History of people of Israel

1. CHANGE WITHIN THE NATION

o Been through year of upheaval

o Hope of the “promised” land DEUT 34:1-4

 God had promised Abraham that he would give to him and his descendants a

land of their own.

 2 generations later Jacob & family moved to Egypt as a result of a famine GEN 37:28; GEN 45:17

 400 yrs. later, the Israelites as they had come to be known were slaves in

Egypt GEN 35:10 (Jacob’s name changed to Israel); EX 1:8-11 (Joseph dies; Israelites become slaves)

* EX 2 Birth of Moses
* EX 3 Moses encounters God through burning bush
* EX 4:18 Moses returns to Egypt

 God performed miracles (EX 7-12)– Pharaoh let people go (EX 13:17)

 God had brought them through wilderness

 God drove out nations before them (Ex 23:29; Deut 7:12-26)

* HORNETS-
	+ Probably the Egyptians are the hornets intended. It was they who, under Rameses III., broke the power of the Hittites and other nations of Palestine, while the Israelites were sojourners in the wilderness.
	+ Possibly the term was chosen in reference to the hieroglyphic sign for “king” in Egypt, which was the figure of a bee or wasp.
	+ The word is used figuratively for a cause of terror and discouragement.
		- fear before which should fall on the Canaanites upon hearing the Israelites were coming; the stings of their consciences for their sins, terrors of mind, dreading the wrath of the God of Israel, of whom they had heard, and terrible apprehensions of ruin and destruction from the Israelites
	+ Not strange or unheard of thing for people to be drove out of their countries by small animals, as mice, flies, bees

 However, there were still Canaanites, the native people, who lived in

the land.

 Time of Judges – walking into another world.

* The period of the judges began after the death of Joshua in the early fourteenth century BC (Joshua 24:29) and continued until Saul was crowned king of Israel by the prophet Samuel in 1051 BC (1 Samuel 10:24).
* The time of the judges brought about great apostasy in Israel.
* The nation underwent political and religious turmoil as the people tried to possess those parts of the land that had not yet been fully conquered.
* The tribes fought among themselves, as well, nearly wiping out the tribes of Manasseh (Judges 12) and Benjamin (20–21).
* The pattern of behavior in the book of Judges is clear**: the people rebelled through idolatry and disbelief,** God brought judgment through foreign oppression, God raised up a deliverer—or judge, and the people repented and turned back to God. When the people fell back into sin, the cycle started over again.
* Ironically, in this book we meet many heroes of faith: Othniel, Gideon, Samson, Shamgar, Deborah, Jephthah, Ehud . . . **flawed individuals who answered God’s call to deliver the Israelites in sometimes dramatic form**.
* The book includes many of the most graphic, violent, and disturbing scenes in all Scripture—**some in the name of righteousness, others in the name of evil**.
* **The primary message of Judges is that God will not allow sin to go unpunished.**

o Israelites were hardly settled even though they had been ushered into the land they

were promised

 Learning how to be farmers

 They had been slaves, and food had been basically provided for them

during this time.

 In wilderness God provided manna for 40 years. They had no need to

grow crops.

 No political structure

 Land a war zone

 Constant conflict with nations around & people within

 Religion up for grabs

- Religion in those days was viewed as the key to prosperity –

similar to our American dream – rich & happy

 Canaanite god’s – Baal & female partner Asherah

- **Economy was agricultural** – focused on fertility of land &

children – potential workers & land inheritors.

- Temptation to turn to Canaanite God’s b/c new to agriculture,

so you find out from those who’ve done it.

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EASY NOW TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE BOOK OF RUTH OPENS WITH:

*IN THE DAYS WHEN THE JUDGES RULED, THERE WAS A FAMINE IN THE LAND.*

* Famine due to disobedience
* Relocate to Moab as a sort of exile- foreigner in a foreign land
* As Exodus established, Israel was God’s people—He was their King.
* They had forsaken the covenant established at Mount Sinai.
* In Judges, He disciplined them for following other gods, disobeying His sacrificial laws, engaging in blatant immorality, and descending into anarchy at times.
* Yet because they were His people, He listened to their cries for mercy and raised up leaders to deliver them.
* Unfortunately, even these godly individuals did not wield sufficient influence to change the nation’s direction.
* The people’s inability to resist sinful Canaanite influences eventually revealed their desire for a centralized monarchy, led by a righteous king whom God would choose as His intermediary.

- The Canaanites often compartmentalized their gods

according to supposed areas of specialty areas

 Yahweh had brought them out of Egypt – viewed as

the God of conquest & military

- Baal – people sought to control actions

 Fertility – make god’s have sex

 Worship places were often filled with sex in an effort

to manipulate their gods.

- Yahweh – **Israel’s relationship with Yahweh was drastically**

**different than the Canaanites relationship to their gods.**

 Couldn’t manipulate or twist Yahweh’s arm

 There response was to serve him only and obey

 Deut 28 describes the expectations of what would

happen if His people chose to follow Him or if they

forsook him

 blessings of many kinds if they would follow

 Curses could be expected if they didn’t follow

Him

Memory is a gift. Remembering the past teaches us countless lessons about how to live today. The Israelites forgot. They did not remember the miraculous events that brought them to their land or the covenant that united them to their God. But God did not forget His covenant—and because of His great love for His people, He disciplined His sinful children so that they might return to Him.

 Judges Cycle – Judges 2:18-19 describes the typical pattern that the people of this time

followed

o What is a Judge?

 Space between judges

 A judge only ruled over small area

 Primarily a military leader

PURPOSE:

1. Genealogy that leads to the Lord Jesus Christ (4:17)
2. Doctrine of redemption (2:20)
	1. Definition- the action of saving or being saved; the action of gaining or regaining possession of something; clearing a debt
	2. GOEL (Hebrew)- pronounced Go- El; to redeem

**GOEL**

go'-el (go'el, "redeemer"):

Goel is the participle of the Hebrew word gal'al ("to deliver," "to redeem") which aside from its common usage is frequently employed in connection with Hebrew law, where it is the technical term applied to a person who as the nearest relative of another is placed under certain obligations to him.

(1) If a Jew because of poverty had been obliged to sell himself to a wealthy "stranger or sojourner," it became the duty of his relatives to redeem him. Compare Leviticus 25:47 and the article JUBILEE.

(2) The same duty fell upon the nearest kinsman, if his brother, being poor, had been forced to sell some of his property. Compare Leviticus 25:23; Ruth 4:4, and the article JUBILEE.

(3) It also devolved upon the nearest relative to marry the ? childless widow of his brother (Ruth 3:13; Tobit 3:17).

(4) In Numbers 5:5 a law is stated which demands that restitution be made to the nearest relative, and after him to the priest, if the injured party has died (Leviticus 6:1).

(5) The law of blood-revenge (Blut-Rache) made it the sacred duty of the nearest relative to avenge the blood of his kinsman. He was called the go'el ha-dam, "the avenger of blood." This law was based upon the command given in Genesis 9:5 f:

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," and was carried out even if an animal had killed a man; in this case, however, the payment of a ransom was permitted (Exodus 21:28). A clear distinction was made between an accidental and a deliberate murder. In both cases the murderer could find refuge at the altar of the sanctuary; if, however, the investigation revealed presumptuous manslaughter, he was taken from the altar to be put to death (Exodus 21:12; 1 Kings 1:50; 2:28). In Numbers 35:9 definite regulations as to the duties of the Goel are given. Six cities were to be appointed as "cities of refuge," three on each side of the Jordan. The congregation has judgment over the murderer. There must be more than one witness to convict a man. If he is found guilty, he is delivered to the Goel; if murder was committed by accident he is permitted to live within the border of the city of refuge; in case the manslayer leaves this city before the death of the high priest, the avenger of blood has a right to slay him. After the death of the high priest the murderer may return to his own city. Ransom cannot be given for the life of a murderer; no expiation can be made for a murder but by the blood of the murderer (Deuteronomy 19:4; Joshua 20; 2 Samuel 14:6). According to the law the children of a murderer could not be held responsible for the crime of their father (Deuteronomy 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6), but see 2 Samuel 21:1. The order in which the nearest relative was considered the Goel is given in Leviticus 25:48 f: first a brother, then an uncle or an uncle's son, and after them any other near relative. This order was observed in connection with (1) above, but probably also in the other cases except (4).

(For the purpose of this study)

1. Pain
	1. Universal (everyone experienced the famine & death affected more than 1 Naomi)
	2. Trusting God while in pain; feeling as though God is against you
2. Name changes
	1. Naomi- pleasant, lovely or delightful
	2. Mara- bitter, sad

1:1-2

* Backdrop
* Judges ruled- land was a free- for- all. Everyone did as they saw fit.
* homosexual assault, idolatry, civil war, thievery, rape and murder (Israelites against each other)
* no sense of direction
* Bethlehem
	+ Promised land
	+ Rich agricultural city
	+ “House of Bread”
* Elimelek relocates his family to Moab
	+ Name meaning- “God is King”
* Sojourn- relocate for a while with the intent to return
	+ through the desolate Jericho pass, through the Judean wilderness near the Dead Sea, going across the Jordan River, into the land of Moab.
	+ Left promised land & went back to wilderness where Israel had been delivered from

**WILDERNESS**

* Dry
* Nothing grows
* Brown; unappealing to the eye
* Things that live in the wilderness have adapted themselves to live in this type of climate (plants, animals)
* Rare to rain

1:3-5

* Husband dies
* Son’s die
	+ Widows taken advantage of or ignored
	+ childless widow was to be among the lowest, most disadvantaged classes in the ancient world.
	+ There was no one to support you, and you had to live on the generosity of strangers.
	+ Poverty stricken
		- God’s law, therefore, provided that the nearest relative of the dead husband should care for the widow; but Naomi had no relatives in Moab, and she did not know if any of her relatives were alive in Israel.

Changes Ruth experienced in 1st 5 verses:

* Relocated to Moab from her home because of famine
* Husband died- widow
* Son’s died- no blood family left
* Situation worse than when she left Bethlehem
* Lived in Moab for at least 10 years

**WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE**

* Place of dying
	+ Where all things that cause you to stumble in your walk with God are killed
	+ Wilderness experience perfects our faith
	+ Dilemmas & crises brings us to a place where we discover things about God we would not have known under normal circumstances
	+ Wilderness teaches us to stand; cast our cares upon the Lord; rely on God; totally depend on Him

How do you feel when things have gone from bad to worse?

What happens to your faith? (Faith comes by hearing the word of God. No bible at this time. Moab served foreign gods/ idol worship.)

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1:6

* 3 widows prepare to return home
* Naomi heard about the goodness of God & went after it
	+ God will send his Word to you no matter how far you’ve traveled

1:7

* *She left the place she had been living to return home from there*
	+ Turn Around
		- Naomi heard (a)
		- Naomi left (b)
		- God will place sharp turns in your life to give you the opportunity to truly repent (a) and to remove people that aren’t meant to travel on with you (b)
		- Repent (Naomi’s move)- 180-degree change; complete turnaround; return to God
		- Only what’s divinely connected to you can make that sharp of a turn
		- Indecisive, unsure, uncommitted or under- committed cannot go
		- This commit is not to Naomi, but to God- so they must be sure, decided & committed
		- Ruth was divinely connected to Naomi by God. Orpah was not.

1:8

* Naomi blessed them
* Naomi’s benediction (Signifying the conclusion of this season. Made up mind)
	+ *May the Lord show you kindness as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me.*
	+ *May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband.*

1:9

* Naomi described marriage as a place of **rest**: **The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband**. God intends that each marriage be a place and source, of rest, peace, and refreshment in life.

1:10

* Orpah & Ruth both offer to go with Naomi

1:11 Naomi’s reasons they should stay in Moab (Naomi attempts to explain a faith move with logic)

* When making faith moves- DISCERN YOUR AUDIENCE
* Naomi gives logical reasons that would/ should appear undesirable to a person not divinely connected.
* Only spiritually connected people can see the vision when there is no evidence
	+ More sons who would become your husband
		- According to the laws of ancient Israel, if a young woman was left widowed, without having had a son, then one of her deceased husband's brothers was responsible for being a "surrogate father" and providing her with a son.

**Naomi here says that she has no other sons to give either Orpah or Ruth.**

* + Too old to have another husband
	+ No hope of having another husband
	+ Would you wait until they grow up
		- Feels that time is against her
			* How do we handle life when we see there is more time behind us than in front?
* Remain unmarried for them
	+ - Naomi makes it sound irrational for them to go with her
		- Naomi only sees their connection to her as through her sons (change/ 1 dimensional; vs metamorphosis/ process)
* More bitter for me than for you
	+ Naomi is fully aware of her & her family’s personal sin
* The Lord’s hand has gone out against me
	+ Naomi felt that this season in her life was ‘just punishment’

1:14

* Orpah chose to stay in Moab. **Ruth clung to her.**
	+ **What was the difference between Orpah & Ruth?**
	+ How & why do some people exit our lives?
	+ Orpah was not divinely connected to Naomi through God’s plan
	+ Many assumptions, but not our place to judge Orpah because clearly, God used a Moabite
	+ What does some exits mean spiritually?

1:15

* Back to her people & her gods
	+ Naomi openly acknowledges the difference between God & gods
	+ Naomi openly lays no claim to the other gods
	+ **There is a time when you have to OPENLY PROFESS Jesus Christ for yourself.**
		- **This is the turning point**
		- **This is the METAMORPHOSIS**

1:16

* Ruth’s reply
	+ Where you go I will go- Ruth’s commitment to Naomi **PRESENT**
	+ Where you stay I will stay- Ruth’s commitment to Naomi **FUTURE**
	+ Your people my people- Ruth’s commitment to Naomi’s **HEALING (**Ruth saw potential where Naomi saw empty)
	+ Your god my God- Ruth’s commitment to God
		- **THIS IS ACTUALLY THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RUTH & ORPAH**
		- **RUTH WAS WILLING TO COMMIT TO MORE THAN JUST NAOMI & HER FAMILY BY WAY OF A SON**

1:19

* Naomi & Ruth travel to Bethlehem
	+ Journey was uphill
		- How bad do you want it?
		- Faith without works is dead
* The town excited to see Naomi return
* Naomi’s name change
	+ Not really a name change; but attempt to change how she was perceived
	+ Naomi means ‘pleasant’
	+ Mara means ‘bitter’
	+ *The Lord has afflicted me-* Naomi is very upfront about her situation
		- Naomi does not try to fool everybody like everything is ok
* Naomi does NOT see God’s hand at work in her life!
	+ *V22 …arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.*
		- It’s not all bad & you’re not all bad
		- You did some good in the eyes of the Lord & He brought you back just in time to claim your harvest
		- That’s why you had to come back
		- Uphill
		- With a repented heart
		- And a future in tow (Ruth)

CHAPTER 2

2:1

* Boaz
	+ Naomi’s relative on her husband’s side (kinsman)
	+ From the clan of Elimelek
	+ A man of standing: man of great wealth; mighty man of valor (warrior Judges 11:1)
		- God made him wealthy during a time of famine
		- Proof that God sustained His people, even through the famine
			* God will show you why you didn’t have to make the decisions (move) that you made

Kinsman

* Hebrew- *Goel*
	+ Relative; special family representative; chief in the family

2:2

* *Let me go in the fields and pick up leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor*
	+ Naomi must have schooled Ruth on Israelite law
		- Leviticus 19:9-10
		- commanded farmers in Israel that they should not completely harvest their fields.
		- commanded to “cut corners” in harvesting, and always leave some behind.
		- if they happened to drop a bundle of grain, they were commanded to leave it on the ground and to not pick it up.
		- This was one of the social assistance programs in Israel.
		- Farmers were not to completely harvest their fields, so the poor and needy could come and glean the remains for themselves.
		- It commanded the farmers to have a generous heart
		- it commanded the poor to be active and work for their food – and a way for them to provide for their own needs with dignity.
* Possible other differences between Ruth & Orpah
	+ Ruth was able to receive & follow instructions
	+ Ruth was a worker

2:3

* Ruth left for work
* Following Naomi example: made a decision & set out to make it happen

**Boaz’s field**