

WOMEN IN THE
BIBLE
RUTH &
ESTHER

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

17 that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped

Both are historical narratives



Both are central to a major feast



Both are about people



Contrasts

Ruth was a Gentile woman from a pagan country who married a Hebrew.

Esther was a Jewish girl who married a pagan Gentile king.



Contrasts

Ruth was a destitute widow.

Esther was an orphan.



Contrasts

Ruth was a migrant
to Israel.

Esther was an exile
from Israel.



Contrasts

Ruth was a Gentile
living among Jews.

Esther was a Jew
living among Gentiles.



Contrasts

Ruth was a proselyte.

Esther influenced
many proselytes.



Contrasts

Ruth gleaned
in a field.

Esther ruled
in a palace.



Contrasts

Ruth was poor.

Esther was rich.



Contrasts

Ruth was a proselyte.

Esther influenced
many proselytes.



Contrasts

Ruth became
grandmother to a king.

Esther was descended
from one king and
married to another.



Contrasts

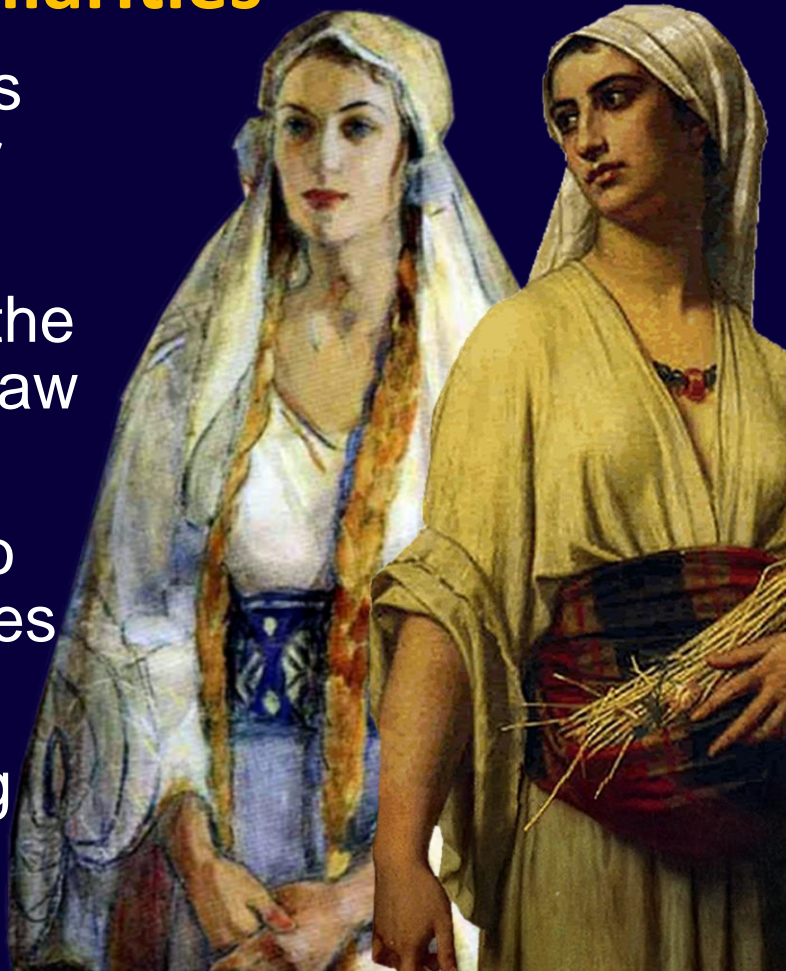
Ruth gave life.

Esther ordered death.



Similarities

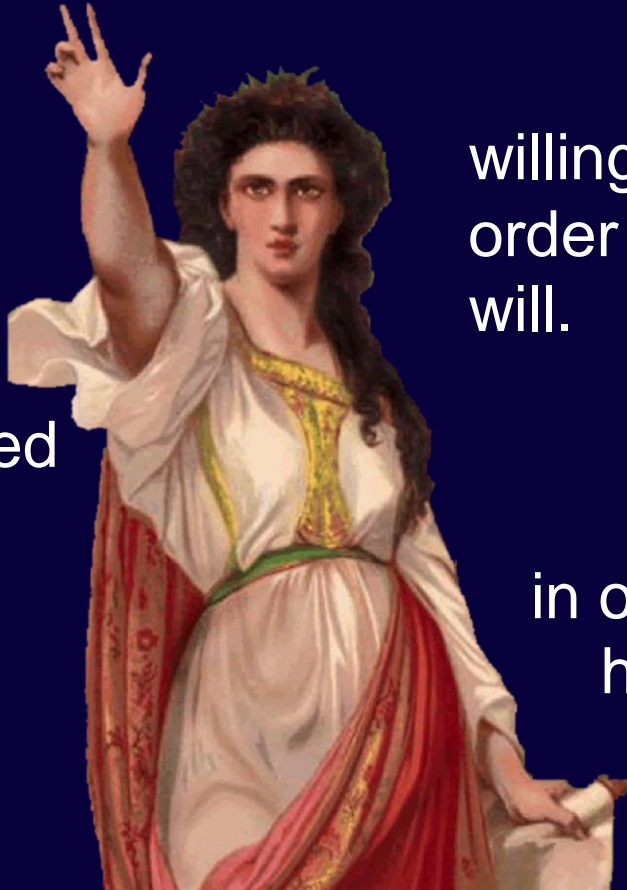
- Both were foreigners living in a land other than their own.
- Both found favor in the eyes of those who saw them.
- Both were taken into the homes of relatives
- Both had relatives who were a blessing others.



Both were women of integrity

Both were
submissive

Each dressed
in special
garments



willing to die in
order to do God's
will.

in order to make
her request.

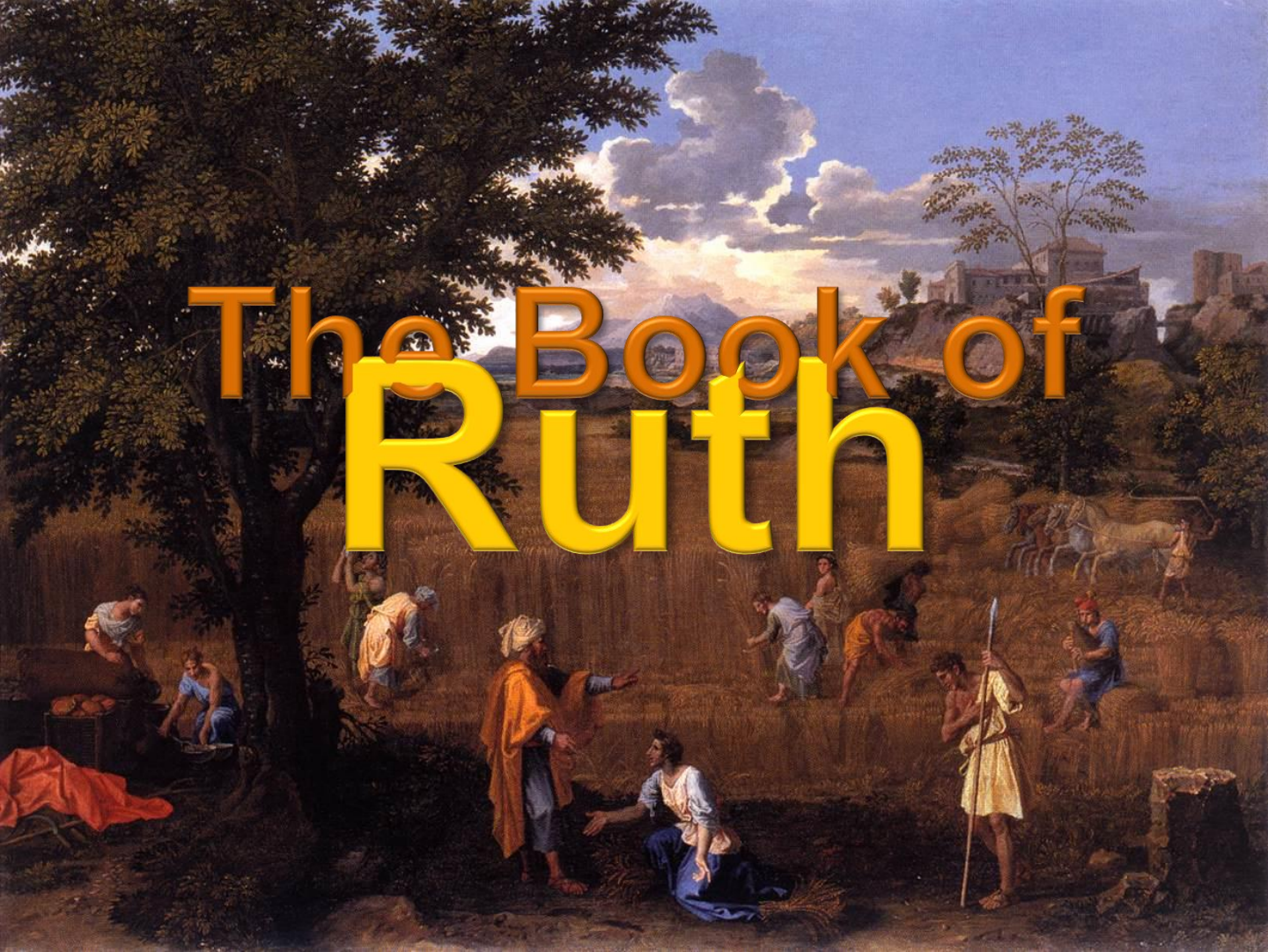
Both brought joy to Humankind

God redeemed Ruth to
perpetuate the line of the
Redeemer, the Lord
Jesus Christ.

God saved Esther to
protect the nation
and the People
through whom
the Saviour
would be born.



The Book of Ruth



the ultimate
love story

The Book of Ruth

- “In the days the judges ruled.”
- The ultimate love story
 - At the literary level
 - At the prophetic level
 - At the personal level
- An extremely significant book for Believers
 - The role of the Goel – the Kinsman-Redeemer
 - The essential pre-requisite to Revelation



Overview of the book's plot

- Ruth, a Moabite and widow of a Jewish man (and a princess according to commentators), gave up her life in Moab to join her Jewish mother-in-law, Naomi, in the Land of Israel. She insisted on adopting Naomi's God and religion.
- A central element of the story is Ruth going to local barley and wheat harvests to collect charitable handouts. She gleans in the fields of Boaz, a judge and a close relative of Ruth's dead husband Elimelech.
- The marriage of Ruth and Boaz resulted in a child, Obed, the grandfather of King David.



Ruth is a book of history

History covers:

The Book of Judges, like many histories, presents only the wars and battles of its time. The Book of Ruth deals with what **average people** were doing between those wars.

Real PERSONALITIES

Real PEOPLES

Real PATTERNS

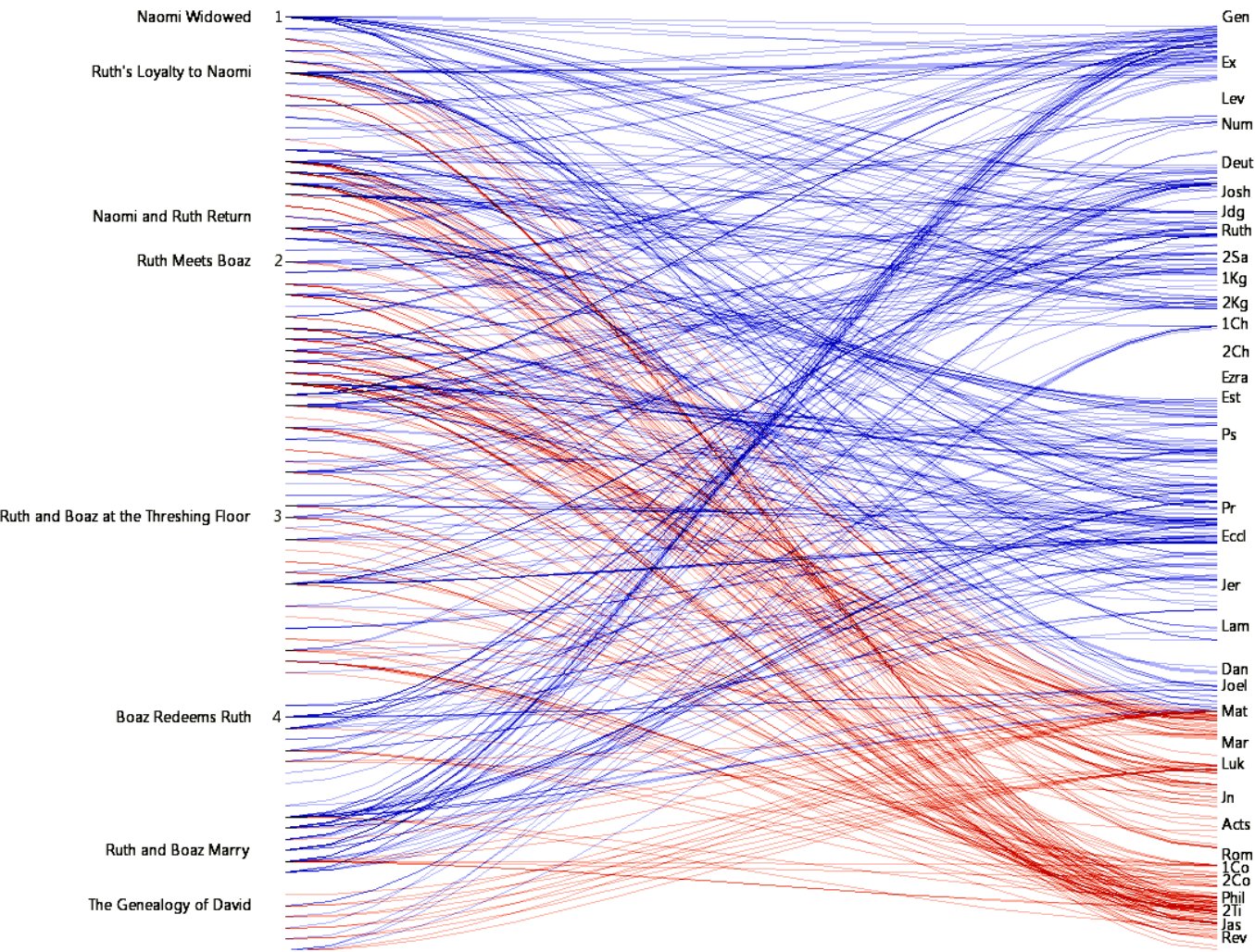
Real PURPOSE

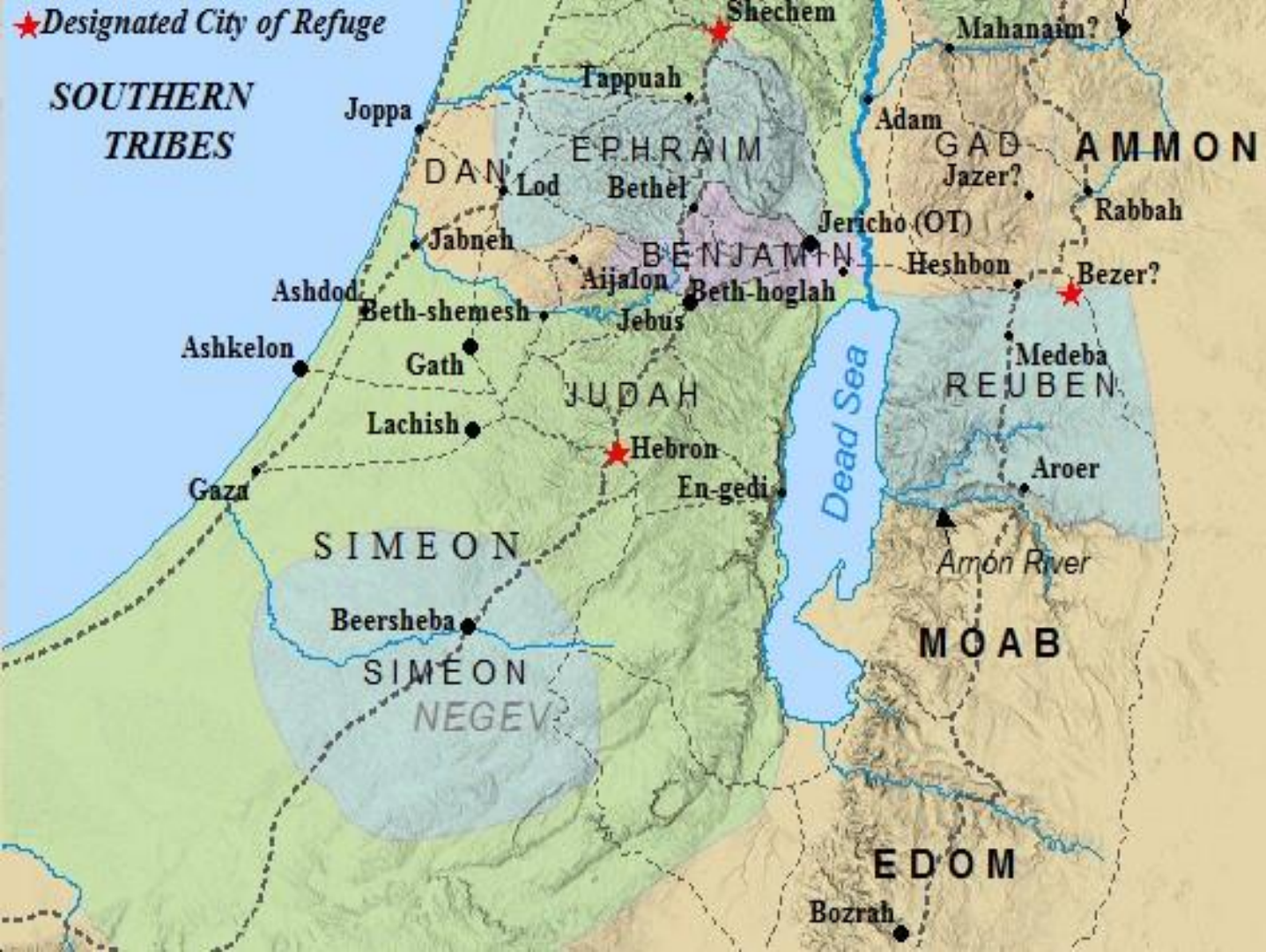
Why Study the Book of Ruth?

- Ruth is one of the most dramatic books of *prophecy* in the Bible. It explains details that are crucial components of the book of Revelation.
- Every book, every name, every detail in the 66 books in the Bible is there by design.
- Each detail in Ruth carries this romance along.
- Each detail also carries along the romance of redemption, and hints about God's Plan:
 - Kinsman-Redeemer
 - Israel and the Church

Ruth

Bible







DEBORAH THE PROPHETESS

Judges (human weakness: divine strength)

OPPRESSORS

- King of Jericho
- King of Moab
- Ammonites
- Amalekites
- Philistines
- King of Hazor
- Midianites and Easterns
- Amalekites
- Philistines
- Ammonites
- Ammonites
- Philistines

DELIVERERS

- Otheil
- Ehud
- Shamgar
- Deborah/Barak
- Gideon
- Tola
- Jair
- Jephthan
- Ibzan
- Elon
- Abdon
- Samson

Relationship of Judges and Ruth

- Ruth takes place during the time of the judges.
- The book of Ruth shows how God works His purposes on the earth even under adverse circumstances.
- Two themes run through the book of Judges:
 - Israel had no king in Israel in those days
 - People did what was right in their own eyes.
- The book of Ruth tells them where their king will come from:
 - Two miles away from the throne (Bethlehem)

In Tanakh, Ruth & Judges are **1** book

In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

Judges 17:6: 21:25

And said unto him [Samuel] , Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

1 Samuel 8:5:25



"David Presenting the Head of Goliath to King Saul," Rembrandt, 1627.

A Question

- How could Samuel appoint Saul (a Benjamite) as Israel's first king when he knew that the king was to come from the tribe of Judah?

Judah, you *are he* whom your brothers shall praise;
Your hand *shall be* on the neck of your enemies;
Your father's children shall bow down before you....
The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh
comes; and to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people.

Genesis 49:8,10

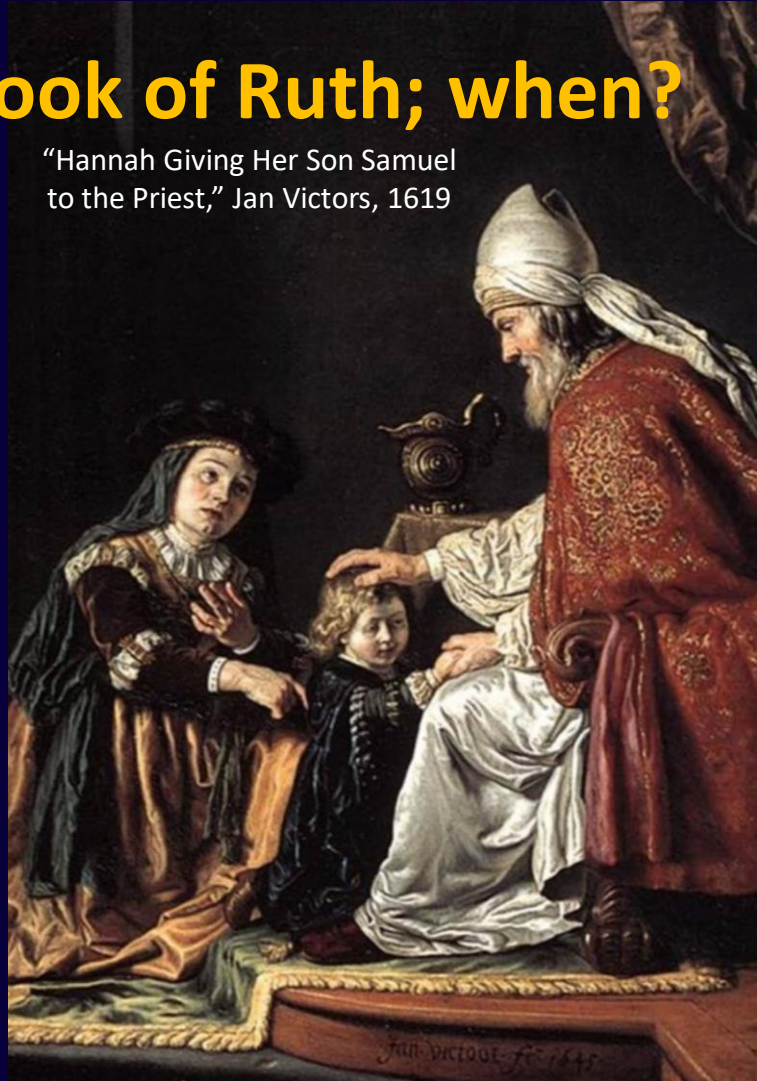


"The Triumph of Saul," Jan van den Hoecke, 1630s.

Who wrote the book of Ruth; when?

- Israel had no king in Israel in those days (thus, “those days” must be over and a king in power).
- David is named in Ruth 4, but not as king (thus, Saul must be the king at the time of the book).
- Samuel (1088-1008 BC) wrote Ruth (and Judges) to switch people’s thinking from Saul to David.

“Hannah Giving Her Son Samuel to the Priest,” Jan Victors, 1619



Relevant laws of Ancient Israel

- Ruth Chapter 1: Laws of Exclusion
 - Deuteronomy 23:1-6
- Ruth Chapter 2: Law of Gleaning
 - Leviticus 19:9-10; Deuteronomy 24:19,21
- Ruth Chapter 3: Law of Levirate Marriage
 - Deuteronomy 25:5-10
- Ruth Chapter 4: Law of Redemption
 - Leviticus 25:47-55



Laws of Exclusion

23 “He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall not enter the assembly of the LORD.

² “One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

³ “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever, **4** because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. **5** Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you. **6** You shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all your days forever.

Leviticus 19:9-10

An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.

Leviticus 19:9-10

Ruth was a Moabite. What's going on?

The Law of Gleaning



Law of Gleaning

And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather [every] grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger.....

Leviticus 19:9-10

- An ancient welfare system, where a land owner could only make one pass through a field.
- What the reapers missed or was spilled was left for the widows and the destitute.

A reflection on Bible history

- Judges is the book of “no king”.

Things got so bad that the people cried out for a king to feed and protect them. Is that like today?

- 1 Samuel is the book of “man’s king” (Saul)

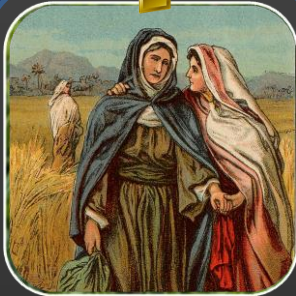
Things will get so bad that the nations will cry out for a king to feed and protect them. (Antichrist)

- 2 Samuel is the book of “God’s king” (David)

When man’s king has done his worst, God’s king will appear, judge the evil world, put away ungodliness, and establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Outline of the book of Ruth

1



Love's Resolve

Ruth cleaves to Naomi

Law(s) of Exclusion

2



Love's Response

Ruth gleanes in the fields

Law of Gleaning

3



Love's Request

The threshing floor scene

Law of Levirate Marriage

4



Love's Reward

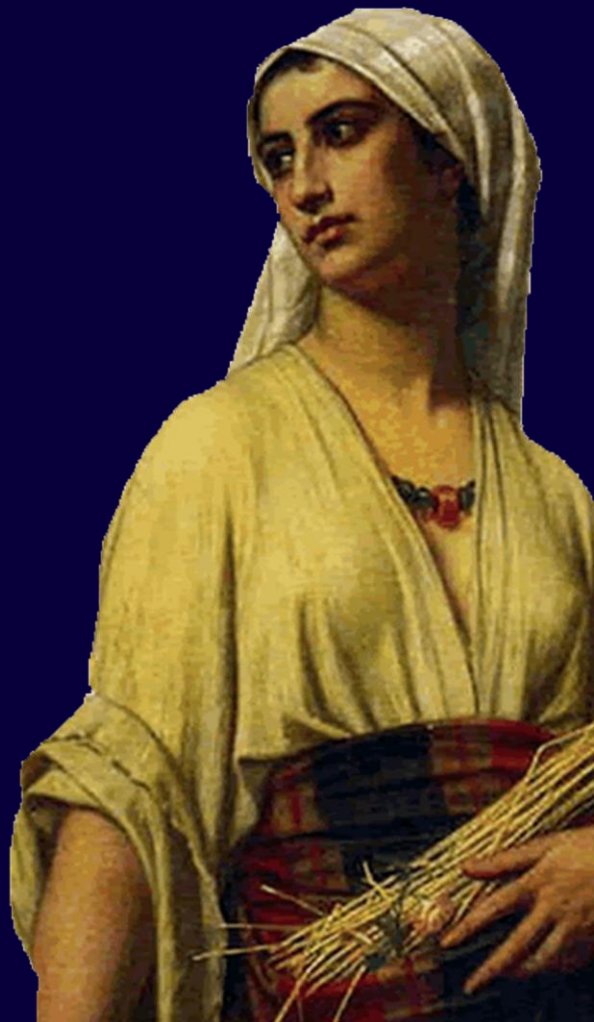
Redemption of both land and bride

Law of Redemption

Chapter One

Love's Resolve

*Ruth cleaves to
Naomi*



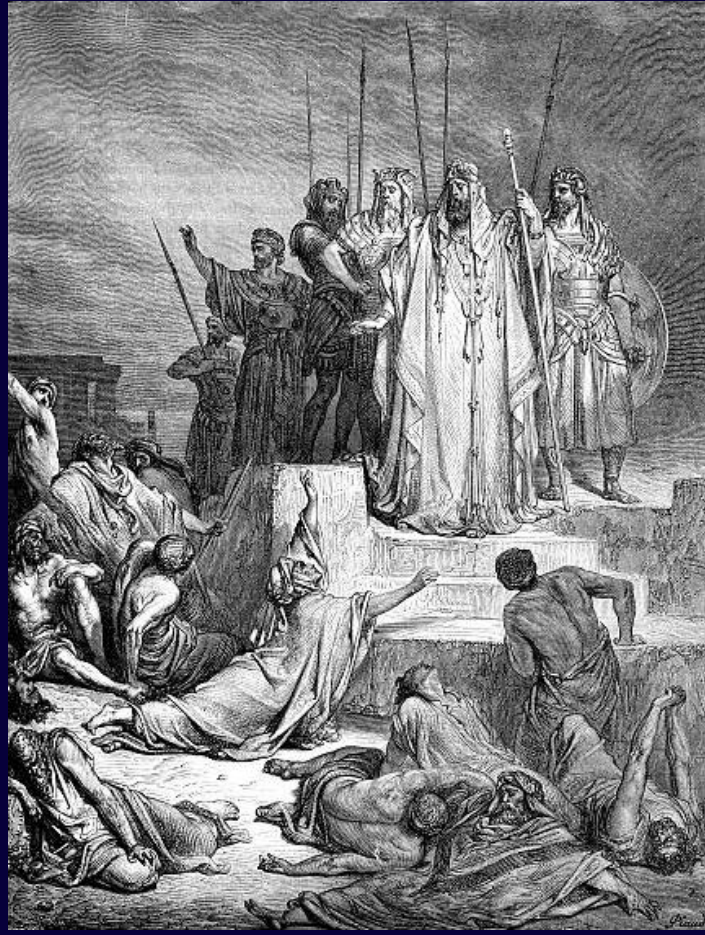
Chapter 1: Ruth Cleaving

- “In the days the judges rules....”
- Famine drives the family to Moab c. 1194 BC:
 - Elimelech (“My God is King”)
 - Naomi (“Pleasant”; “My delight”); [Mara (“Bitter”)]
 - Mahlon (“Sickly”; “Unhealthy”; “to blot out”)
 - Chilion (“Puny”; “pining”; “wasting away”)
- Naomi deters daughters-in-law from following c. 1094 BC:
 - Orpah (“Fawn”; “Gazelle”) [Ultimately returns]
 - Ruth (“Desirable”; “friendship”) [Ultimately remains]

Ruth 1 – Elimelech's Family

Moves to Moab

¹ Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

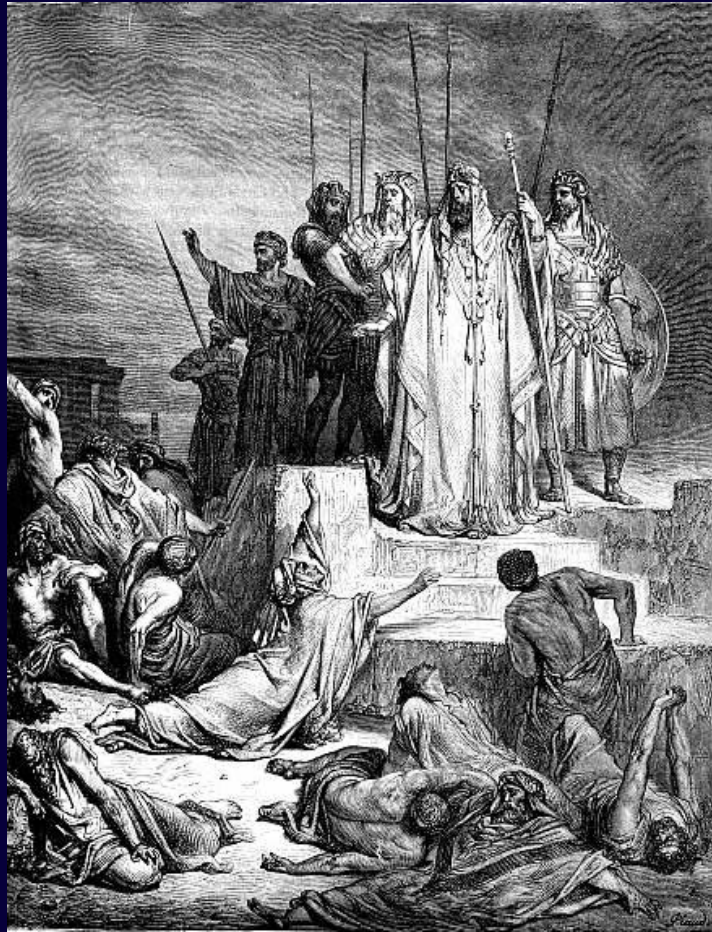


Ruth 1 – Love's Resolve

Moves to Moab

¹ Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

² The name of the man was Elimelech [God is my king], the name of his wife was Naomi [“pleasant”]....





... and the names of his two sons were Mahlon [sickly] and Chilion [wasting, puny], Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there.



³ Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons.

4 Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah [fawn], and the name of the other Ruth [desirable]. And they dwelt there about ten years.



⁵ Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.



⁵ Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.





- ⁶ Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread.
- ⁷ Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

"Naomi and Her Daughters In Law," Minton Parian, 1864

⁸ And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law,

“Go, return each to her mother’s house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

⁹ The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband.” So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.



“Naomi and her daughters,” George Dawe, 1803.

¹⁰ And they said to her,

“Surely we will
return with you
to your people.”

“Naomi and her daughters,”
Marc Chagall, 1960.



¹¹But Naomi said,

“Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? *Are* there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

¹² Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, *if* I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, ¹³ would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands?

No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!”



14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.



"Ruth and Naomi," Philip
Hermogenes Calderon,
1886.

¹⁴ Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵ And she said,
“Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”



“Ruth and Naomi,” Philip
Hermogenes Calderon,
1886.

¹⁶ But Ruth said:

“Entreat me not to leave you,
or to turn back from following
after you;

For wherever you go, I will go;
And wherever you lodge,
I will lodge;

Your people *shall be* my people,
And your God, my God.

¹⁷ Where you die, I will die,
And there will I be buried.
The LORD do so to me, and
more also, if *anything but*
death parts you and me.”



Ruth's Sevenfold Decision

And Ruth said, *"Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee:*

- 1. for whither thou goest, I will go;*
- 2. And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;*
- 3. Thy people shall be my people,*
- 4. And thy God my God:*
- 5. Where thou diest, will I die,*
- 6. And there will I be buried'*
- 7. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought death part me and thee."*

Ruth 1:16-17 (KJV)

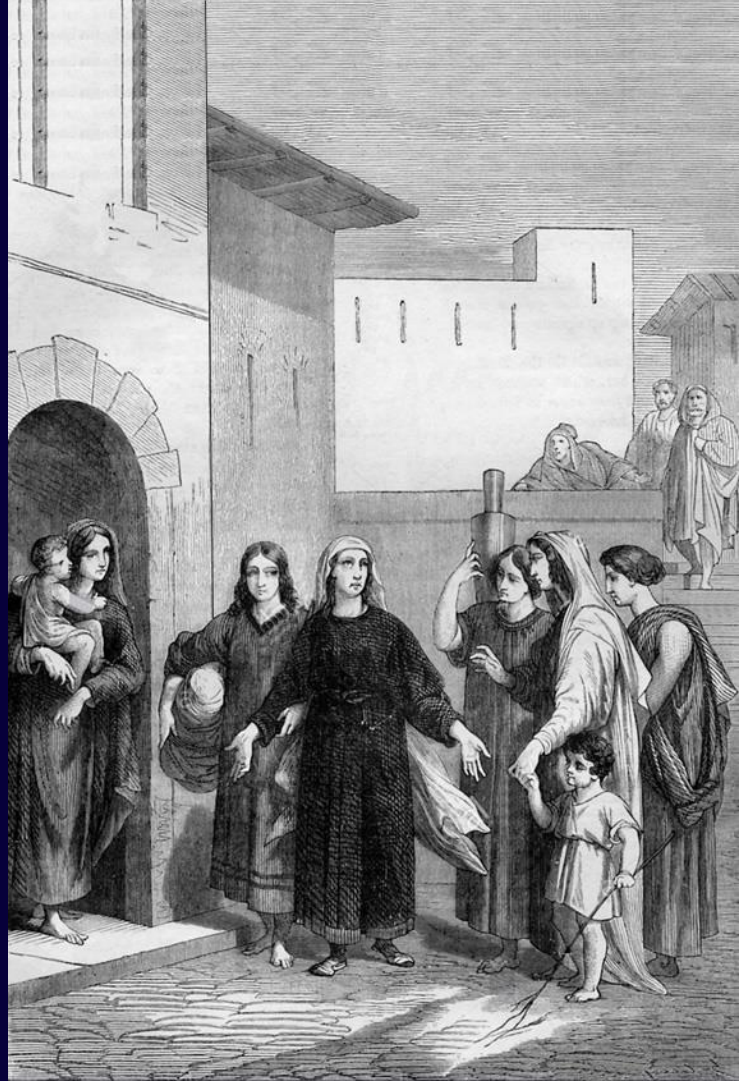


18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.



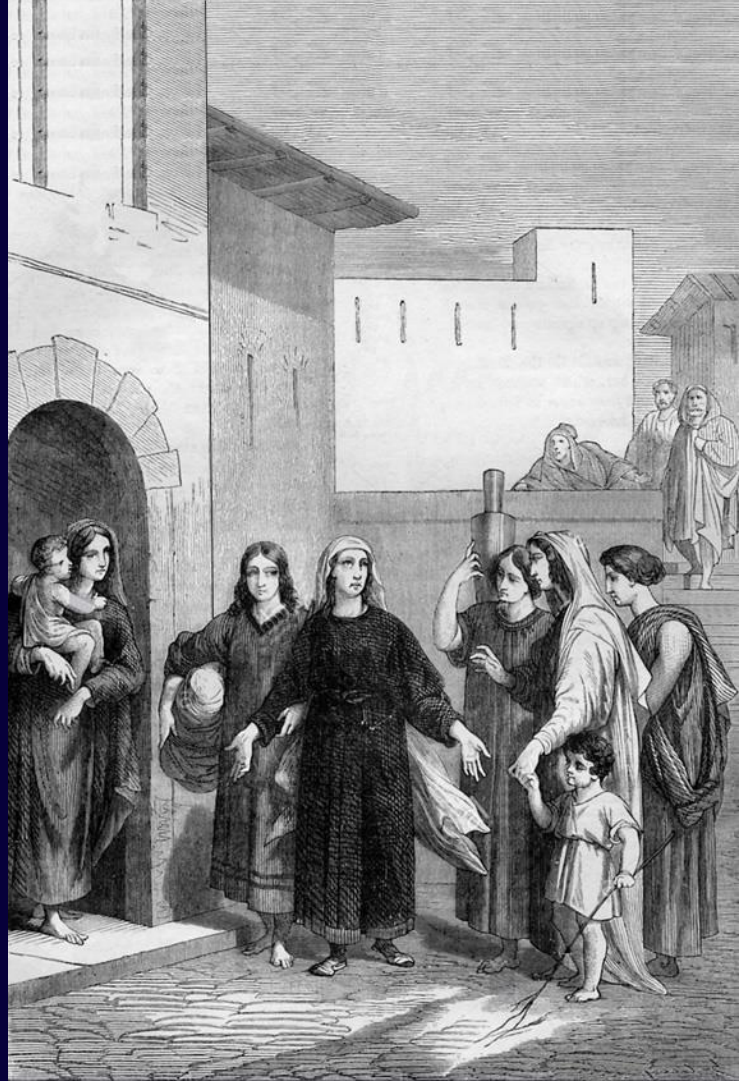
"Ruth and Naomi", Pieter Lastman, 1624

¹⁹ Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, “Is this Naomi?”



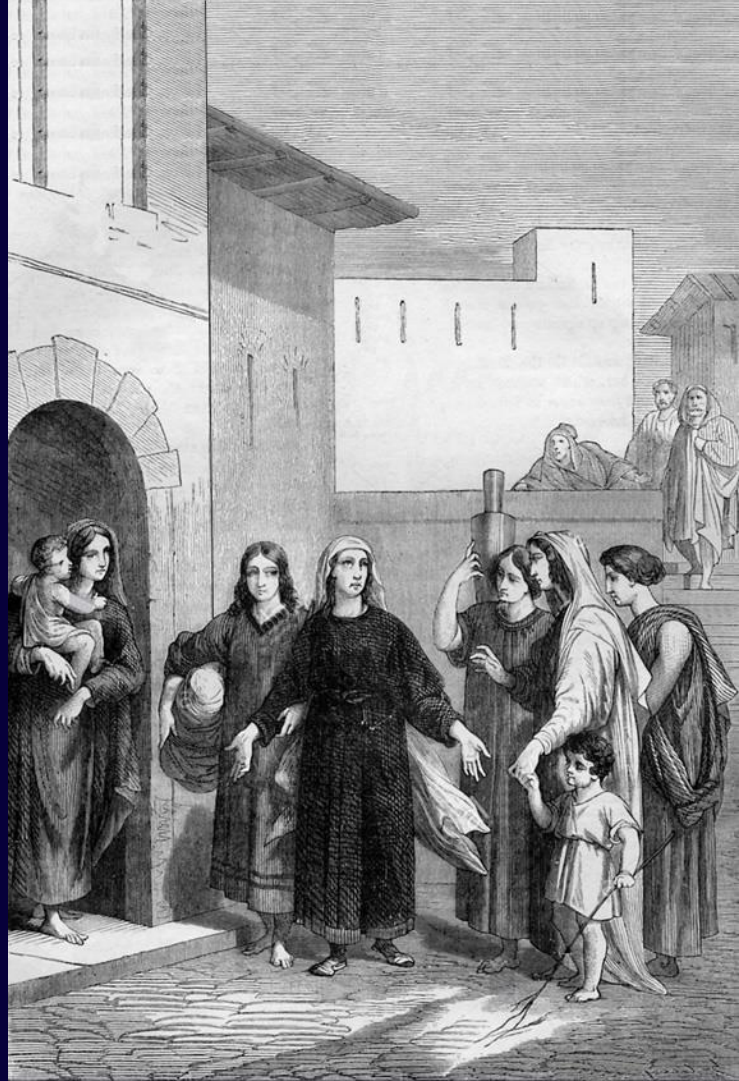
¹⁹ Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, “Is this Naomi?”

²⁰ But she said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara [bitter], for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.



²¹ I went out full, and
the LORD has brought
me home again
empty.

Why do you call me
Naomi, since the LORD
has testified against
me, and the Almighty
has afflicted me?"



²² So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

