



Ruth 1:1-6

Apostacy as Leaving Home

The Journey to Moab

Journey to Moab: 1:1-2

"1In the days when the judges ruled,
there was a famine in the land,

and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab,
he and his wife and two sons. 2 The name of the man was Elimelech and the
name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and
Chilion;

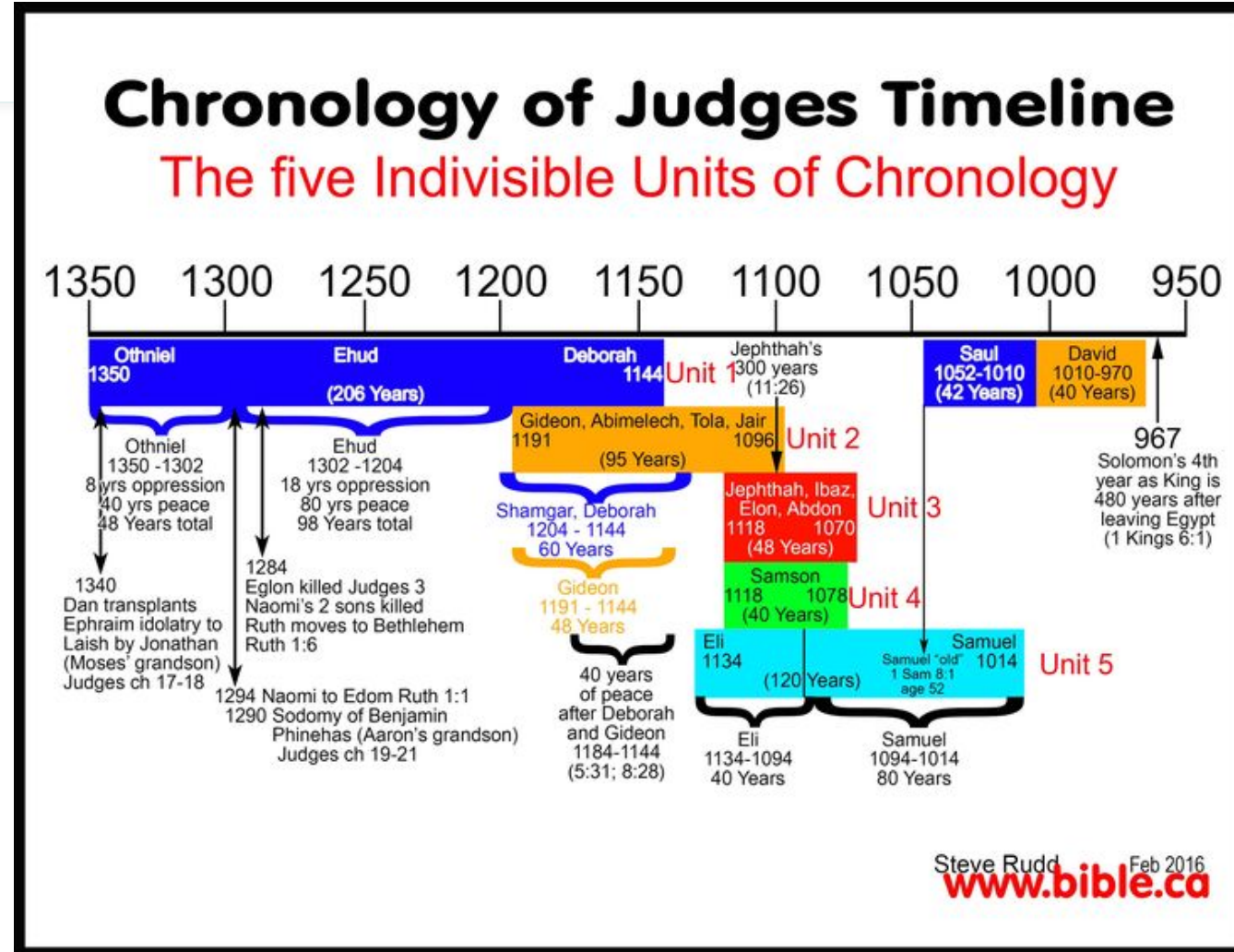
they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of
Moab and remained there.

Judges of Israel

*Not to be understood in a narrow juridical sense.
From the death of Joshua to the Crowning of Saul*

1. Military leaders (Othniel, Ehud, Barak, Gideon, and Jephthah.)
2. Lone Warriors (Shamgar and Samuel.)
3. Nazirite (Samson.)
4. Priests (Eli and Samuel.)
5. People who sat in Judgement (Deborah and Samuel.)
6. Unknown (Tola, Jair, Izan, Elon, and Abdon.)

The context of Ruth



Judges 21:25

Famine in "The House of Bread"

The connection of "During the time of Judges" and "Famine"

The covenant has been broken, resulting in famine.

Famine is more than the absence of food, in biblical literature famine is a deep theological idea: "How could there be famine in the land that was supposed to be flowing with milk and honey?" Is this land truly God's gift to his people, a place to find rest and blessing?

Elimelech is confronted with difficult choice: Food or Faith. "In the face of famine, will he respond with repentance and humility, or will he seek blessings outside the land? He can respond out of a sense of fear and desire for food or out of a sense of faith. Elimelech responds with fear and flight...He did not seek repentance, nor did he stay to witness the recovery of the land. Rather, he searched for other places of blessing; he left the land of promise.

(In Judges) The only time the land was dry was during times of curse. This also reminds us of the way of God's people in the book of Judges. When they turned away from God, He turned away from them. He turned his back on them and He dried up the land."

"We know that in these kinds of redemptive narratives famines are not random..."

Elimelech faces a test of faith, "Would he trust in God's promise to provide food for his family in the land or would he leave in fear? He was not a faithful husband. The word of God required him to hold fast to the promises and thus to seek the restoration of the land." He whose name means "God is Mighty" failed to believe in God's might and runs for protection to God's (and the people's) historic enemy.

(<https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/article/ruth-11-6-famine-house-bread>.)

Leviticus
26:3-6

Leviticus
26:14, 19-20

Deuteronomy
28

“...Went to live in the country of Moab” He chose the worse place on earth

MOAB'S Strategy against Israel:

1. Deprive them of bread, “they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 23:3-4.)
2. Curse them that they may perish on the road out of Egypt, “They hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you” (Ibid.)
3. Weaken Israel by giving their daughters into marriage to Israelite men, thus exercising control over the new families.
4. Lead young men into idol worship through sexual favors (Numbers 25:1-3.)

The Covenant Curses Become Fulfilled

- *Elimelech died*: He abandoned the land, broke the covenant, was a poor husband to his homestead, refused to return...
- *She was left with her two sons*: Who went along with the father's plans, although (being male) they could have convinced him to return. They failed in the same ways as the father, by association
- *They married Moabite women*: They abandoned God and the covenant, accepting Moabite women in opposition to Deuteronomy. They have left the land orphaned. They failed to redeem the land.
- *They lived there for 10 years*: They failed by their own will. They refused to return and to be a husband to the land, even though they had no children (another sign of punishment.)
- *They also died*: Same punishment for betrayal of God's covenant, poor husbands, horrible Jews...
- *The woman was left without her two sons and without her husband*: And they are completely to blame. They left Naomi and their wives, daughters in law, completely unprotected. Now the land is about to be lost. Who could be the righteous husband who redeems the land and Naomi? Who could be the elder kinsman who provided a seed to advance the family name: THE ONE WHO STAYED! The righteous who worked the land even in famine. The one who trusted the Lord. The one who obeyed the commandments.

A Plan to Return "Then, So, But..."

Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law: a decision is made to reverse the faithlessness of the men of the family.

Naomi acts like the true Israelite, Perhaps out of desperation, but the passage tells us it was out of faith. "She heard that God had blessed his people..."

Psalm 34:17, Psalm 145:18, 145:19, Isaiah 65:24, Proverbs 15:29, Exodus 2:23-25,
Exodus 22:26-27, Psalm 102:17, Psalm 6:9, 1 Samuel 1: 27...

God's Mercy has returned to the land. The famine is over, the earth has been redeemed, God has remembered his people and sent them the blessings of shalom: Peace, harvest, abundance, food a plenty.

"From the country of Moab"
My Shtetl is Calling





A God Who Remembers

Naomi attributes relief from the famine to God's Mercy

"for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had had consideration for his people" (Had heard, paid notice, taken care, remembered...)

God remembers

God acts

God restores

God's hand is guiding the entire narrative of the story (people, nation, etc. God rewards Torah faithfulness.)



“... and given them food”

- Food is life, blessing, provision
- That Ruth starts at the start of a harvest and ends at the gathering of a second harvest (6-weeks apart) is telling of the abundance God bestows on his people.
- A good harvest means the difference between life and death. Food is a theological symbol of God's favor.

Charasho: [fsyo bú-deet ha-ra-shó]

