows Naomi's instructions and goes to Boaz while he is sleeping on the threshing floor. Ruth asks Boaz to spread his cloak over her, symbolizing his willingness to marry her and fulfill his duty as a **kinsman-redeemer**.
- ▶ **Chapter 4:** Boaz takes Ruth as his wife, fulfilling the role of the **kinsman-redeemer**. They have a son named Obed, who becomes the grandfather of King David. The book concludes with a genealogy tracing the lineage from Perez, the son of Judah and Tamar, through Boaz and Ruth to David.

# Outline: Ruth (1–4)

- ▶ A: No Future: Naomi's life is bitter (1:1-5)
  - ▶ Story begins in the days of the judges. Death of Naomi's husband and sons. No future for the family. **Ten years in Moab end in tragedy.**
- ▶ B: No Redeemer: The hopeless widows return to Bethlehem (1:6-22)
  - ▶ Orpah lacks *hesed* (loving-kindness) and departs. Ruth demonstrates *hesed*. Naomi and Ruth are committed to each other.
- ▶ C: Boaz a potential Redeemer: A temporary solution for the family (2:1-22)
  - ▶ Beginning of the barley harvest. Ruth leaves Naomi to glean in the fields of Boaz. Ruth requests permission to glean. Boaz demonstrates *hesed* to Ruth. Ruth returns to Naomi with grain. The LORD shows present *hesed* to the family through Boaz.
- ▶ X: **Hope of a Redeemer:** The LORD promises future *hesed* to the family through Boaz (2:23)
- ▶ C': Boaz agrees to be Redeemer: A lasting solution for the family (3:1-18)
  - ▶ End of the barley and wheat harvest. Ruth leaves Naomi to meet Boaz at the threshing floor. Ruth requests marriage and redemption. Boaz demonstrates *hesed* to Ruth. Ruth returns to Naomi with grain.
- ▶ B': Covenant with the Redeemer: The hopeful widows are taken care of in Bethlehem (4:1-12)
  - ▶ The nearer kinsman-redeemer lacks *hesed* and departs. Boaz and Ruth are committed.
- ▶ A': Great Future: Naomi's life is sweet (or pleasant) (4:13-22)
  - ▶ Story ends with David. Birth of Obed. Great future for the family. **Ten generations end in triumph (Perez to David).**

Adapted from A. Boyd Luter and Richard O. Rigsby. "An Adjusted Symmetrical Structuring of Ruth." Journal of the Evangelical Theology Society 39/1, (1996): 15-31.

# Ruth 1: Naomi Returns to Bethlehem

33

## ▶ A: No Future: Naomi's life is bitter (1:1-5)

❖ Elimelech, Naomi, and their sons, Mahlon and Chilion, move from Bethlehem to Moab due to a famine. While in Moab, Naomi's husband Elimelech dies, as do her sons after they marry Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah.

▶ Orpah married Chilion, whose name means "used-up."

▶ Ruth married Mahlon, whose name means "sickness."

## ▶ B: No Redeemer: The hopeless widows return to Bethlehem (1:6-22)

❖ Ten years have passed. Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem, urging her daughters-in-law to stay in Moab. Naomi says she is too old to bear sons for them to marry.

❖ Orpah chooses to stay, but Ruth insists on accompanying Naomi, saying, *"Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God"* (v.16 ESV).

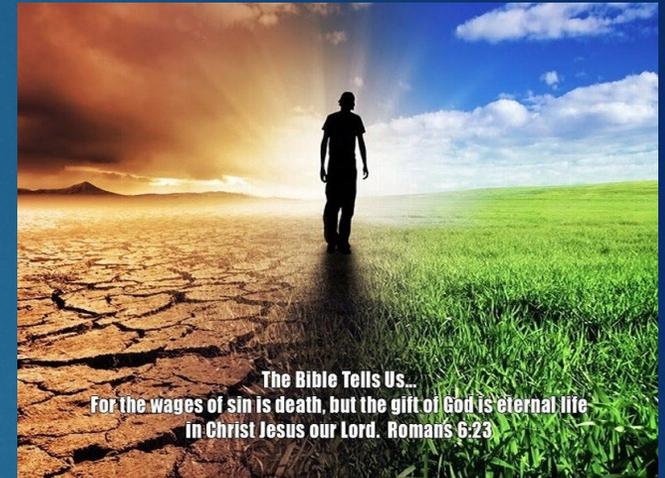
❖ Naomi renames herself Mara, meaning "bitter." They arrive at Bethlehem in the time of the barley harvest.



# Background: Famine—The Result of Disobedience

34

- ▶ *“And the heavens over your head shall be bronze, and the earth under you shall be iron. The LORD will make the rain of your land powder. From heaven dust shall come down on you until you are destroyed”* (Deuteronomy 28:23-24 ESV).
- ▶ *“Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and lacking everything. And he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you”* (Deuteronomy 28:47-48 ESV).
- ▶ *“And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins, and I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. And your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit”* (Leviticus 26:18-20 ESV).
- ▶ **Contrast:** *“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose”* (Romans 8:28 ESV).

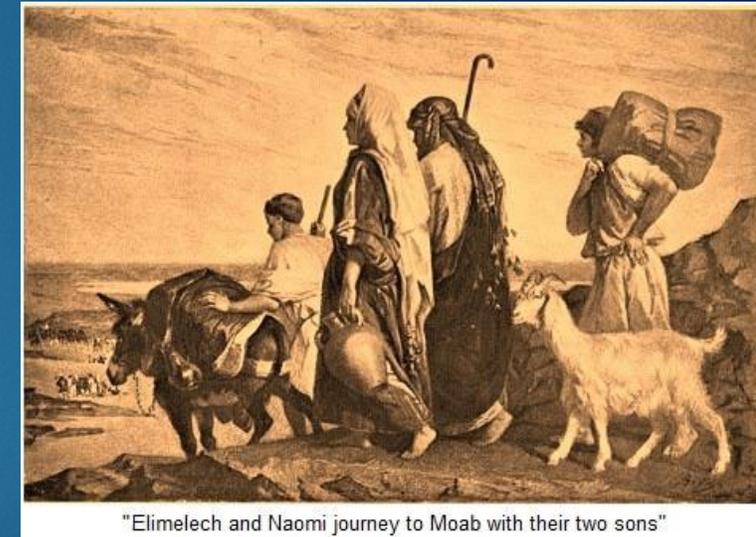


The Bible Tells Us...  
For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life  
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23

# Comment: Elimelech's Choice?

35

- ▶ Was it wrong for Elimelech and his family to move to Moab?
  1. **Disobedience to God's Law:** The Israelites were instructed to trust in God's provision and remain faithful to their land, rather than seeking refuge in foreign territories during times of difficulty (Deuteronomy 28:15-68).
  2. **Dangerous and Shameful:** To seek refuge in Moab, Israel's enemy throughout history, was both shameful and dangerous.
  3. **Abandonment of Community:** Moving to Moab meant leaving behind their community, including fellow Israelites and worshipers of the LORD. By relocating to a foreign land, Elimelech's family may have risked losing their cultural and religious identity and support network.
  4. **Marital Alliances with Moabites:** The Moabites were considered pagan idolaters by the Israelites, and forming marital alliances with them could lead to spiritual and moral compromise. This concern is realized when Elimelech's sons marry Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth.
  5. **Consequences of the Decision:** Elimelech appears to be taking his destiny into his own hands. Elimelech's decision to move to Moab ultimately leads to tragedy, as he and his sons die there, leaving Naomi and her daughters-in-law as widows. The loss of their husbands leaves them vulnerable and without male protection or support.

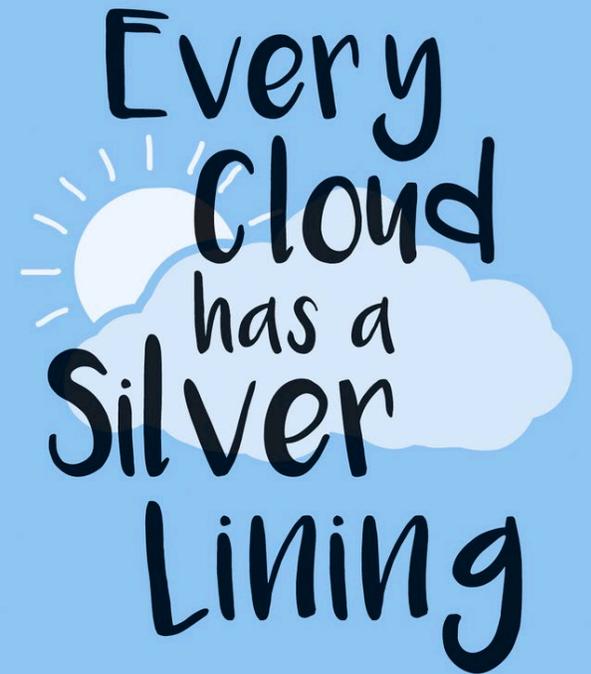


"Elimelech and Naomi journey to Moab with their two sons"

# Comment: Famine, A Silver Lining?

36

- ▶ The book of Ruth recalls the biblical pattern that famines, despite tragic appearances, often advance God's plan for his people. What great destiny might this story foretell?
- ▶ Ruth hints at some thematic link between this story and the Patriarchs.
  - ❖ The same phrase ("*there was a famine in the land*", 1:1) occurs elsewhere only in Genesis 12:10 and 26:1.
  - ❖ Abraham left the land to live as a foreigner (*gur*) in Egypt. Isaac left the land to live as a foreigner (*gur*) in Gerar among the Philistines (see Genesis 41:54, 56; 42:5).
  - ❖ In both instances, despite the tragic famines and the Patriarchs' false witnesses concerning their wives, God's sovereign plan brought blessing on his people.
- ▶ Could the text infer that this may happen again here? Is the author serving notice to watch for the development of that theme?



Every  
Cloud  
has a  
Silver  
Lining

# Life Application (1:1-22)

- ▶ **Loyalty and Commitment:** Ruth's commitment to her mother-in-law, Naomi, is a powerful example of loyalty and devotion. Despite the challenges and uncertainties they faced, Ruth refused to leave Naomi's side, demonstrating the importance of standing by loved ones in times of hardship.
  - ❖ "Generational gaps" need not occur between the young and old; Ruth and Naomi had great respect and trust for each other (Ruth 1:16-17; 1 Timothy 5:1-2; 1 Peter 5:5).
- ▶ **Importance of Friendship and Support:** Naomi and Ruth's relationship exemplifies the value of friendship and mutual support. They lean on each other for comfort and companionship, finding solace in their shared experiences and determination to navigate life's challenges together.
- ▶ **Embracing Diversity and Inclusion:** Ruth, a Moabite woman, chooses to embrace Naomi's culture and faith, declaring, *"Your people shall be my people, and your God my God."* Her willingness to integrate into Naomi's community reflects the importance of acceptance, inclusion, and unity across cultural boundaries.
- ▶ How can you demonstrate these attributes in a situation you face today?

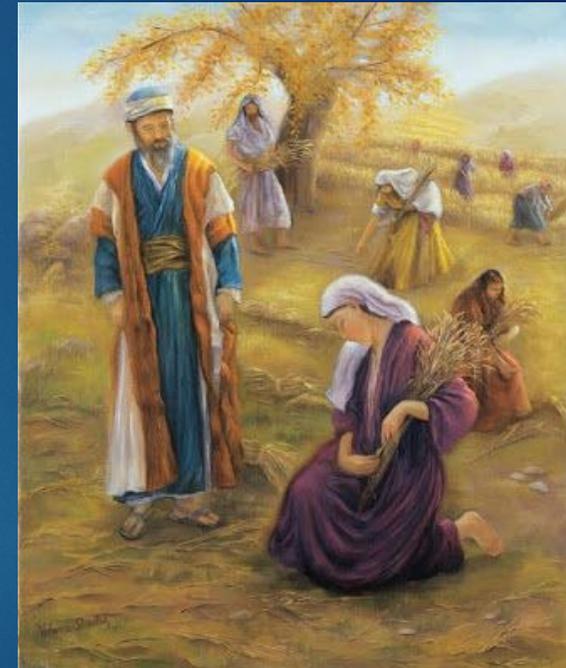


# Ruth 2: In the Fields of Bethlehem

38

## ► C: Potential Redeemer: A temporary solution for the family (2:1-22)

- ❖ **Boaz sees Ruth (v. 1-5):** Ruth goes to glean barley from the field of Boaz, Naomi's wealthy kinsman. Boaz arrives from Bethlehem, sees the reapers in his field, and blesses them. Then he sees Ruth, who is not an Israelite but a Moabite, and he asks his servant who she is.
- ❖ **Ruth asks for mercy (v. 6-9):** The servant tells Boaz that the girl who's gleaning in the field is Naomi's daughter-in-law. Ruth, fearful that she'll be cast out of the field, asks Boaz to let her to continue to glean after the reapers, which she'd been doing since that morning. Boaz tells her to stay and glean with his maidservants. He has also told the young men who work for him not to molest Ruth and if Ruth is thirsty to go drink the water the young men have drawn from the well.
- ❖ **Boaz's generosity (v. 10-14):** Ruth is so thankful that she prostrates herself before Boaz and asks him why he is being so generous to her. Boaz tells her it is because of her deep loyalty to Naomi and the courage she has shown to live far away from her people among strangers. He asks the Lord to bless Ruth and then tells her to come and dine with him and the other reapers, which she does.
- ❖ **Boaz continues to show kindness (v. 15-22):** Boaz continues to show kindness to Ruth by instructing his young men to purposely leave extra grain for her to glean, ensuring she has an abundant harvest. Ruth works diligently throughout the day, gleaning until evening. She then gathers the grain she has collected and returns to the city, where she shows Naomi the generous amount she has gleaned. Impressed by Ruth's productivity and Boaz's benevolence, Naomi blesses Boaz, recognizing him as a close relative who could potentially serve as a kinsman-redeemer for Ruth.



## ► X: Hope of a Redeemer: The LORD promises future *hesed* to the family through Boaz (2:23)

- ❖ Ruth continues to work in Boaz's fields throughout the barley and wheat harvests, enjoying his protection and provision.

# Background: What is Gleaning?

- ▶ In the Old Testament, **gleaning** refers to the practice of gathering leftover crops or grain from fields after the harvest. It was a form of charity and welfare for the poor, widows, orphans, and foreigners who lacked land or resources to provide for themselves. Ruth and Naomi were both widows and poor.
- ▶ Gleaning reflects the principles of compassion, generosity, and social justice within the Israelite community, emphasizing the importance of caring for the less fortunate and ensuring that no one goes hungry.
- ▶ The practice is mentioned in several passages, including Leviticus 19:9-10 and Deuteronomy 24:19-22, where landowners are instructed not to harvest the corners of their fields or to gather any missed sheaves but to leave them for the needy to collect.
- ▶ The word “gleaning” is used 7 times in chapter 2.
  - ❖ Ruth benefited from this merciful provision in the Law (v. 2, 3, 7, 8, 15-19, 22).



# Life Application (2:1-23)

- ▶ **Hard Work and Diligence:** Ruth's willingness to glean in the fields demonstrates the importance of hard work and perseverance, even in challenging circumstances. Despite her disadvantaged position as a widow and foreigner, Ruth works diligently to provide for herself and Naomi.
- ▶ **Humility and Gratitude:** Ruth's humility is evident in her willingness to glean in the fields and accept whatever scraps of grain were left behind. Her gratitude towards Boaz and his workers for their generosity reflects the importance of humility and thankfulness for the kindness of others.
- ▶ **Generosity and Compassion:** Boaz's generosity towards Ruth exemplifies the principle of compassion and caring for those in need. By instructing his workers to intentionally leave extra grain for Ruth to glean, Boaz demonstrates the value of generosity and compassion towards the less fortunate.
- ▶ **Recognizing Opportunities:** Naomi's recognition of Boaz as a potential kinsman-redeemer for Ruth highlights the importance of recognizing and seizing opportunities for a better future. Naomi's strategic planning and guidance paved the way for Ruth's eventual security and prosperity.
- ▶ **Community Support:** The community's acceptance and support of Ruth, a foreigner, as she gleans in the fields underscore the importance of community and belonging. Through their kindness and inclusion, the community provides a sense of support and belonging for Ruth, emphasizing the value of unity and harmony.
- ▶ Which of these character traits would you consider a strength of yours? How can you leverage it to show Christ to others? Which of these aspects is an area for growth? Ask the Holy Spirit for the grace to grow in that area.



# Ruth 3: Ruth and Boaz at the Threshing Floor

41

- ▶ C': Boaz agrees to be Redeemer: A lasting solution for the family (3:1-18)
  - ❖ Naomi's Instructions to Ruth (v. 1-6): Naomi devises a plan to secure a future for Ruth by seeking out Boaz as a potential kinsman-redeemer. She instructs Ruth to prepare herself and go to the threshing floor where Boaz will be winnowing barley. Naomi advises Ruth to wait until Boaz has finished eating and drinking, then to uncover his feet and lie down. Ruth agrees to Naomi's plan and does as she instructs.
    - ▶ Cultural Background: This act of uncovering his feet symbolizes Ruth's willingness to enter into a marriage proposal with Boaz, invoking the custom of levirate marriage and the role of a kinsman-redeemer (discussed in the next few slides).
  - ❖ Ruth's request for Boaz to marry her (v. 7-9): After Boaz ate and drank at the threshing floor and lay down to sleep, Ruth quietly approaches him, uncovers his feet, and lies down. At midnight, Boaz awakens suddenly and is startled to find a woman lying at his feet. He asks, "Who are you?" Ruth identifies herself as Ruth, his servant, and asks him to spread his cloak over her.
    - ▶ Cultural Background: When Ruth asks Boaz to spread the corner of his garment over her, it is a symbolic gesture of asking for protection and marriage. If he did, then he was giving her his protection, which in turn means a marriage proposal (see Ezekiel 16:8).



# Ruth 3: Ruth and Boaz at the Threshing Floor (cont.)

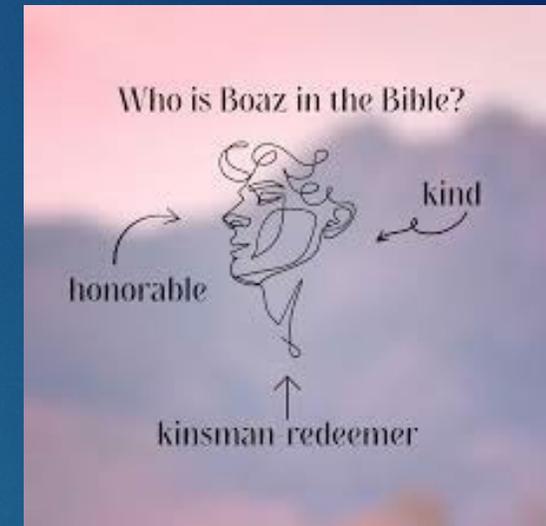
- ▶ C': Boaz agrees to be Redeemer: A lasting solution for the family (3:1-18) cont.
  - ❖ Boaz agrees to be Ruth's redeemer (v. 10-14): Boaz responds to Ruth's proposal with admiration for her loyalty and virtue. He acknowledges her request for protection and acknowledges her kindness towards Naomi. Boaz praises Ruth for not pursuing younger men, whether rich or poor. He recognizes that Ruth's character is widely known and respected in the community. Despite acknowledging that there is a closer relative who could fulfill the role of the kinsman-redeemer, Boaz promises to do everything in his power to help Ruth and assures her that he will take care of the matter the following day. He tells her to stay the night but advises her to leave before morning to avoid any gossip or suspicion. Ruth agrees to Boaz's instructions and stays with him until dawn.
  - ❖ Boaz gives Ruth a gift (v. 15-18): In the morning, Boaz tells Ruth that she must keep secret the fact that she, a woman, had come to the threshing room. He asks for her shawl, and he wraps six measures of barley in it and gives it to her. Boaz sends Ruth back to Naomi with a generous gift of barley, indicating his commitment to her and his desire to assist her in any way he can. Naomi says that they must now wait until they hear from Boaz and that the matter should be settled that day.



# Background: The Kinsman-Redeemer

43

- ▶ In the Old Testament, a kinsman-redeemer, also known as a *goel* in Hebrew, is a close relative who has the responsibility and legal right to act on behalf of a family member in certain situations, particularly in matters of redemption, protection, and care.
- ▶ The concept of the kinsman-redeemer is outlined in the book of Leviticus and elaborated upon in other parts of the Old Testament, including the book of Ruth. According to Mosaic law, the duties of a kinsman-redeemer include:
  1. **Redemption of Property:** If a family member becomes impoverished and is forced to sell their land, the kinsman-redeemer has the right to buy back the land and restore it to the family to prevent it from permanently passing out of the family's possession.
  2. **Redemption of Persons:** In cases where a family member becomes enslaved or indebted, the kinsman-redeemer can pay the necessary price to redeem them and set them free from bondage.
  3. **Levirate Marriage:** If a man dies without leaving an heir, his brother or close relative may be obligated to marry the widow and produce offspring to ensure the continuation of the deceased man's lineage and inheritance (see Deut. 25:5-10).
- ▶ This word *goel* or “kinsman-redeemer” appears 8 times in Chapters 3–4. The kinsman-redeemer is a “savior” figure – the one who was responsible for coming to rescue the needy.
- ▶ The role of the kinsman-redeemer is characterized by a sense of familial obligation, loyalty, and responsibility to care for and protect one's relatives. In the book of Ruth, Boaz serves as a kinsman-redeemer for Ruth and Naomi by marrying Ruth to preserve the family line and inheritance, demonstrating the principles of loyalty, compassion, and justice inherent in the concept of the kinsman-redeemer.



# Background: The Kinsman-Redeemer (cont.)

44

## ► To be a kinsman-redeemer:

- ❖ He must be a kinsman, a *relative*.
- ❖ He must be free, *not a slave*.
- ❖ He must be *able to pay the price*.
- ❖ He must be *willing to pay the price*.

## ► Note: Jesus is our kinsman-redeemer

- ❖ He is our kinsman, born of a woman, 100% man and 100% God.
- ❖ He is free, free from being a slave to sin.
- ❖ He could pay the price because He is perfect and without sin.
- ❖ He was willing to pay the price by dying on a cross for our sins.



# Background: Levirate Marriage

- ▶ A levirate marriage was a custom in ancient Israel and other ancient societies where, if a man died without children, his brother was expected to marry the widow. The term “levirate” is derived from the Latin word *levir*, meaning “husband’s brother.”
- ▶ This practice protected widows from poverty and ensured the family’s place in the community was preserved (see Deut. 25:5-6).
- ▶ In Ruth’s story, Boaz acted as a kinsman-redeemer by redeeming the land, securing the family line, and fulfilling the spirit of levirate marriage by marrying Ruth to continue Elimelech’s and Mahlon’s line.
- ▶ Levirate marriage can still be found in certain traditional communities around the world (such as the Kurdish, Kirgiz, and some countries in central Africa).



Levirate Marriage	Kinsman-Redeemer
Focused on <b>marriage</b> to continue the family line.	Focused on <b>redeeming property, people, or rights.</b>
Always triggered by a <b>childless widow.</b>	Triggered by various family needs: debt, slavery, land loss, or widowhood.
Usually involved a <b>brother.</b>	Could be <b>any close male relative.</b>

# Life Application (3:1-18)

- ▶ **Courageous Action:** Ruth's bold, but respectful, decision to approach Boaz at the threshing floor demonstrates the importance of taking courageous action and understanding biblical principles to pursue one's goals (how to ask for a kinsman-redeemer to redeem the family).
- ▶ **Trust in Providence:** Ruth's trust in Naomi's guidance is evident in her willingness to follow Naomi's instructions. Ruth's actions reflect the belief that there is a higher purpose guiding their lives, emphasizing the importance of faith and trust in uncertain circumstances.
- ▶ **Wisdom in Strategy:** Naomi's strategic advice to Ruth regarding how to approach Boaz reveals the importance of wisdom and foresight in navigating complex situations. Naomi's guidance underscores the value of thoughtful planning and consideration of consequences in pursuing one's objectives.
- ▶ **Respectful Boundaries:** Boaz's response to Ruth's approach at the threshing floor highlights the importance of maintaining respectful boundaries in relationships. While Boaz is surprised by Ruth's presence, he responds with integrity and honor, ensuring that their interaction remains appropriate and dignified.
- ▶ **Patience and Timing:** Boaz's decision to address Ruth's request the following day instead of acting impulsively demonstrates the importance of patience and discernment in decision-making. Boaz's measured response underscores the value of waiting for the right moment and considering all factors before taking action.
- ▶ **Mutual Respect:** The mutual respect and trust between Ruth and Boaz are evident in their interactions. Both characters treat each other with dignity and kindness, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect and consideration in building healthy relationships.
- ▶ How has this chapter enriched your understanding of Jesus as our kinsman-redeemer?



# Ruth 4: The Kinsman-Redeemer Acts

- ▶ B': Covenant with the Redeemer: The hopeful widows are taken care of in Bethlehem (4:1-12)
  - ❖ Boaz goes to the town gate to obtain the right to be kinsman-redeemer (v. 1-4)
    - ▶ Boaz goes to the town gate, where legal and business matters were often conducted in ancient Israel, to meet with the closer relative who could potentially serve as the kinsman-redeemer. Boaz gathers ten elders of the town as witnesses to the proceedings. He presents the case to the closer relative, informing him of Naomi's intention to sell the land that belonged to Elimelech, her deceased husband, and to seek a kinsman-redeemer for Ruth, the Moabite widow.
  - ❖ Boaz wins the right to be kinsman-redeemer (v. 5-12)
    - ▶ The closer relative initially agrees to redeem the land but withdraws his offer when Boaz mentions that the transaction would also involve marrying Ruth to perpetuate Elimelech's name in his inheritance. The closer relative immediately changes his mind because it would "ruin his inheritance," i.e., he would have to split it between the children he presumably already has, and any future children he might have with Ruth. So, the closer relative rescinds his offer. To ensure that the transaction is conducted legally and fairly, the closer relative removes his sandal, a symbolic act signifying his relinquishment of his right to redeem the land and marry Ruth (v. 5-8).
    - ▶ Boaz accepts the redemption right and announces that he has purchased the property from Naomi and that he has acquired Ruth as his wife. He explains that Ruth was a widow and that this transaction would save her dead husband's name from vanishing (v. 9-10).
    - ▶ The elders and witnesses present at the gate confirm the transaction, blessing Boaz and Ruth and expressing the hope that their family line will be as famous as that of Perez, the son of Judah and Tamar. Boaz and Ruth marry, and Ruth gives birth to a son named Obed. He becomes the grandfather of King David, establishing Ruth's significance in the lineage of Israel's kings (v. 11-12).



# Background: Refusing a Levirate Marriage

48

- ▶ A levirate marriage could be refused. What happens in this case?
  - ❖ *“<sup>7</sup> However, if a man does not want to marry his brother’s wife, she shall go to the elders at the town gate and say, ‘My husband’s brother refuses to carry on his brother’s name in Israel. He will not fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to me.’ <sup>8</sup> Then the elders of his town shall summon him and talk to him. If he persists in saying, ‘I do not want to marry her,’ <sup>9</sup> his brother’s widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, take off one of his sandals, spit in his face and say, ‘This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother’s family line.’ <sup>10</sup> That man’s line shall be known in Israel as ‘The Family of the Unsandaled’” (Deut. 25:7-10 NIV).*
- ▶ Taking off his sandals is a symbol of mourning, since his failure to perform the levirate marriage meant that his brother was now irrevocably dead.
- ▶ She would then spit in his face (indicating contempt), declaring that *“this is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother’s house”* (Deuteronomy 25:9 ESV). From then on, the widow was free to marry anyone she chose.



# Ruth 4: The Marriage of Ruth and Boaz

50

## ▶ A': Great Future: Naomi's life is sweet (or pleasant) (4:13-22)

### ❖ Naomi gains a son (v. 13-17 NIV)

▶ <sup>13</sup> So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. <sup>14</sup> The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! <sup>15</sup> He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth."

▶ <sup>16</sup> Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. <sup>17</sup> The women living there said, "Naomi has a son!" And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

### ❖ The Genealogy of David (v. 18-22)

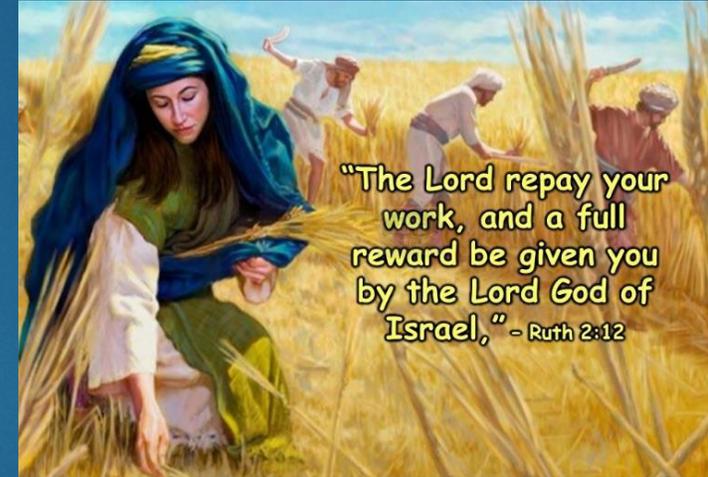
▶ 10 generations from Perez to David are listed.



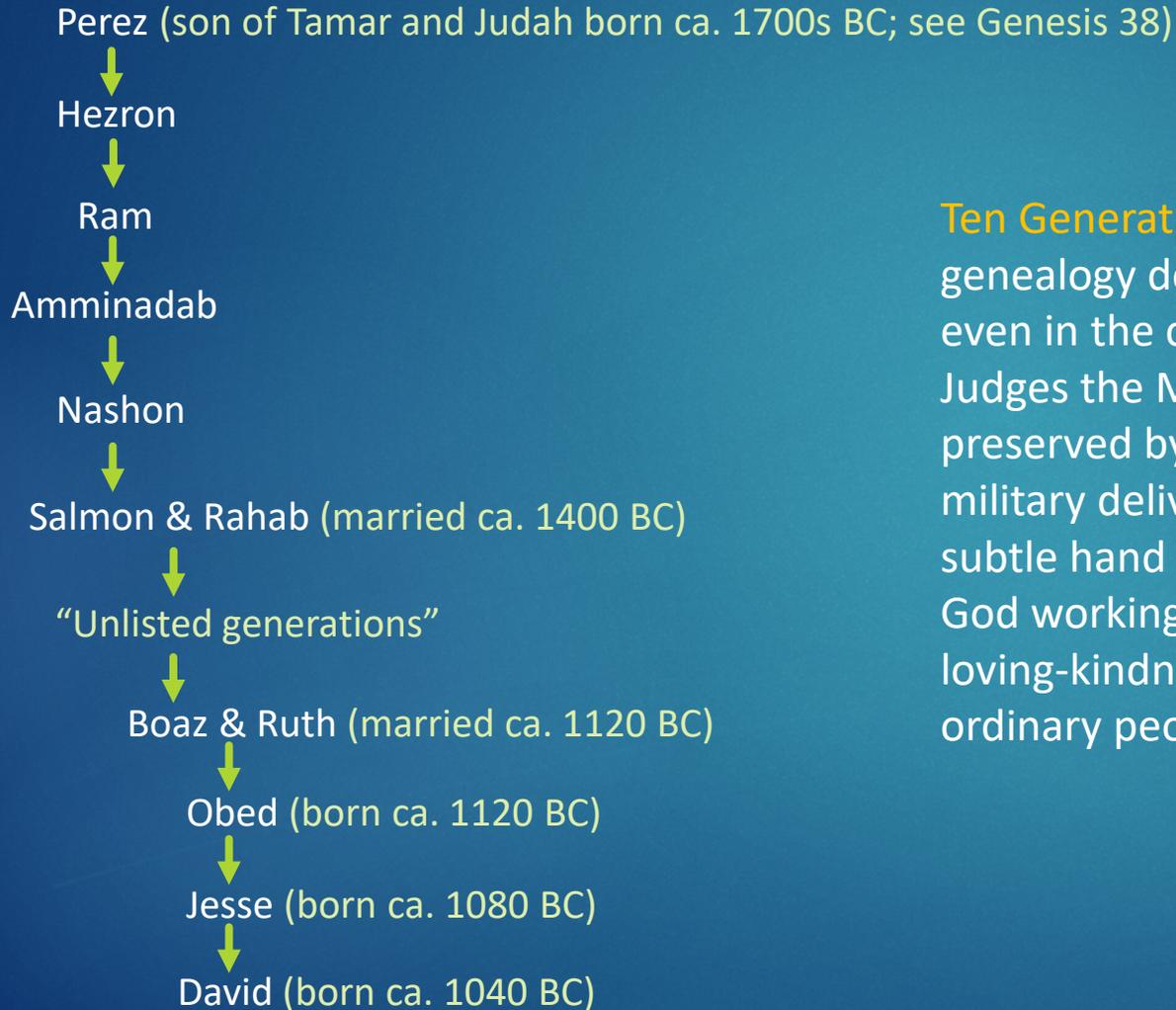
# Comment: Ruth's *Hesed* Rewarded

51

- ▶ Ruth was praised as being better than 7 sons.
- ▶ Obed, the son born to Ruth and Boaz, symbolized redemption and restoration.
  - ❖ Continuation of the Family Line: Obed's birth ensured the continuation of the family line of Elimelech and Naomi, which had been in jeopardy due to the deaths of Elimelech and his sons. Obed's existence fulfilled the duty of the kinsman-redeemer, ensuring that the family's name and inheritance would be preserved.
  - ❖ Link to King David: Obed was the grandfather of King David, who became one of Israel's greatest and most renowned kings. Through Obed's lineage, the Davidic dynasty was established, fulfilling God's promise to David of an everlasting kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12-16).
  - ❖ Connection to Jesus Christ: Obed is listed in the genealogy of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 1:5-6). This genealogy traces Jesus's ancestry back to King David and ultimately to Obed, highlighting Obed's role in the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation through the Messiah.
  - ❖ Symbol of Redemption: Obed's name means "servant" or "worshipper," reflecting the idea of obedience and devotion to God. His birth symbolized God's redemption and blessing upon Naomi and Ruth, as well as His faithfulness to His covenant promises to His people.



# Background: David's Genealogy (4:18-22)



**Ten Generations:** This genealogy demonstrates that even in the chaotic times of the Judges the Messianic line is not preserved by heroic feats by military deliverers but by the subtle hand of a providential God working through the loving-kindness (*hesed*) of ordinary people.



# Life Application (4:1-22)

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- ▶ **Faithfulness Rewarded:** Ruth's unwavering loyalty to Naomi and her willingness to embrace Naomi's God and people ultimately led to her redemption and prosperity. This teaches the lesson that faithfulness and loyalty are often rewarded, even in the face of adversity.
- ▶ **Generosity and Kindness:** Boaz's generosity towards Ruth, demonstrated through his willingness to act as her kinsman-redeemer and provide for her and Naomi, highlights the importance of generosity and kindness towards others in need.
- ▶ **Restoration and Redemption:** The story of Ruth and Boaz exemplifies the theme of restoration and redemption. Through their union, Ruth's family line is preserved, and Naomi's lineage is restored, demonstrating the possibility of new beginnings and blessings arising from difficult circumstances.
- ▶ **Community and Support:** The community's affirmation and blessing of Ruth and Boaz's union underscore the importance of community support in times of celebration and joy. This teaches the lesson that relationships are strengthened and enriched by the support and encouragement of others.
- ▶ **Trusting in Divine Providence:** Throughout the narrative, the characters grapple with uncertainty and doubt, yet they ultimately place their trust in God's hand. The unfolding events, guided by divine intervention, lead to unexpected blessings and opportunities, underscoring the witness that God works in unusual ways to fulfill His plans for His people.
- ▶ How can you trust God and show faithfulness in a situation you are facing? How can you show *hesed* (lovingkindness) to those in your life today?

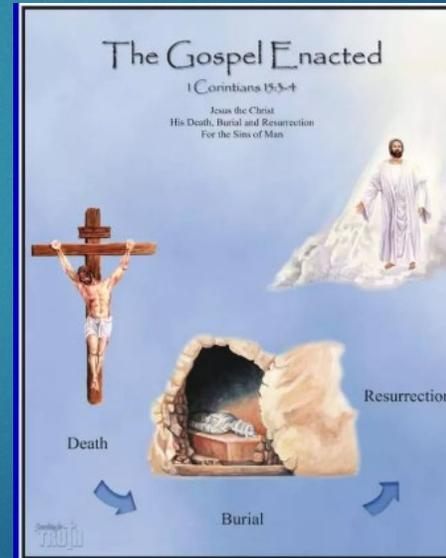


# Redeemers: Boaz and Jesus

Boaz	Jesus
Redeemed Ruth	Redeemed Israel and Gentiles (Luke 24:21)
Redeemed Ruth from “curse” of being a widow	Redeemed us from the “curse of the Law” (Gal. 3:13)
Redeemed Ruth to raise up sons	Redeemed us to be adopted as “sons” (Gal. 4:1-7)
Redeemed Ruth, purifying her to himself	Redeemed us, purifying us to Himself (Titus 2:11-14)



Boaz the Kinsman-Redeemer  
for Ruth and Naomi



Jesus the Kinsman-Redeemer  
for all mankind

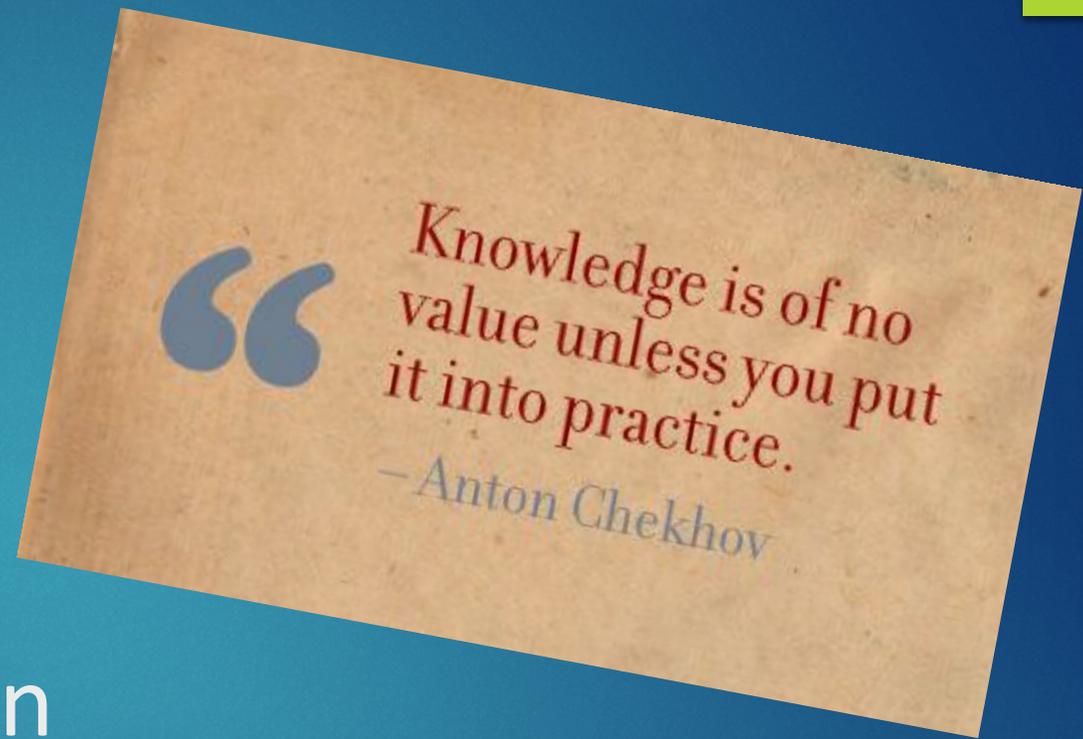
# Conclusion: Jesus is our Kinsman-Redeemer

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Kinsman-Redeemer (Redemption from Adversity)	Jesus Christ Our Redeemer (Redemption from Sin)
Must redeem those who are in need (Ruth 4:1-6, 15)	Came to redeem humankind from sin (Matt. 1:21; Luke 19:10)
Must be <u>related</u> by blood to those he redeems (Ruth 2:1; Deut. 25:5-10)	Jesus was God made fully man (John 1:14; Rom. 1:3; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 2:14-15)
Must be <u>able</u> to pay the redemption price (Ruth 2:1)	Paid the price with his blood (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19)
Must be <u>willing</u> to redeem the lost (3:11-13; 4:7-10)	Was willing to die (Matt. 20:28; John 10:15; Hebrews 10:7,10)
Must be <u>free</u> to redeem (Ruth 2:1; 4:7-10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Was free from the guilt of sin (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22,24)</li><li>• Christ's virgin birth freed Christ from the curse of sin (Matt. 1:23)</li></ul>

Christ is the kinsman-redeemer (*goel*) for His Church.

Christ fulfilled all 4 requirements of a *goel* to redeem humankind.



## Bonus Life Application

WHAT ELSE CAN WE LEARN AND APPLY FROM RUTH?

# Life Application: Faithfulness and Hard Work

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- ▶ When hardships enter our lives, we must continue to rely upon the Lord (Ruth 1:1-5; Philippians 4:19; Hebrews 13:5; 1 Peter 5:7).
- ▶ We must remain faithful to the Lord regardless of the circumstances (Ruth 1:19-21; Job 1:20-22; 2:7-10; Hebrews 12:7-13).
- ▶ The Lord blesses his people, rewards his people, protects his people, and shows kindness to his people (Ruth 2:4,12,20; Genesis 15:1; Psalms 34:7; Proverbs 30:5; Romans 8:28).
- ▶ Steadfast commitment, faith, love, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and hard work are all qualities that are much needed today (Ruth 1:16-18; 2:2,11,23; 3:5,10-11; 4:15; Matthew 6:33; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9; Revelation 2:10).



# Life Application: A Good Reputation

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- ▶ A good reputation is the best kind of introduction (Ruth 2:11; Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Peter 2:12).
- ▶ A good name (reputation) is better than great riches (Ruth 3:10-11; Proverbs 22:1).
- ▶ *“A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies”* (Proverbs 31:10 NIV; cf. Ruth 3:11).
- ▶ A woman’s inward character is more impressive to a godly man than outward beauty (Ruth 3:11; 1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:1-6).
  - ❖ *“The Lord bless you, my daughter [Ruth],” he [Boaz] replied. “This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. And now, my daughter, don’t be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character”* (Ruth 3:10-11 NIV).
- ▶ Men and women who seem unimportant by the world’s standards can play an important role in God’s plan (Ruth 4:11-12,18-22; Matthew 1:3-6, 18-25).

