

**The Book of Ruth**  
**LESSON 1**  
**Introduction and Lesson 1, Chapter 1:1-5**  
**"Ruth's Relationships"**

**Chapter 1: 1-5**

**"Ruth's Relationships"**

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**The Book of RUTH – 2 Writer's Comments:**

"What an opportunity to show how mankind progresses when completely free - free of God and man, but it didn't work out that way; the greater Israel's freedom, the deeper their bondage became. The more they did as they pleased, the less pleased they were with what they did. The more they became what they wanted to be, the less they wanted to be what they became.

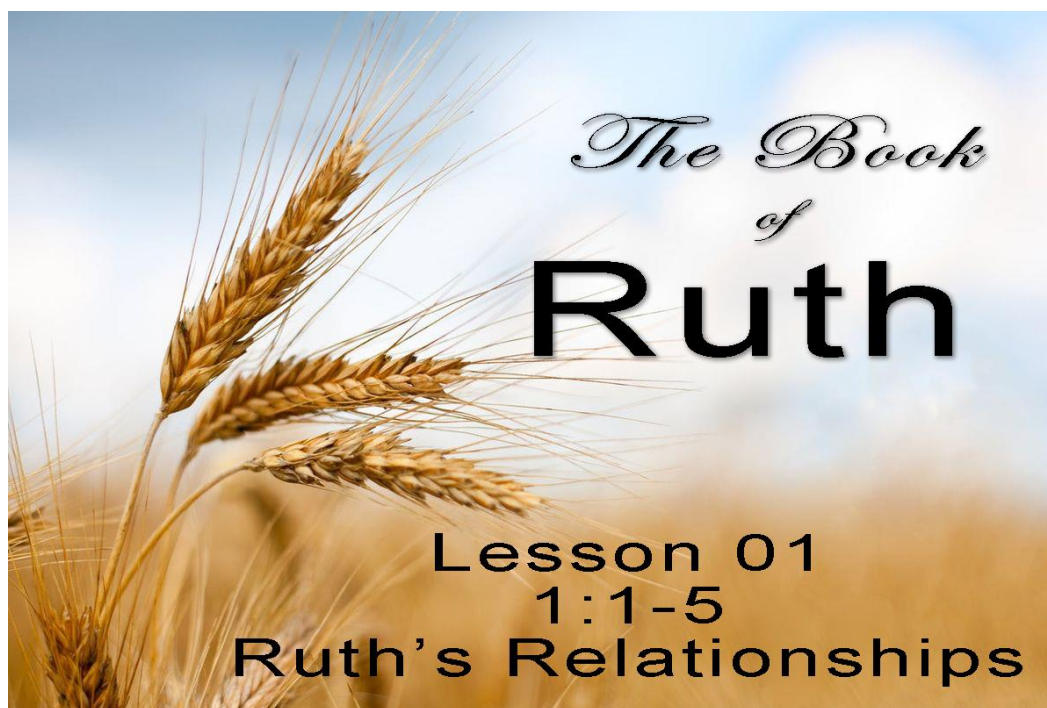
Ruth is the eighth book of the Bible. Eight is the number of new beginnings in the Scriptures.

Ruth is the sunrise after a dark night of sin, immorality, and corruption. Ruth lifts the curtain just enough for us to see the unshaken God, directing the drama of the ages on the stage of earth with actors who are not fully aware of where their parts fit into the script.

Abraham running to Egypt to escape a famine - the Hebrew people enslaved for 430 years." And God uses Joseph to bring them redemption.

"The book of Ruth is of skyscraper significance. It is read by the nation of Israel on the day of Pentecost, and it should prove suggestive to the Christian. Pentecost is the birthday of the Church. Pentecost marks the "Bethlehem of the Holy spirit," for He came on

that day to indwell human flesh. Pentecost is the line of demarcation between law and grace and the book of Ruth tells the story of grace. It is pure grace from beginning to end. She believed Boaz, and he brought her into his heart and home... by Grace she was saved through faith. Boaz, the Kinsman-Redeemer. Boaz furnishes us with a miniature figure of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Redeemer. A full treatment of the theme of redemption necessitates a careful consideration of the book of Ruth."



### **An Introduction to the Book and Chapter 1:1-5**

Welcome to the study of the Book of Ruth. These studies are specifically designed to help you learn both the book – and how to study all the books of the Bible. You will learn about CONTEXT, WORD MEANINGS, HOW TO PUT THE BIBLE TOGETHER AS ONE BOOK, and much more.

“Picking up in the days when the judges ruled, the book of Ruth tells the story of Naomi – The wife of a man named Elimelech, and their two sons – from the town of Bethlehem in Judah. This man and his

family decide that the hand of the Lord is too hard upon them, and they forsake Him and their covenanted country in order to satisfy their needs, and they moved to a town in the land of Moab. Both of the sons then married Moabite women. Mahlon married a woman named Orpha, and Chilion married a woman named Ruth. A farmer named Boaz will, largely, complete the character list of the story.

The four chapters of the book are each designed with intentional symmetry. The first and last chapters reflect how loyalty turned this story of tragedy and death into a story of joy and birth. The inner chapters show how Naomi and Ruth make a plan, followed by an encounter between Ruth and Boaz, followed by Naomi and Ruth rejoicing.

Curiously, God is hardly mentioned in the book of Ruth. At a time when we look for God to be active through a judge or king, God instead worked out his will through the everyday faithfulness of his people. This faithfulness not only benefits Naomi and her family but goes on to bless the world through the family of David, the line from which the Messiah would eventually come."

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### **The Book of Ruth – General Introduction**

**The time:** 1322-1312 B.C. (approx.)

A time of national darkness - The time of the book of Judges, in the midst of Israel's Rebellion when: "Every man did right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6).

**The Place:** Bethlehem, Judah

The place of the birth of Jesus, The Christ

The family "hometown"

Ruth gives us an insight into the domestic life of the Nation during the time of its anarchy under the rule of Gideon or Jephthah. Samuel may have been the author, but no one knows exactly where or when it was written. This book, written on a separate scroll was, and still is, read at Pentecost, the Hebrew harvest festival.

Ruth was the great-grandmother of David. This book establishes the

lineage of David, an ancestor of Christ. It tells of the beginning of the Messianic family, within the Messianic nation, into which over a thousand years later the Messiah was to be born.

Boaz was the son of Rahab, the harlot found in Jericho (Joshua Ch-2). David's great-grandmother was a Moabitess, and his great-grandfather was half Hebrew and half Canaanite.

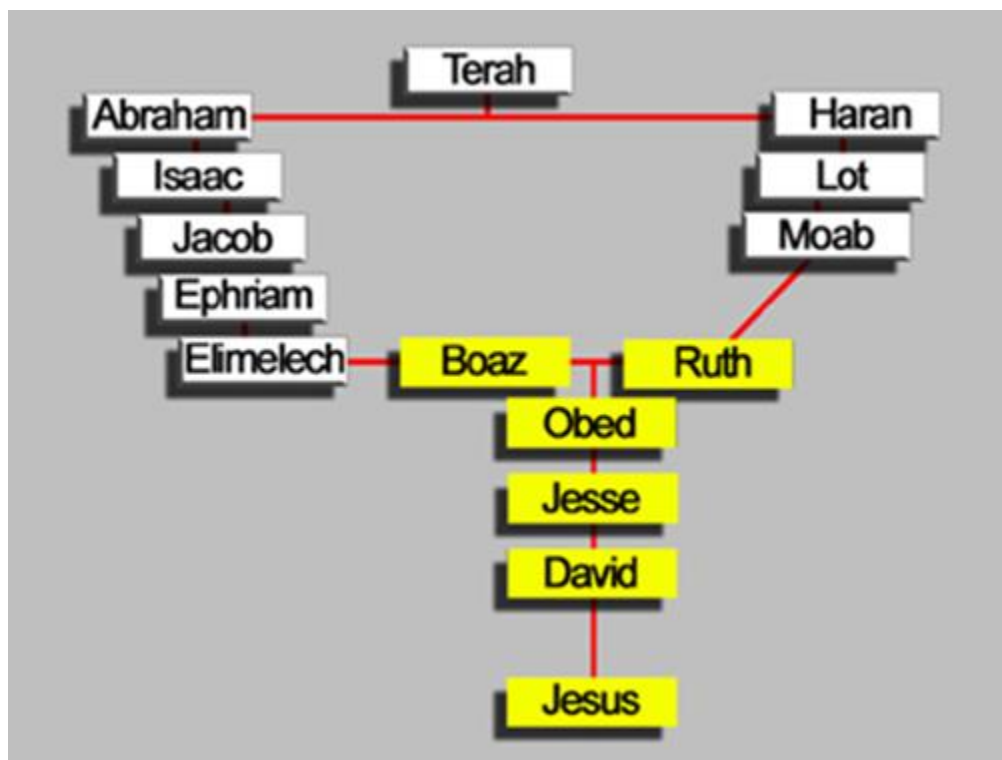
The book of Ruth gives to us God's intimate story of His love for His people.

The book of Ruth has a very vivid central theme - Redemption. The first chapter introduces us to the predicament and the remainder of the book gives us wave after wave of truth concerning God's redemptive heart. Whether you look at the book from the viewpoint of the characters of the story, or its typology of the Nation of Israel, or the extended typology of the individual believer in Jesus Christ and the Body of Christ (the Church), every page abounds with truths and relationships that tell of the wonderful and graceful redemptive nature of our God.

We will study the book of Ruth in stages. Stage-1: We will study the remarkable story of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz. Stage 2: Then move on to study the parallels between the characters of the book and the actions and relationships between Israel and the Lord God of Israel. Stage 3: We'll look for the wonderful truths that can be gleaned concerning God's amazing grace toward the one who repents (one who changes his mind - toward God and away from sin and idols) in the aspect of salvation in Jesus Christ, and also the one who is already a faithful believer but has been disobedient in temptation and sin. The former is the story of coming to Christ because you will have no other, and the latter is the story of the wayward believer who realizes his error and seeks to wholeheartedly agree with God about his sin and return to full fellowship through confession.

Ruth was written sometime between 150 and 180 years after the events in the book as Chapter 4:22 follows the lineage through David, who dies in 1058 BC, at the age of seventy, he was High King of Israel.

Elimelech and Naomi were of the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph, the son of Jacob and Rachel, the son of Sarah and Abraham (brother to Haran, whose son was Lot). They lived in the city of Bethlehem (sometimes referred to as Bethlehem-Judah). It is interesting to note that there are two Bethlehems in the scriptures and that this one is called out by name as Bethlehem "City of Bread," so as to not confuse it with the other Bethlehem in the North of Israel.



## THE GENEALOGIES

**Ruth was the great-grandmother of David.** This book establishes the lineage of David, the ancestor of Christ. It tells of the beginnings of the Messianic family from Abraham to Boaz, within the Messianic nation into which over a thousand years later the Messiah was to be born.

### **Mary's Lineage** (David to Jesus)

**David,** Nathan, Mattatha, Menna, Melea, Eliakim, Jonam, Joseph, Judah, Simeon, Levi, Matthat, Jorim, Eliezer, Joshua, Er, Elmadam,

Cosam, Addi, Melchi, Neri, Shealtiel, Zerubbable, Resa, Johanan, Joda, Josech, Semein, Mattathias, Maath, Naggai, Hesli, Nahum, Amos, Mattathias, Joseph, Jannai, Melchi, Levi, Matthat, Eli, **(Mary, the wife of) Joseph, Jesus** [Luke 3:23-31]).

### **Joseph's Lineage** (David to Jesus)

**David**, Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehosaphat, Joram, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jeconiah (also named Jehoiachin), Shealtiel, Zerubbabel, Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Zadok, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Mathaqn, Jacob, **Joseph, Jesus** [Matthew 1:6-16])

Note that the two versions of the lineage of Jesus differ from Abraham to Jesus. Scholars agree that the two lineages are that of each side of Jesus' family. His mother's family (Luke) is traced to show that Jesus has the human physical seed of Abraham. Even though Jesus is Virgin born He is human flesh through Mary and that human flesh was directly traceable to Abraham and gives Her family both genetic and national authority, and her offspring has the Right to become **KING of Israel**.

Joseph's family lineage (Matthew) is traced to show that Jesus has the national authority for inheritance of The People and The Land – but not KING. In Jeremiah 36:30 God proclaims that no member of Jehoiachin's (Jeconiah) family will ever set on the THRONE of Israel.

The combination of the two genealogies is remarkable in that Jesus has every RIGHT to be Priest, King, and Prophet, able to be The Christ, and fulfill every demand of Scripture, even to the extent of being the descendant of Jeconiah, for while Joseph is his descendant, The **Holy Spirit** IS, and Joseph IS NOT the physical father of Jesus.

There are many interesting things to notice in this book. Ruth was a Moabitess. These people were descendants of Lot (nephew of Abraham). They were Gentiles. God, in establishing the family, which was to produce the world's Savior, chose a beautiful gentile girl, led her to Bethlehem and made her the bride of Boaz. We shall keep our eyes open during this study for evidence of "The Bride of

Christ.” This is God's grace. He adopts the Gentiles into Christ's family. Of course, we know that although Ruth was born an unbeliever, through her first husband, or Naomi (her mother-in-law), she learned of and worshiped the one true God.

Boaz was the son of Rahab, the harlot found in Jericho whose husband is Salmon who probably was one of the two spies sent into Jericho who rescued Rahab before “The walls came tumbling down.”

The book of Ruth gives us God's intimate story of His love for His people then as now, in the Old Testament through the Nation of Israel, and in the New Testament through the Children of His Son Jesus.

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## **Two Quick Overviews of Ruth’s Story**

### **The Physical Story:** (Keil and Delitzsch<sup>1</sup>)

The book of Ruth introduces us to the family life of the ancestors of king David, and informs us, in a simple and attractive form of historical narrative, and one in harmony with the tender and affectionate contents, how Ruth the Moabitess, a daughter-in-law of the Bethlehemite Elimelech, of the family of Judah, who had emigrated with his wife and his two sons into the land of Moab on account of a famine, left father and mother, fatherland and kindred, after the death of her husband, and out of childlike affection to her Israelitish mother-in-law Naomi, whose husband had also died in the land of Moab, and went with her to Judah, to take refuge under the wings of the God of Israel (chap. 1); and how, when there, as she was going in her poverty to glean some ears of corn in the field of a wealthy man, she came apparently by accident to the field of Boaz, a near relation of Elimelech, and became acquainted with this honorable and benevolent man (chap. 2); how she then sought marriage with him by the wish of her mother-in-law (chap. 3), and was taken by him as a wife, according to the custom of Levirate marriage, in all the ordinary legal forms, and bare a son in this marriage, named Obed. This Obed was the grandfather of David (chap. 4), with whose genealogy the book closes.

**The Spiritual Story** (C. I. Scofield)<sup>2</sup>**Author:** Unknown**Theme:** Kinsman-Redeemer**Date of writing:** c. 10th Cent. B.C.

In Ruth the events set forth are contemporary with the first half of Judges. In contrast with that period of strife and bloodshed is this lovely idyllic story, renowned in world literature as a masterpiece of narration. The book, however, is more than a beautiful picture of pastoral life; for behind the story of Ruth's fidelity there are clear implications of our Lord's redeeming work. Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, points to Christ; Ruth portrays those who enter into a new life through trust in Him. It is significant that both Boaz and Ruth are mentioned in the Messianic genealogy (Mt. 1:5)

**The book is divided according to chapters, as follows:**

- I. Ruth's Relationships, Resolve, Return, & Reception
  - II. Ruth's Guidance, Gleaners, Grace, & Gladness
  - III. Ruth's Rest
  - IV. Ruth's Reward
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## The Characters



**Elimelech** was the husband of Naomi, they lived in Bethlehem, Judah.

**Naomi** is Elimelech's devoted wife.

**Mahlon** is Elimelech and Naomi's First-Born Son.

**Ruth** is the Moabite wife of Mahlon, married to him in Moab.

**Chilion** is Elimelech and Naomi's second son.

**Orpah** is the Moabite wife of Chilion, married to him in Moab.

**Boaz** is a man from Bethlehem, Judah, that will eventually become the husband of Ruth by Levirate marriage (Kinsman Redeemer).

**Obed** is the First-Born Son of Ruth and Boaz.

So, now you have seen the individual trees in the forest, let us now turn our attention to a bigger frame of reference. This story has to do with the provision of God to work through human circumstances to bring about His will. Through this story God is telling us of the great depth of His wondrous grace.

The stage is set. The time is described as "In the days when the judges governed." These were not days that included the deep

fellowship of God and His people the Israelites. These were days when Israel had spiritually left the God of Israel. Joshua has died and with him died the days of a leader fully dedicated to doing the will of God. God gave Israel the “promised land” under the leadership of Joshua. God renewed His covenant under Joshua. It was Joshua who said, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” It was Joshua who on his deathbed called upon Israel to reaffirm her vows before the Lord and her willingness to serve Him and Him alone.

And it was Joshua who proclaimed of Israel, at the end of his life, **“Ye cannot serve the Lord.”** He knew and understood that such a wicked and stiff-necked people would not and could not walk with God.

Then came the Canaanites, the Moabites, the Midianites, and the Philistines. These were nations that God had commanded Israel to remove from His land. In their battles and wars... they never accomplished God’s command. 13 Judges (Rulers raised by God from among the people) needed to come to Israel to rescue the Nation during these years.

It is before this backdrop that the story of Ruth is told. The best scholarship says that it takes place during the time of the Judge Gideon, when Israel is under the attack from the Midianites.

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### **The story told in Ruth is three-fold.**

**First** there is the story of the characters of the book and the events of their lives.

**Second** there is a bigger story that is symbolized by these characters of how God works and moves among His People, the Nation of Israel.

**Lastly**, there is the foreshadowing of God’s precious relationship to His Church, The Body of Christ. God does not change; His grace is always the same and it is based on the individual’s willingness to believe and trust in Him without coercion on His part.

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## **THE VISUALIZED TEXT (NASB)**

### **1:1-5 – Ruth's Relationships**

#### **1:1-2 – Sojourn to Moab**

##### **1:1a – Judges Ruled**

**Now**

*it came about*

*in the days when the judges governed (or, judged),  
that there was a famine in the land.*

##### **1:1b**

**And**

*a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah  
went to sojourn in the land of Moab  
with his (Lit., he, and ...) wife and his two sons.*

##### **1:2**

**And**

*the name of the man  
was Elimelech (Name: "my God is King"),  
and  
the name of his wife  
Naomi (Name: "pleasant, lovely");  
and  
the names of his two sons  
were Mahlon (Name: "puny") and Chilion (Name:  
"pining"),  
Ephrathites (a designation for inhabitants of Bethlehem)  
of Bethlehem in Judah.*

**Now**

*They entered the land of Moab and  
(They) remained there.*

### **Brief Commentary on Ruth 1:1-2, Sojourn to Moab**

The previous Old Testament Book, the book of Judges, involves God chastising Israel because of unbelief. Each judge that God raised up to do this was like a dictator. There were 13 judges spread over 7 periods of time. Each period of time was marked by the cycle of 1.

Failure, 2. Discipline, 3. Crying out to God, 4. A short-lived time of faith restored. The length of these periods lasted from the Exodus to King Saul (about 300 years).

In verses 1-2 we learn that God is in the middle of chastising Israel through a great famine brought that is probably the result of years of war with the Midianites who intentionally killed the productive land with the spreading of salt. Elimelech, Naomi, their sons, and their daughters become characters that play the part of the Nation of Israel in this saga. Elimelech, Naomi, and their sons have gone astray; probably somewhat involved in the idolatry that was sweeping Israel. When God brings His chastising hand against them – they flee. Yes, they flee to a land that has food to spare, but they also are fleeing to a land, ruled by their cousins, in Moab; The Moabites, and it is a hotbed of pagan idol worship. Moab as a nation came about as the result of Lot's two daughters who knew that Lot wasn't going to have any more children – specifically a male to carry on the family line. So they got him drunk, camouflaged themselves, and lay with him to get pregnant – the result was a son named Moab.

The Hebrew words used to describe Elimelech and Naomi's intentions indicate that they intended to remain in Moab. It's also true that the Midianites, Israel's constant enemies, lived in Moab. Picture here some children of Israel making their decisions based on food, water, and political advantage, moving into the land of their enemies... anything but faithfulness to her God.

Naomi's husband, Elimelech, was born and raised in Bethlehem, Judah. (There is also a Bethlehem in northern Israel).

Here's Bethlehem, Judah.



Here's the country of MOAB



The nation of Moab came about as Abraham's nephew Lot's son Moab moved his family across the Jordan and South to the land just East of Judah sometime in the previous twelve hundred years. Elimelech, in the midst of a terrible famine chooses to take his wife and two sons to Moab. Bible teacher Matthew Henry writes: "Elimelech's care to provide for his family was not to be blamed; but his removal into the country of Moab could not be justified. And the removal ended in the wasting of his family. It is folly to think of escaping that cross, which, being laid in our way, we ought to take up. Changing our location is seldom mending our problem. Those who bring young people into bad acquaintance and take them out of the way of public ordinances, thought they may think them well-principled, and armed against temptation, know not what the end will be."

At the end of verse 2, we learn that this family were Ephrathites – they were of the tribe of Ephraim who settled in the Land of Judah near Mount Ephraim. Joshua was buried there. It is also the birthplace of Jesus. Bethlehem, meaning "the house of bread" is one of the most famous places of Bible History. King David was the son of Jesse – born in Bethlehem of Judea. Micah, the prophet, prophesized that the Messiah would be born there. Benjamin, one of Jacob's children was born there. We'll find later in Ruth that a son will be born to her, there in Bethlehem, named Obed will be the grandfather of King David.

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### **1:3-5 – Sorrow In Moab**

**1:3**

***Then***

***Elimelech,***

***Naomi's husband,***

***died;***

***and***

***she was left with her two sons.***

### **Brief Commentary on Ruth 1:3, Sorrow In Moab**

Right away we need to notice that this verse starts with the word "Then." When used as a transitional word it means a major change is taking place. Living in Moab for some time, everything is going along well. Then... Elimelech dies. God moves against them for their stiff necks and their sin – Just as He does for the Nation of Israel. Consider this: God's People Dying of Famine ... In The Promised Land. Move out of God's promised land and death follows them.

With Elimelech's death all inheritance, according to Hebrew law, moves to the sons – as women cannot inherit. The older son, Mahlon, receives a double portion and the younger Chilion a single. And so goes the Nation as God moves to purify His people. Many lives are lost when God moves against sin and the sinner – without belief... eternal Godly inheritance is lost forever. His inheritance remains intact to those who believe and are obedient in their faith.

Now, Naomi is left with two adult sons.

### **1:4a – Sisters-in-Law**

**And**

***they took for themselves Moabite women as wives  
the name of the one was Orpah and  
the name of the other Ruth.***

### **Brief Commentary on Ruth 1:4a, Sisters-In-Law**

While there, they continue their waywardness from God by allowing their sons Mahlon and Chilion to take Moabite women as their wives. The Targum says, "they transgressed the decree of the word of the Lord and took to them strange women."

The Moabites were not among the list of nations forbidden for marriage to an Israelite, but they were on the list of those who would not be considered to become members of the Nation of Israel, even if proselytized, until after the tenth generation (Deut. 23:3-6). Other existing nations were also "no marry" countries – The Hittites, the Girgashites, The Amorites, the Canaanites, the

Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites (Deur. 7:1-3).

It's also interesting that the text says that they took Moabite women for themselves," unbelieving idol worshippers. This is a probable reference to that famous verse "and everyone did what was right in their own eyes." "They did not take Hebrew women "To please the Lord." Poor Naomi, the return to Israel would be virtually impossible as her sons would be shunned because of their marriages to pagan women, and Naomi is now their ward.

It should be recognized that God is exercising His will through these events. While the characters may make moves against His will, God is fully in control. The family line will be established and lead to the Messiah.

### **1:4b Their Stay in Moab**

**And**

***they lived there about ten years.***

### **Brief Commentary on Ruth 1:4b, Their Stay in Moab**

As is often the case the plans of mice and men often go astray. Elimelech's family settles into the land of Moab and no longer become sojourners. The sons have forsaken Judah and their God. While they are still members of the tribe of Judah, they have left the fellowship of their God and are now living amongst the pagans and idolaters of the land of Moab. The famine in Judah, brought about as a chastisement from God for these very acts of the Nation goes on and on – for 10 years.

### **1:5 – Sustained Sorrow in Moab**

**Then**

***both*** (Lit., both of them) ***Mahlon and Chilion also died;***

***and***

***the woman was bereft of***

***her two children and***

***her husband.***

### **Brief Commentary on Ruth 1:5, Sustained Sorrow in Moab**

We begin this verse with the word "then" again. The context indicates a word of "results." The result of their waywardness (as also the waywardness of the nation of Judah) is the death of many of the rebellious.

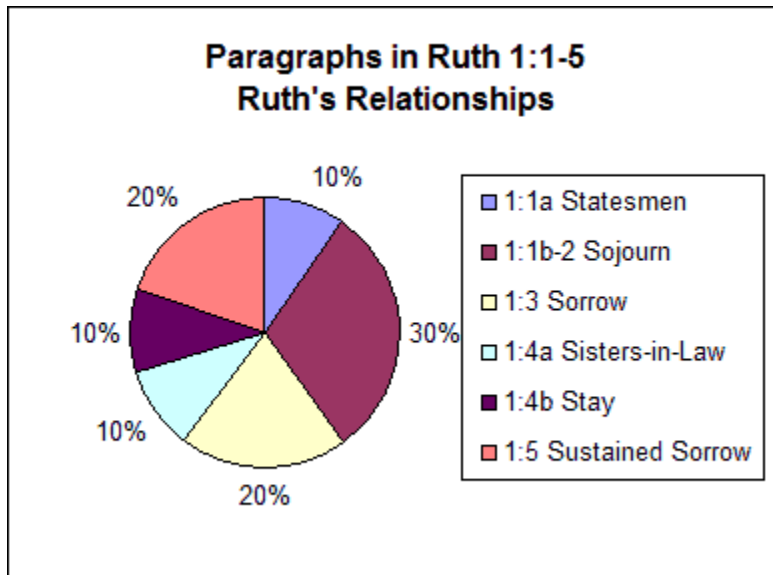
Not only is Naomi's husband dead but also the husbands of her daughters-in-law. The word "bereft" indicates that she was now desperately alone with only a pair of Moabite daughters-in-law. Her sons died childless.

So, Naomi loses her husband and then her two sons. She is left alone, even the inheritance that would have been hers from Elimelech was lost to her sons. Now, as inheritance was only allowed through the men... all was lost, if she returned to Israel, whatever she had left would be directed to the oldest living male family member. Thus, everything she had was to be forfeited if she returned to her people in Israel. And so, we are introduced to these two young women, Orpah and Ruth. All three were now effectively indigent, living in a foreign land that hated the Jew.

And so goes the Nation as God moves to purify His people. Without belief... eternal Godly inheritance is lost forever. His inheritance remains intact to those who believe and are obedient in their faith.

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## Verse Percentage Chart for Ruth 1:1-5



1:1a Statesman 10%  
 1:1b-2 Sojourn 30%  
 1:3 Sorrow 20%  
 1:4a Sisters-in-law 10%  
 1:4b Stay 10%  
 1:5 Sustained Sorrow 20%

How many words it takes influences how the text is stressed, for instance here, the Sorrow is stressed more in total (1:1b-2 & 1:5) than the Sojourn, all else much less. So, as you read the text you should be moved by the Sorrow more than the journey from Israel to Moab.

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1(Delitzsch, F., Keil, C. F., Commentary on the Old Testament, in Ten Volumes, Volume II, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I & II Samuel, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978 reprint, p. 465).

2(Scotfield, C. I., The New Scotfield Reference Bible, KJV, Oxford University Press, NY, 1967 Edition, p. 317)

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Jeremiah 18:15

"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path."

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