

1:1-5

Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, the writer of this book assumes that the reader has read the book of Judges. **that there was a famine in the land.** Leviticus 26:18-22 prepares the reader for a feeling of doom to set over the main characters of our story. Perhaps the town in focus is under the wrath of God? **And a certain man of Bethlehem,** When comparing Judges 12 and Judges 19, you see there are two towns by this name, and one of them is not in **Judah,** When you see that Judges-1 Samuel is a drama between the house of Judah and the house of Benjamin, and you see that Ruth fits into the book of Judges, we see why the author (probably Samuel) is so interested in pointing out the lineage of “Elimelech.” Incidentally, the drama of Judges 19 may be the occasion of this famine.¹ Oddly enough, Genesis 19 (discussed under 1:3) and Judges 19 have almost identical stories.

went to dwell in the country of Moab, So Judges 19 and here we have people leaving the town of Bethlehem. Another similarity between the two stories is that in Judges 19 we have men surrounding the house out of lust whereas in the book of Ruth we have people journeying to a country that existed because of a similar story in Genesis 19! **he and his wife and his two sons.** **2 The name of the man was Elimelech,** means the “Lord is My King.” **the name of his wife was Naomi,** means “pleasant.” **and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem,** Genesis 35 and Genesis 48 give both names for this town **Bethlehem Ephratah** (as does Micah 5:2). Any time you see that prefix **Beth** in the Hebrew, it means “house.” **Bethlehem** is “house of bread.” The house of bread, then, had no bread (verse 1).

Genesis 35:16-20 is the first time we find this town in the Scripture and the event is the birth of Jacob’s 12th (of 12) sons and the death of his favorite wife Rachel. **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: Genesis 19 tells us the origin of the **Moabites.** They are the result of an incestual relationship between Lot (Abraham’s nephew) and one of his daughters. **the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. 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.**

¹We know for sure it was after Judges 3:30.