

# ~ Selah ~

## Pause & Listen



THE BOOK OF RUTH  
JUNE 2015

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How to Use the Study



# THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN STUDYING THE WORD:

EXCEPTS FROM “WOMEN OF THE WORD” BY JEN WILKIN



- THE BIBLE IS A BOOK ABOUT GOD.
- THE BIBLE IS A BOOK THAT BOLDLY AND CLEARLY REVEALS WHO GOD IS ON EVERY PAGE.
- SOUND BIBLE STUDY TRANSFORMS THE HEART BY TRAINING THE MIND AND IT PLACES GOD AT THE CENTER OF THE STORY.
- FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION THE BIBLE IS TELLING US ABOUT THE REIGN AND RULE OF GOD.

# STUDY WITH PERSPECTIVE:



- FIVE QUESTIONS TO ASK:
  - 1. WHO WROTE IT?
  - 2. WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN?
  - 3. TO WHOM WAS IT WRITTEN?
  - 4. IN WHAT STYLE WAS IT WRITTEN?
  - 5. WHY WAS IT WRITTEN?
- HOW DO THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS AID OUR STUDY?

# WHO WROTE IT?



KNOWING WHO WROTE SOMETHING HELPS US UNDERSTAND WHY A TEXT IS WRITTEN ONE WAY AND NOT ANOTHER, AND IT HELPS US JUDGE THE CREDIBILITY OF WHAT WAS WRITTEN.

WITH BIBLICAL AUTHORS, CREDIBILITY IS NOT AT STAKE – WE COME TO THE TEXT WITH THE ASSUMPTION THAT GOD INSPIRED A PARTICULAR AUTHOR TO WRITE WITH FULL AUTHORITY.

HOW DOES GOD'S CHOICE OF A PARTICULAR PERSON TO WRITE A PARTICULAR BOOK INFLUENCE THE WAY WE INTERPRET THAT BOOK?

EX: 1&2 PETER; JAMES

# WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN?



WE USE THE DATING OF A BOOK TO HELP US UNDERSTAND HOW THE BOOK WOULD HAVE BEEN READ BY ITS ORIGINAL AUDIENCE.

HELPS US SEE HOW THE BOOK SPEAKS UNIQUELY TO THE ORIGINAL AUDIENCE'S MOMENT IN HISTORY.

HELPS TO DETERMINE WHAT OTHER BOOKS OF THE BIBLE ARE ITS CONTEMPORARIES.

HELPS US UNDERSTAND WHERE IT FITS INTO THE BIGGER STORY OF CREATION/FALL/REDEMPTION/RESTORATION.

HELPS US CONSIDER THE CULTURAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED ITS WRITING, SUCH AS SOCIAL STRUCTURE, GENDER ROLES, LAW CODES, GEOGRAPHY AND POLITICAL FORCES, ETC.

# TO WHOM WAS IT WRITTEN?



EVERY BOOK OF THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN TO A SPECIFIC AUDIENCE WHO LIVED IN THE PAST.

THOUGH THEIR TIMES AND CULTURES WERE VERY DIFFERENT FROM OURS, THE MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE TRANSCENDS ITS ORIGINAL AUDIENCE, BUT IT CANNOT BE SEVERED FROM ITS ORIGINAL AUDIENCE.

THE BIBLE IS A BOOK ABOUT GOD, WRITTEN TO PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THE PAST AND ALSO WRITTEN TO US. BUT WE MUST REMEMBER THAT A TEXT CANNOT MEAN WHAT IT NEVER COULD HAVE MEANT TO ITS AUTHOR OR HIS OR HER READERS.

MISAPPLICATION OF SCRIPTURE OCCURS BECAUSE MODERN-DAY CHRISTIANS OVERLOOK THE ORIGINAL AUDIENCE OF THE TEXT. BEFORE WE CAN ASK, **“WHAT DOES THIS TEXT MEAN TO ME?”** WE MUST ASK, **“WHAT DID THIS TEXT SAY TO ITS ORIGINAL AUDIENCE?”**

# IN WHAT STYLE WAS IT WRITTEN?



**HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:** USES LANGUAGE TO GIVE A FACTUAL RETELLING OF EVENTS. INTENDS TO BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE.

**PARABLES/STORYTELLING:** USES CAREFULLY CRAFTED CHARACTERS AND SETTINGS TO TEACH A LESSON OR ILLUSTRATE A POINT.

**LAW CODES:** RECORDED AS GUIDELINES FOR GOVERNING AUTHORITIES, NOT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

**POETRY:** USES LANGUAGE SYMBOLICALLY AND METAPHORICALLY TO PAINT WORD PICTURES.

**WISDOM LITERATURE:** USES LANGUAGE TO COMMUNICATE PRINCIPLES THAT GENERALLY TRUE, THOUGH NOT UNIVERSALLY TRUE.

**PROPHECY:** USES LANGUAGE IN SYMBOLIC WAYS.



# WHY WAS IT WRITTEN?



EVERY AUTHOR WRITES WITH A SPECIFIC PURPOSE IN MIND. (TO RECORD HISTORY, INSTRUCT, ADMONISH, INSPIRE, REBUKE, WARN, ENCOURAGE....ETC).

CONSIDER ITS MAJOR THEMES AND REPEATED IDEAS IN LIGHT OF ITS ORIGINAL AUDIENCE AND ITS HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT.

KNOWING THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH A TEXT WAS WRITTEN GUARDS US FROM READING IT SOLELY FOR OUR OWN PURPOSES.



## THE BOOK OF RUTH

WHO WROTE IT?

- AUTHOR UNKNOWN
- SINCE THE BOOK ENDS WITH DAVID, THE AUTHOR CANNOT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BEFORE HIS TIME.
- SAMUEL, WHO ANNOINTED DAVID AS KING, MAY WELL HAVE PROVIDED THE BOOK TO SHOW THE NEW MONARCH'S PEDIGREE, BUT THIS IS SPECULATIVE.



## **THE BOOK OF RUTH**

WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN?

- LIKELY WRITTEN DURING OR SOON AFTER THE REIGN OF DAVID (C. 1011-970 B.C.)
- WRITTEN IN THE TIME OF DAVID BUT TOOK PLACE DURING THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES; EVENTS OCCURRED BETWEEN THE DEATH OF JOSHUA AND THE ANNOINTING OF SAUL AS KING



# **THE BOOK OF RUTH**

**TO WHOM WAS  
IT WRITTEN?**

- **TO THE NATION OF ISRAEL**



## **THE BOOK OF RUTH**

**IN WHAT STYLE  
WAS IT  
WRITTEN?**

- **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE; TELLS THE ACUTAL STORY OF ACUTAL PEOPLE THAT LIVED IN HISTORY.**



# **THE BOOK OF RUTH**

**WHY WAS IT WRITTEN?**

- TO GIVE THE NATION OF OF ISRAEL A HISTORIC ACCOUNT OF THE LINEAGE OF DAVID.
- RECORDED CULTURAL CUSTOMS UNIQUE TO THE TIME AND REGION.
- PROVIDED A HISTORY OF EVENTS THAT OCCURRED (FAMINE, ETC).
- RECORDED THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.



## THE BOOK OF RUTH

ABOUT THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES: Why?

Explains the spiritual climate of the time

Shows what was God revealing about Himself through the story of Ruth set in this particular time in history

- FROM JOSHUA'S DEATH TO SAUL, BOOK SPANS ABOUT 325 YEARS FROM OTHNIEL TO SAMSON.
- ONE OF THE DARKEST, MOST WICKED, IDOLATROUS & REBELLIOUS PERIODS OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY; (JUDGES 17:6).
- 12 JUDGES APPOINTED FROM 9 TRIBES OF ISRAEL ON OCCASION TO AVENGE ISRAEL OF THEIR ENEMIES AND TO PURGE ISRAEL OF THEIR IDOLATRIES
- GOD WAS ISRAEL'S KING; THE JUDGES DID NOT RULE IN THAT MANNER; WERE MORE MILITARY LEADERS THAN JURISTS



## THE BOOK OF RUTH

### ABOUT MOAB:

Why? Because this is where Elimelech, a Jew, took his family.

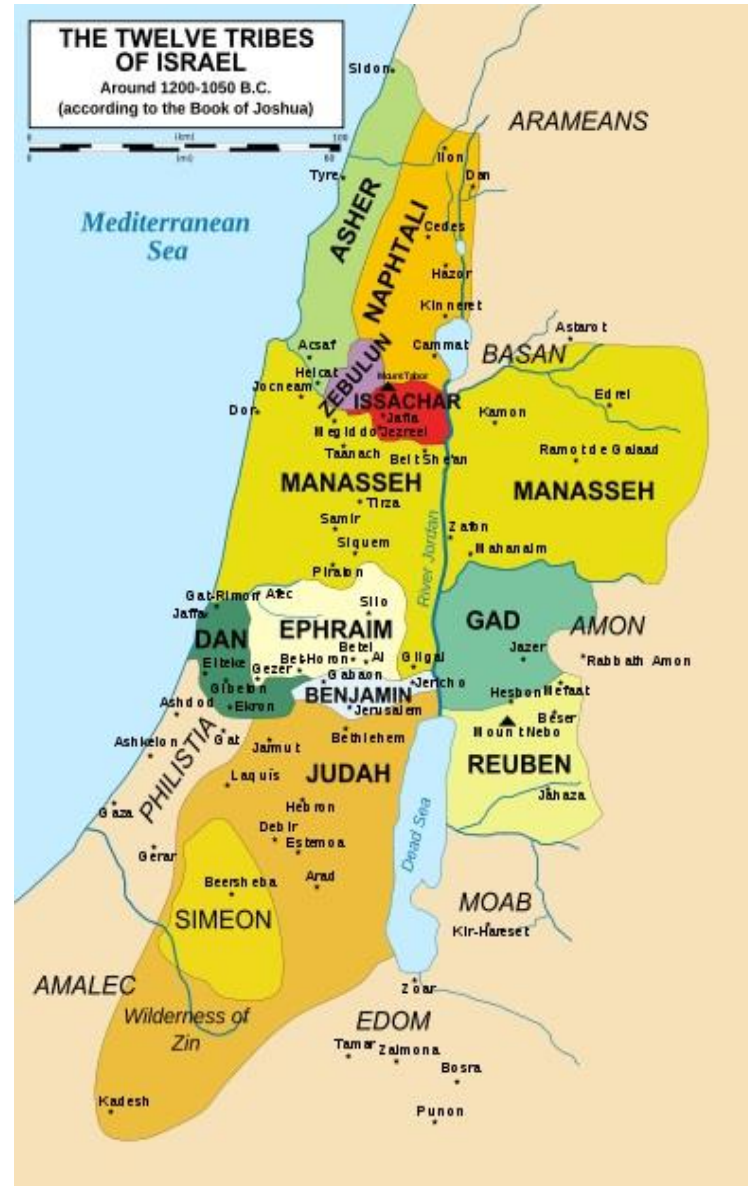
Because Ruth was a Moabite

- Moab was the son of Lot by incestuous union with his eldest daughter (Gn 19:36-38)
- Israel had a long history of conflict with Moab. (Num 22:1-6; Judges 3:12-30)
- Moab worshipped the god Chemosh; worshippers engaged in child sacrifice as burnt offering (1Kings 11; 2Kings:3)
- Moab was cursed by God for their rejection of the one true God and for all their other gross idolatries (Isaiah 15 & 16)
- No Moabite was to enter the assembly of the Lord; that is to say they would not be allowed to enter the assembly of Israel, come inside the covenant (Deut 23)
- The story of Ruth occurs during the time when the curse was in force on Moab



# THE BOOK OF RUTH

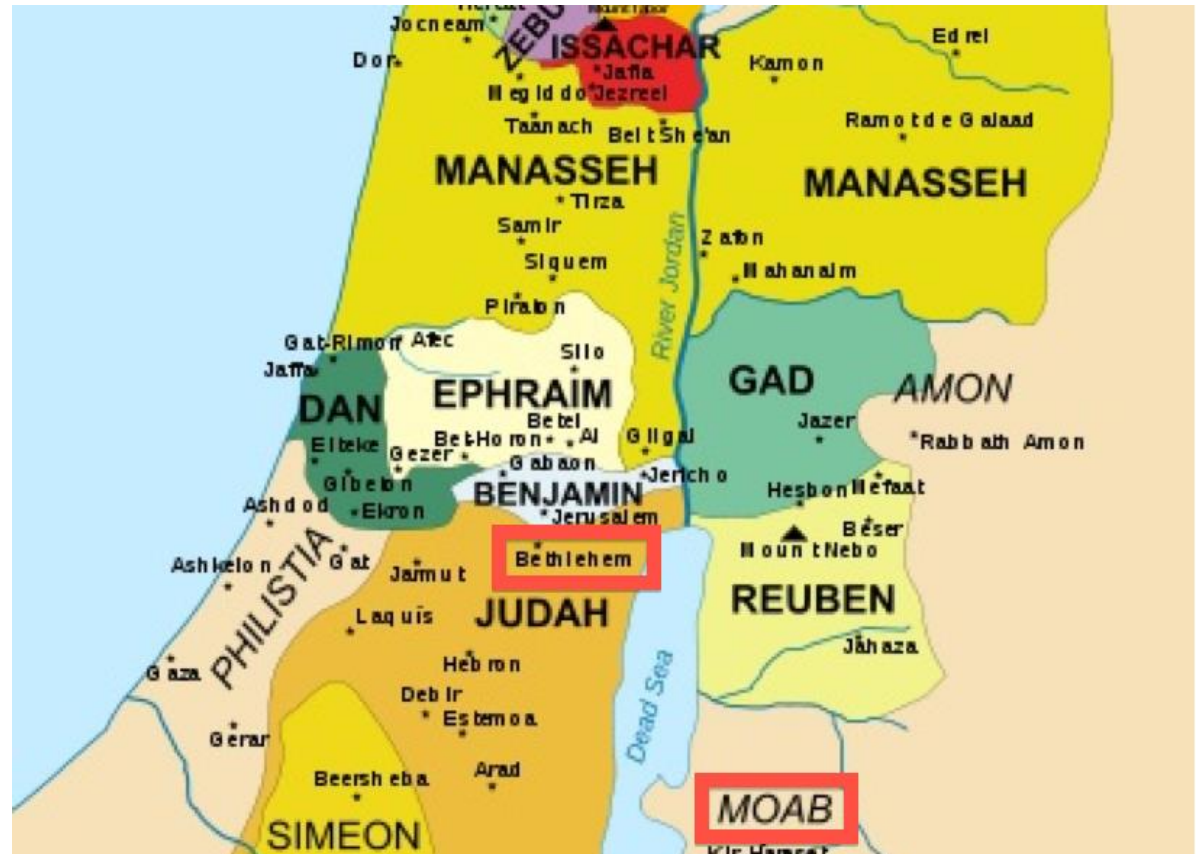
## MAP OF MOAB



# THE BOOK OF RUTH

MAP OF MOAB:

Bethlehem was about 50 miles from Moab



# THE BOOK OF RUTH

## MAP OF MOAB:

Bethlehem was about 50 miles from Moab





## THE BOOK OF RUTH

### QUESTIONS TO ASK:

Based on the history and setting of the story

- Why would Elimelech take his family to a land and people cursed by God?
- Where else in scripture do we see famine and how did it come about?
- How does knowing that Ruth was a Moabite woman affect how we see God in this story?
- What do you think the spiritual climate may have been like in Bethlehem based on what we know of the nation as a whole?
- Would knowing that explain some of Elimelech's decision to go to Moab? Why or why not?
- What do the names of all the people mean?
- What's the difference between Orpah and Ruth?
- Where is God mentioned?



## THE BOOK OF RUTH

BE ON THE  
LOOKOUT FOR:

GOD revealing His  
character

- The mention of Kinsman Redeemer: what does that mean? What can we see about God?
- How was God kind?
- How was God compassionate?
- How was God faithful?
- How was God providential (sovereign AND good)
- How was God loving?
- How was God just?

# Suggested Sources I Used:



- Women of the Word by Jen Wilkin
- The Book of Ruth, study by Jen Wilkin ([www.fmwbs.wordpress.com](http://www.fmwbs.wordpress.com))
- Matthew Henry's Whole Bible Commentary by Dr. Wilbur M. Smith
- Believer's Bible Commentary by William MacDonald
- MacArthur Study Bible by John MacArthur