

There Was a Famine in the Land: Ruth 1:1–5 (Running through Ruth: Message 1)

Grace Chapel

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INTRODUCTION

WHERE IS RUTH IN THE FLOW OF THE 11 CHRONOLOGICAL BOOKS OF THE OT?

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|--------|--|------------------|---|
| 1a. | Genesis 1–11: Creation, the Fall, the Flood, Gentile Nations | —2166 BC | * |
| 1b. | Genesis 12–50: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph | 2166–ca. 1806 BC | |
| 2–3. | Exodus–Numbers: Moses: Exodus, Wilderness wandering | 1526–1406 BC | |
| 4. | Joshua: Joshua: Crossing the Jordan, taking the land | 1406–1399 BC | |
| 5. | Judges: Everyone did right in own eyes under many judges | 1399–1104 BC | * |
| 6–7. | 1–2 Samuel: Samuel, Saul, David | 1104–971 BC | |
| 8–9. | 1–2 Kings: Solomon, Split of kingdom, decline, fall | 971–560 BC | * |
| 10–11. | Ezra–Nehemiah: Ezra–Nehemiah | 538–430 BC | |

Each date = a specific event that occurs reasonably close to the start or finish of a book.

* Asterisked books compress time and consider many main characters briefly.

Non-asterisked books contain fewer main characters, but give more details about them.

Ruth occurs within the time frame of the book of Judges (cf. Ruth 1:1)

The main events seem to occur while Gideon is judge (1230–1190 BC)

The time of the judges is summarized by Judges 17:6

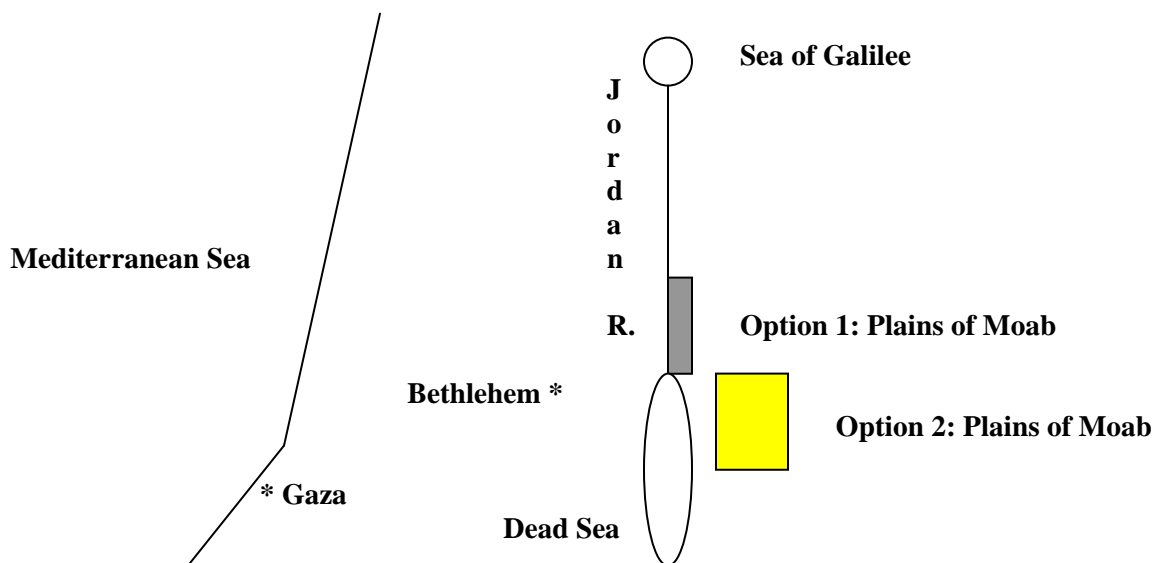
When was Ruth written?

Who was the author?

Why was it written?

NEW EXPOSITION

(1:1–2) During the time of the judges an Ephrathite family of Bethlehem (Elimelech, Naomi, Mahlon, and Chilion) went to the plains of Moab to escape a food shortage



Two options exist for *Plains of Moab*

Option 1: The east side of the southern end of the Jordan River

Option 2: The western Moab Plateau north of Arnon R. (east of Dead Sea)

The word translated *famine* (*ra'ab*) can mean famine, but it can also mean *hunger*. For example,

Therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you. (Deuteronomy 28:48)

The translation *famine* gives the connotation of crop failure or drought. If Bethlehem suffered a drought, the Jordan Valley and the Moab Plateau would also experience a drought.

The solution: translating (*ra'ab*) as *hunger*:

The historical background: Judges 6

Applying the historical background to identifying the *plains of Moab*

How did Bethlehem receive its name? *Beth* *lehem*
 House of bread

The meaning of Ephrathites: Option 1: a synonym for Bethlehem
 Option 2: a royal clan that lived around Bethlehem

Genesis 35:19

1 Samuel 17:12

The Family:
 Elimelech

Naomi

Mahlon

Chilion

(1:3) Elimelech died, leaving only Naomi and her sons

(1:4) Mahlon and Chilion took Moabite wives (but had no children) after ten years

Neither Orpah nor Ruth bore children after ten years of marriage

(1:5) Mahlon and Chilion both died (with no offspring), so Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth are all widows in Moab

CONCLUSION