

# Ruth 1:1-5

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ruth/ruth-1/ruth-chapter-1/>

*Elimelech moved his family to Moab due to a famine, while there he and his sons died leaving their widows behind.*

The setting for the book of Ruth takes place during the time *when the judges governed*. That means the events in Ruth occurred during the book of Judges (approximately 1000 years before Christ's incarnation), prior to Israel having kings. The passage notes that there *was a famine in the land*. This will be an important backdrop for the ensuing story. The famine is named as the cause for *a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah* deciding to *sojourn in the land of Moab with his wife and his two sons*.

Bethlehem is located in Israel west of the Dead Sea near Jerusalem. Moab was located to the east of the Dead Sea, roughly 60 miles from Bethlehem. Today, it is a part of modern Jordan. The Moabites were the descendants of the incestuous affair of Lot (see Genesis 19). Moses delivered Deuteronomy to Israel while on the Plains of Moab about 400 years prior to the time of the Judges.

In ancient times, and even today, famines cause people to migrate. The famine was so severe that they *remained there* in Moab for *ten years*. While in Moab, things did not go well for Naomi. While away from her homeland, her husband *Elimelech* and two sons die. Naomi is left with only two daughters-in-law, *Orpah* and *Ruth*. *Mahlon and Chilion* had taken *for themselves Moabite women as wives*.

The name Naomi means "pleasant."

## Biblical Text

**1 Now it came about in the days when the judges governed, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab with his wife and his two sons. <sup>2</sup>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, Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. Now they entered the land of Moab and remained there. <sup>3</sup>Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons. <sup>4</sup>They took for themselves Moabite women as wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. And they lived there about ten years. <sup>5</sup>Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and the woman was bereft of her two children and her husband.**