

A woman in a white headscarf and dress, holding a bundle of wheat, stands against a textured wall. The word "Ruth" is written in a large, elegant, dark red cursive font to her right.

# Ruth



Division of the Promised Land to the children of Israel



# Israel



IN THOSE DAYS  
 THERE WAS NO  
 KING IN ISRAEL;  
 EVERYONE DID  
 WHAT WAS  
 RIGHT IN HIS  
 OWN EYES.  
 JUDGES 21:25



# Overview

- Main characters: Naomi, Ruth the Moabitess, Boaz
  - Even minor characters are good, kind
- Named after Ruth.
  - Ruth speaks least.
  - Only OT book named for non-Israelite
  - Should have been called *Naomi* or *Boaz*?
- Locations: Moab and Bethlehem
- 85 verses. 55 have dialog.
- No supernatural events.
- Events happened around 1100 BC
- Anonymous and undated
  - Tradition says author was Samuel
- Purpose: explain Davidic line





# Israelite Law and Traditions: Marriage and Death

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<sup>5</sup> If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. <sup>6</sup> The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel. – Deut. 25







Hannah and Peninnah



Sarah and Hagar



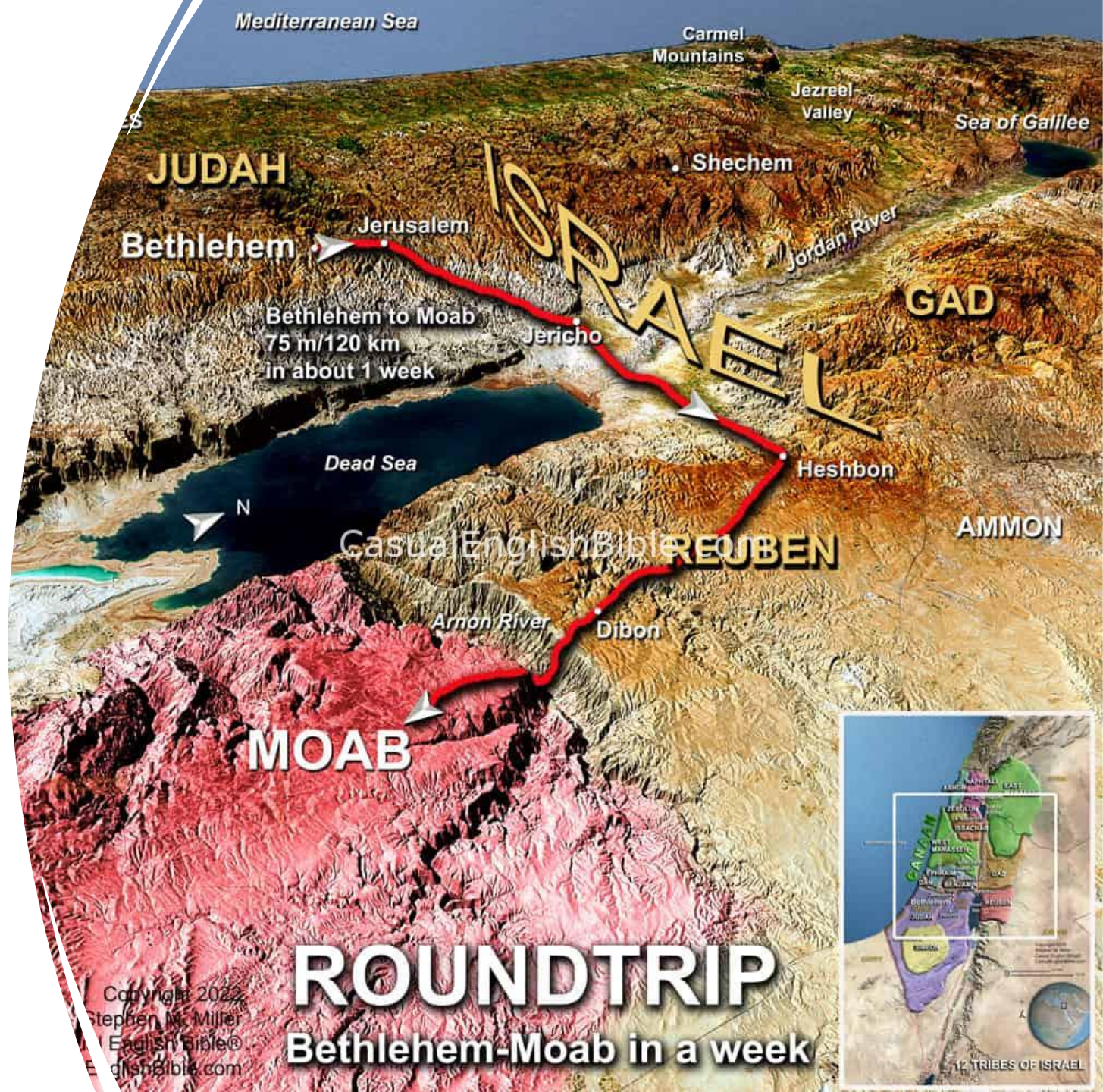
Leah and Rachel

# Female relationships in the Old Testament



# Bad relationship between Israel and Moab due to:

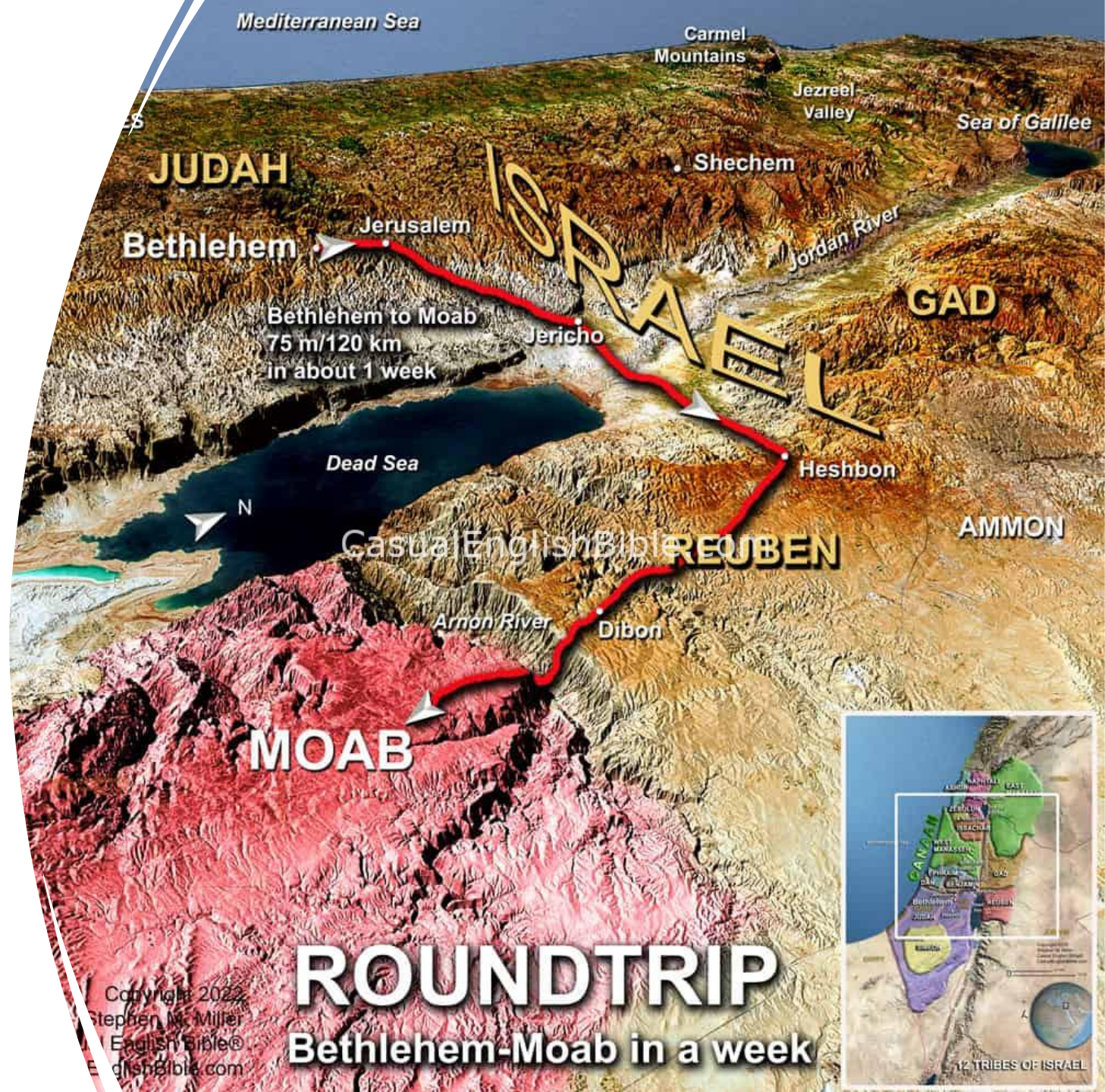
- (1) the Moabites' contemptible origins in the incestuous relationship of Lot and his daughter (Gen 19:30–38);
- (2) the Moabites' resistance to Israelite passage through their territory when they came from Egypt (Numbers 22–24);
- (3) the Moabite women's seduction of the Israelites and the latter's subsequent punishment (Num 25:1–9);
- (4) Israel's constitutional exclusion of Moab from the assembly of the Lord (Deut 23:3–6); and
- (5) the recent oppression of the Israelites by Eglon the king of Moab (Judg 3:15–30).





# Chapter 1: Introduction to the Story

**1** In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. **2** The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.





# Chapter 1: Introduction to the Story

<sup>3</sup> Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. <sup>4</sup> They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, <sup>5</sup> both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.





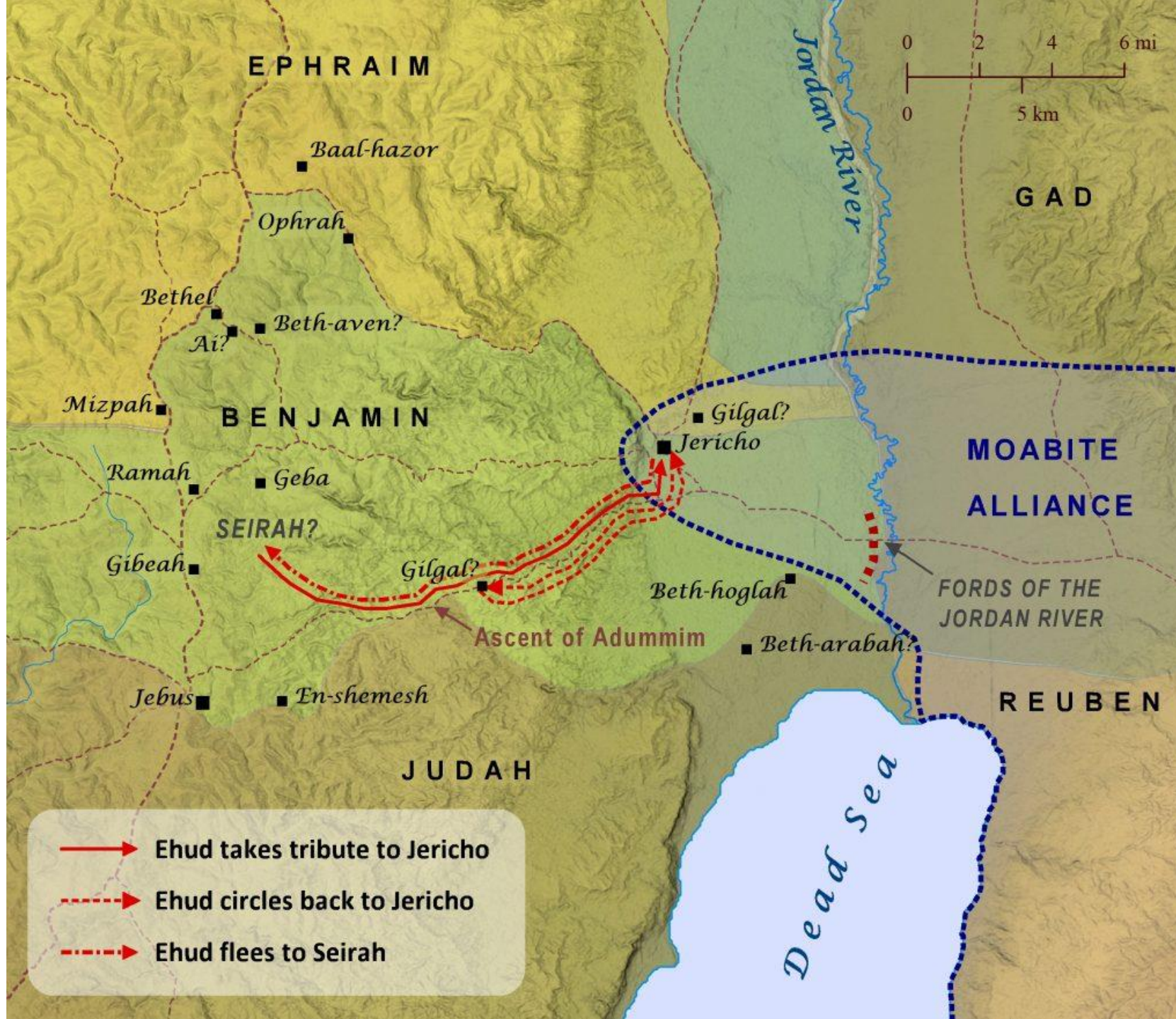
## Ehud and King Eglon

10,000 Moabite soldiers  
killed in battle

## Jewish tradition

*(Ruth Rabbah, Targum, Talmud, Midrash)*

*Targum. They transgressed the decree of the Memra of the Lord and they took for themselves foreign wives from the house of Moab. The name of one was Orpah and the name of the second was Ruth, the daughter of Eglon, the king of Moab. And they dwelt there for a time of about ten years.*







# Returning to Bethlehem

<sup>6</sup> When Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. <sup>7</sup> With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

<sup>8</sup> Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back, each of you, to your mother’s home. May the LORD show you **kindness**, as you have shown **kindness** to your dead husbands and to me. <sup>9</sup> May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband.”

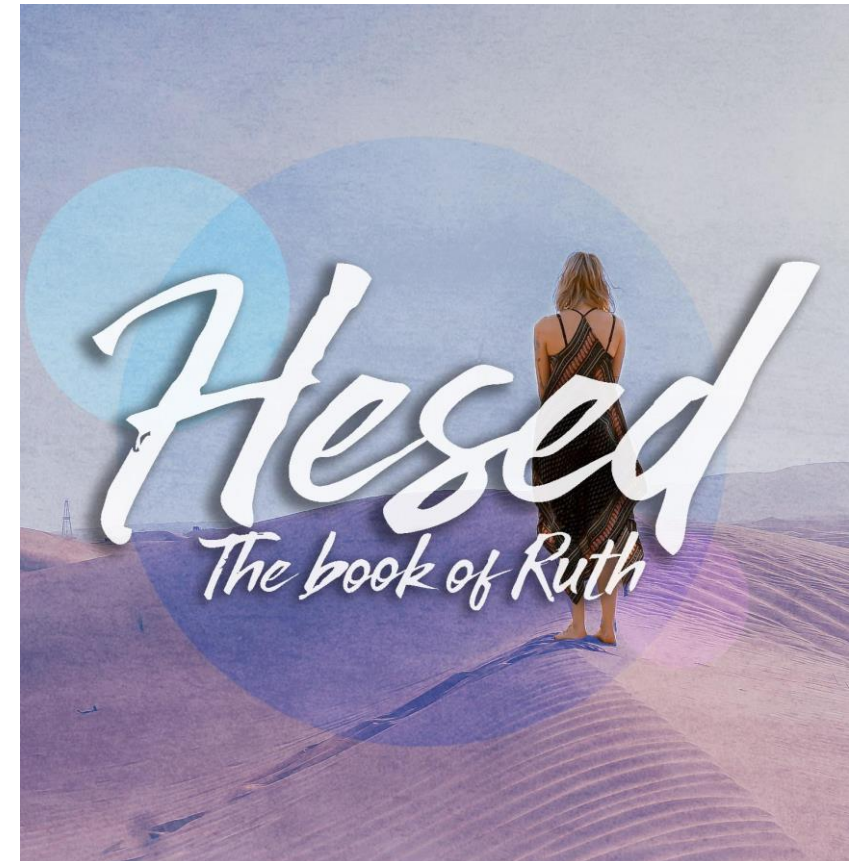
Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud <sup>10</sup> and said to her, “We will go back with you to your people.”



# Hesed

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In Naomi's first speech (1:8) we are introduced to the key theological term in the book and one of Yahweh's most treasured characteristics: *hesed*. *Hesed* is one of those Hebrew words whose meaning cannot be captured in one English word. This is a strong relational term that wraps up in itself an entire cluster of concepts, all the positive attributes of God—**love, mercy, grace, kindness, goodness, benevolence, loyalty, covenant faithfulness**; in short, that quality that moves a person to act for the benefit of another without respect to the advantage it might bring to the one who expresses it.





# To stay or to go?

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<sup>11</sup> But Naomi said, “Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? <sup>12</sup> Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons— <sup>13</sup> would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD’s hand has turned against me!”

<sup>14</sup> At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

<sup>15</sup> “Look,” said Naomi, “your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her.”





# The Return

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<sup>16</sup> But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. <sup>17</sup> Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.” <sup>18</sup> When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

<sup>19</sup> So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, “Can this be Naomi?”

<sup>20</sup> “Don’t call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. <sup>21</sup> I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”

<sup>22</sup> So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.





Chapter 2:  
Ruth meets  
Boaz





# RUTH & BOAZ

AT THE THRESHING FLOOR

R U T H 3







## City Gates



# Kinsman-Redeemer (*aka Guardian-Redeemer*)

The Scriptures note five aspects of a kinsman-redeemer's redemptive role:

- (1) to ensure that the hereditary property of the clan never passes out of the clan (Lev 25:25–30);
- (2) to maintain the freedom of individuals within the clan by buying back those who have sold themselves into slavery because of poverty (Lev 25:47–55);
- (3) to track down and execute murderers of near relatives (Num 35:12, 19–27);
- (4) to receive restitution money on behalf of a deceased victim of a crime (Num 5:8); and
- (5) to ensure that justice is served in a lawsuit involving a relative (Job 19:25; Ps 119:154; Jer 50:34).





# Boaz Marries Ruth

<sup>13</sup> So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. <sup>14</sup> The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! <sup>15</sup> He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.”

<sup>16</sup> Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. <sup>17</sup> The women living there said, “Naomi has a son!” And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.





# Themes and Key Takeaways









# The Nation of Israel

## *Schedule*

1. Overview
2. Israel's Dark Ages: Judges
3. Lights Amid the Darkness: Ruth and Samuel
4. Beginnings of the Monarchy in Israel
  - 1 Sam 8-15
5. Prelude to the reign of David
  - 1 Sam 16 – 2 Sam 5
6. The reign of David
  - 2 Sam 6 - ; 1 Chronicles 28
7. The reign of Solomon
  - 1 Kings 3, 2 Chron 5, 1 Kings 8,11
8. The division of the kingdom and early ministry of Elijah
  - 1 Kings 12-18
9. The divided monarchy in the times of Elijah and Elisha
  - 1 Kings 21-22, 2 Kings 5-7
10. The divided monarch from Jehu to the fall of the northern kingdom
  - 2 Kings 9-17
11. The kingdom of Judah from Hezekiah to the fall of Jerusalem
  - 2 Chron 30, 2 Kings 19-34



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THROUGH-THE-BIBLE COMMENTARY

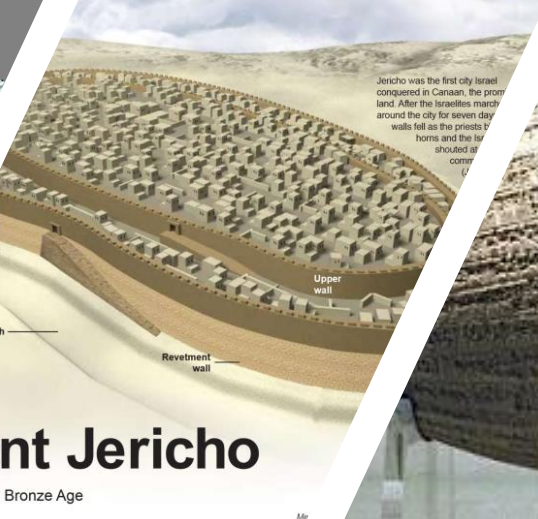
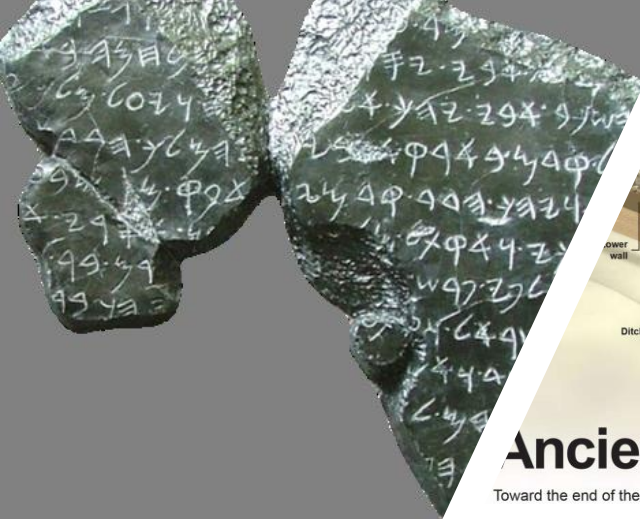
OLD TESTAMENT VOLUME TWO

## The History of Israel

compiled by Douglas Redford

**Standard**<sup>®</sup>  
PUBLISHING  
*Bringing The Word to Life*  
Cincinnati, Ohio





## Ancient Jericho

Toward the end of the Bronze Age

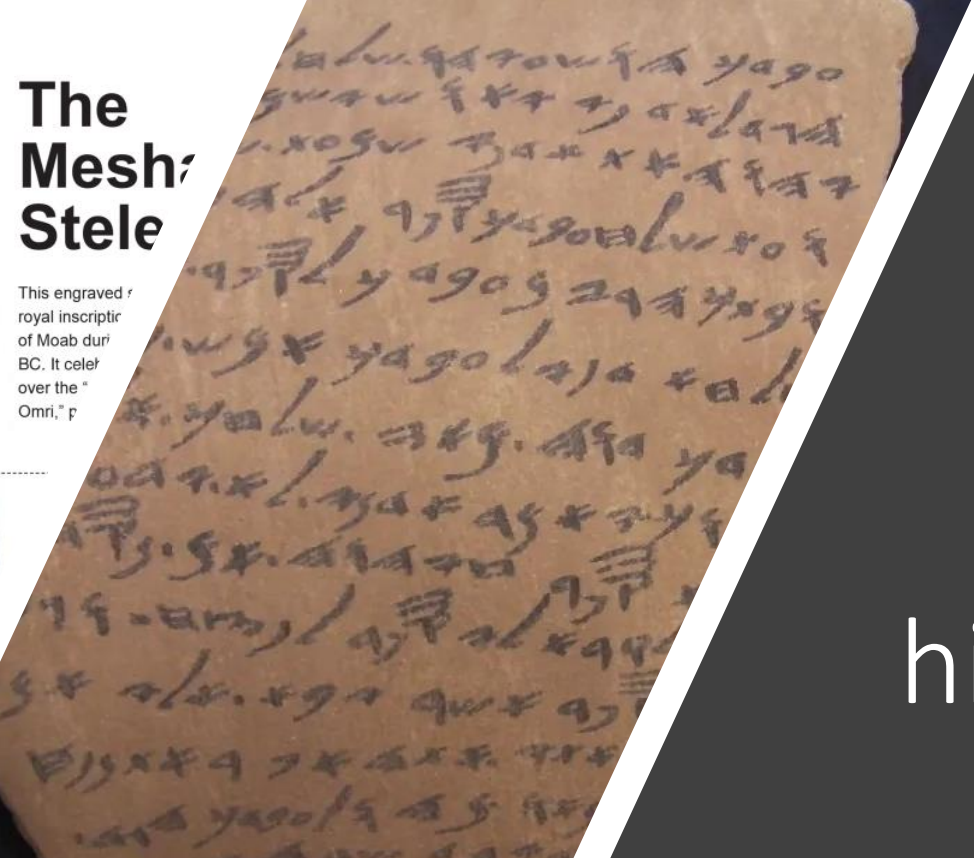
Archaeological excavations reveal that Jericho was already

Jericho was the first city Israel conquered in Canaan, the promised land. After the Israelites marched around the city for seven days, the walls fell as the priests blew horns and the Israelites shouted at the top of their voices.



## The Mesha Stele

This engraved royal inscription of Moab during the 9th century BC. It celebrates the victory of Mesha over the Israelites.



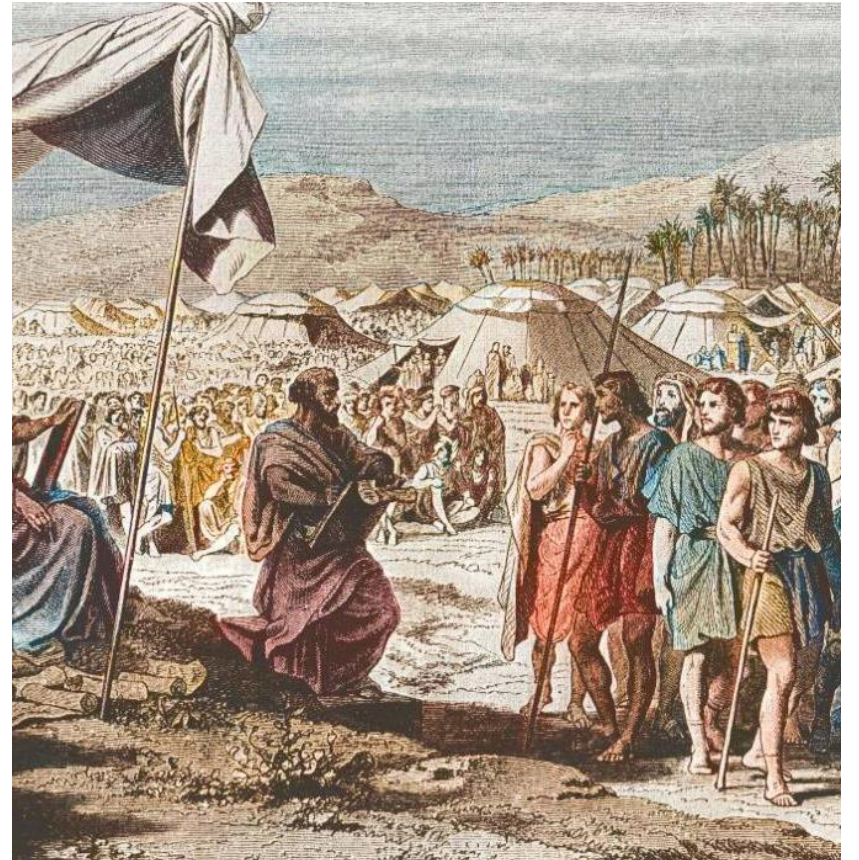
Are the stories in the Old Testament historically reliable?



# Census of military age men

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- 1<sup>st</sup> year in wilderness
  - 603,550
  - Exodus 38:26, Numbers 1:46
- 40<sup>th</sup> year in wilderness
  - 601,730
  - Numbers 26:51
- Total population estimated to be over 2 million.
- Example from Numbers 1:
  - <sup>20</sup> From the descendants of Reuben the firstborn son of Israel:
    - All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, one by one, according to the records of their clans and families. <sup>21</sup> The number from the tribe of Reuben was 46,500.
  - <sup>22</sup> From the descendants of Simeon:
    - All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were counted and listed by name, one by one, according to the records of their clans and families. <sup>23</sup> The number from the tribe of Simeon was 59,300.







# The census problems

- Other biblical passages assume a smaller population
  - <sup>29</sup> But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals too numerous for you. - Exodus 29
  - <sup>7</sup> The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. - Deut. 7
  - <sup>1</sup> Hear, Israel: You are now about to cross the Jordan to go in and dispossess nations greater and stronger than you... – Deut. 9
  - Song of Deborah: <sup>8</sup> God chose new leaders when war came to the city gates, but not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel. – Judges 5
  - Israel would be 3-4 times larger than all the nations in the area combined.
    - 10 spies
    - Power of Yahweh
- First born problem: too many children per family
  - <sup>42</sup> So Moses counted all the firstborn of the Israelites, as the LORD commanded him. <sup>43</sup> The total number of firstborn males a month old or more, listed by name, was 22,273. – Numbers 3
  - Each family must have 29 non-first-born sons (and assume there were 30 daughters)



# The census problem

Population of 2 million or army of 600,000 doesn't match the stories or archeology

- Population of Egypt was 2-3 million
- Population of Canaan no more than 600,000
- 10 hours, Moses speaking
- Jericho was about 9 acres with a population of about 20,000.





# Possible solution

- Literal translation: Reuben's tribe is "six and forty thousand and five hundred".
  - translated in English Bibles to 46,500.
- The Hebrew word *elep* translated "thousands" is translated "tribes", "clans", "families", and "divisions" elsewhere in Joshua and Numbers.
- The word translated "and" can also mean "or", depending on the context.
- Therefore, the original text might have meant "six and forty clans, or 500".
  - In other words, 46 clans totaling 500 men
- The total population would have been about 20,000 – 30,000.

Military Census of Israel, (Numbers 1)

Tribe	אלפ as 1000	אלפ as contingents	No. men	Approx. No. of Men/contingent
Reuben	46,500	46	500	11
Simeon	59,300	59	300	5
Gad	45,650	45	650	14
Judah	74,600	74	600	8
Issachar	54,400	54	400	7
Zebulon	57,400	57	400	7
Ephraim	40,500	40	500	13
Menashe	32,200	32	200	6
Benjamin	35,400	35	400	11
Dan	62,700	62	700	11
Asher	41,500	41	500	12
Naphtali	53,400	53	400	8
<b>TOTALS:</b>	603,550	598	5,550	9 (average)



# RUTH

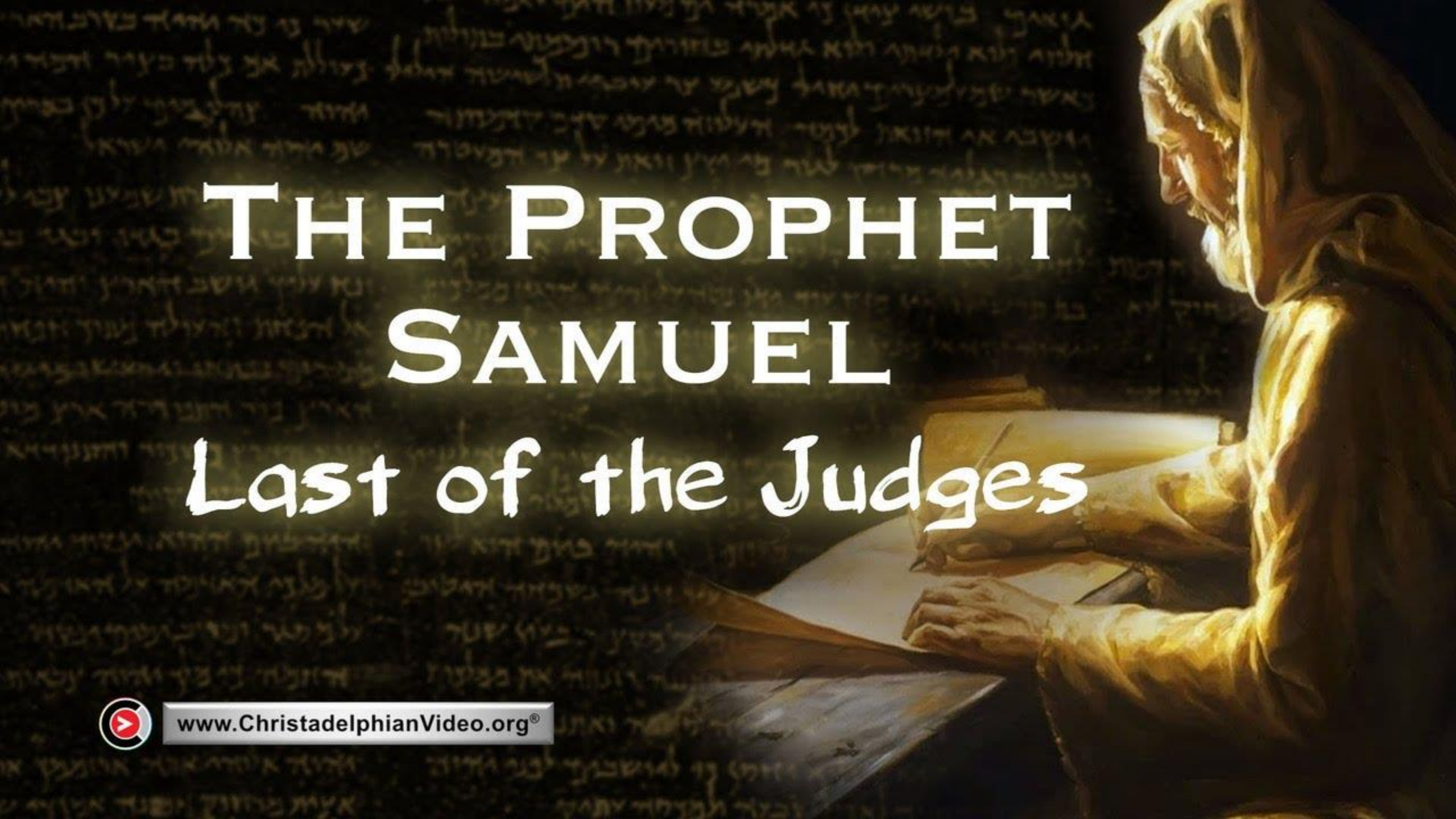


# SAMUEL



Woodlawn  
Christian Church



A man with a beard, wearing a yellow hooded robe, is shown in profile, writing on a scroll. He is illuminated by a warm, golden light from the right. The background is dark and filled with faint, glowing Hebrew text. The overall mood is solemn and focused.

# THE PROPHET SAMUEL

## Last of the Judges



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