

good
NEWS BIBLE

The books of

JUDGES
and
RUTH

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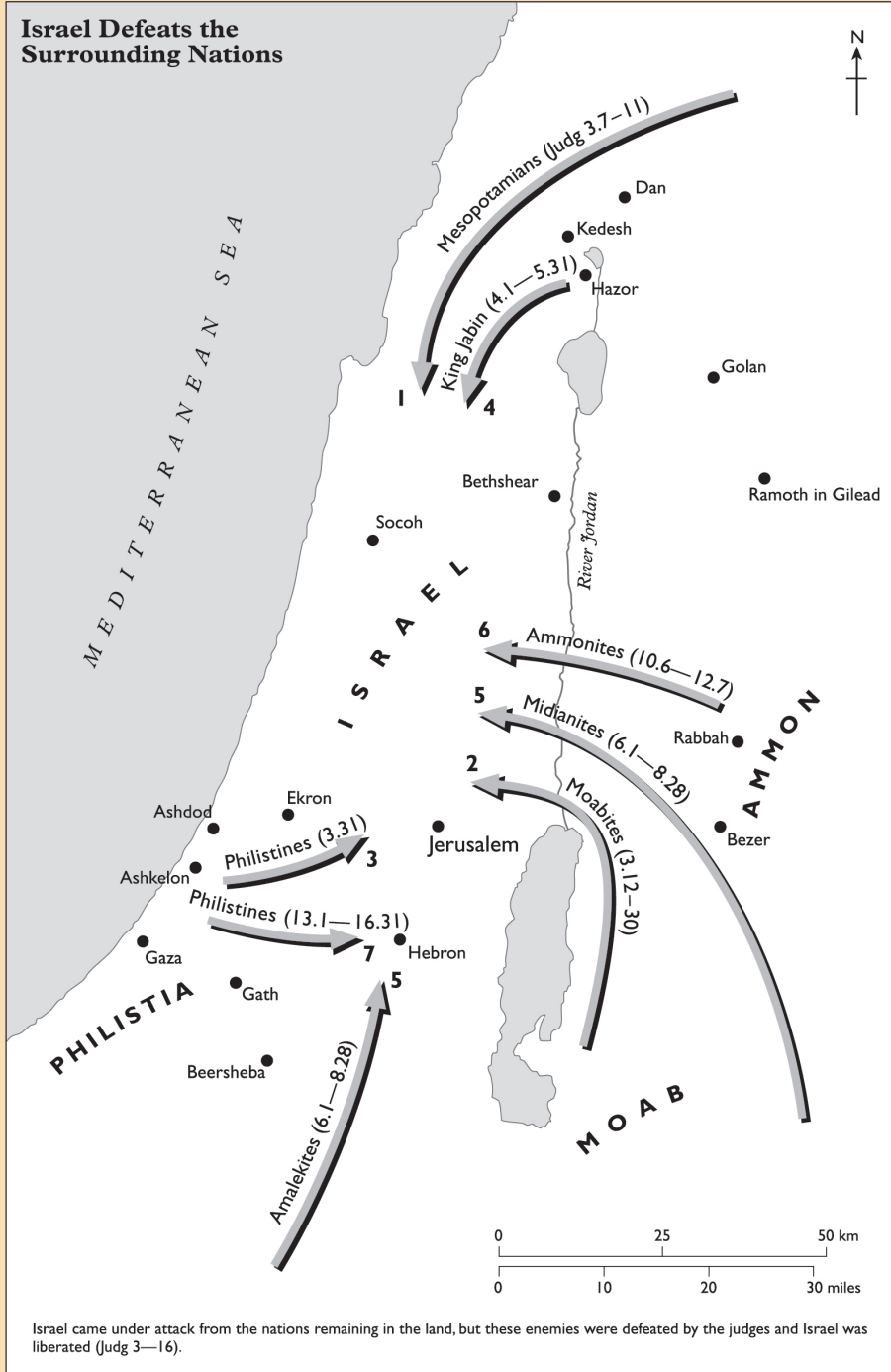
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Israel Defeats the Surrounding Nations



Israel came under attack from the nations remaining in the land, but these enemies were defeated by the judges and Israel was liberated (Judg 3—16).

Judges

The leaders of God's people

What's it about? Even after God brought his people to the Promised Land, they turned away from him and so were attacked by their enemies. They had no king to unite them, so God raised up mighty leaders, called judges, to save his nation.

Who wrote it? The book is anonymous and we get no clues to who wrote it. Some traditions claim it was the prophet Samuel, but we don't know.

Why read it? The stories are astonishing, from obese kings and burning foxes to misguided lust and violent death. It's not an easy read, but it shows time and again how God saves his people.

What's it to me? What happens when people simply do as they like? Judges answers that question, and it's not pretty. Things might not get as violent in our lives, but some of the consequences can be just as serious.

Chapter 1

The Tribes of Judah and Simeon Capture Adonibezek

¹ After Joshua's death the people of Israel asked the LORD, "Which of our tribes should be the first to go and attack the Canaanites?"

² The LORD answered, "The tribe of Judah will go first. I am giving them control of the land."

³ The people of Judah said to the people of Simeon, "Go with us into the territory assigned to us, and we will fight the Canaanites together. Then we will go with you into the territory assigned to you." So the tribes of Simeon ⁴ and Judah went into battle together. The LORD gave them victory over the Canaanites and the Perizzites, and they defeated 10,000 men at Bezek.

⁵ They found Adonibezek there and fought against him.

⁶ He ran away, but they chased him, caught him, and cut off his thumbs and big toes.

⁷ Adonibezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off have picked up scraps under my table. God has now done to me what I did to them." He was taken to Jerusalem, where he died.

The Tribe of Judah Conquers Jerusalem and Hebron

⁸ The men of Judah attacked Jerusalem and captured it. They killed its people and set fire to the city.

⁹After this they went on to fight the Canaanites who lived in the hill country, in the foothills, and in the dry country to the south.

¹⁰They marched against the Canaanites living in the city of Hebron, which used to be called Kiriath Arba. There they defeated the clans of Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.

Othniel Conquers the City of Debir

¹¹From there the men of Judah marched against the city of Debir, at that time called Kiriath Sepher.

¹²One of them, called Caleb, said, "I will give my daughter Achsah in marriage to the man who succeeds in capturing Kiriath Sepher." ¹³Othniel, the son of Caleb's younger brother Kenaz, captured the city, so Caleb gave him his daughter Achsah in marriage.

¹⁴On the wedding day Othniel urged her^a to ask her father for a field. She got down from her donkey, and Caleb asked her what she wanted.

¹⁵She answered, "I want some pools of water. The land you have given me is in the dry country." So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

The Victories of the Tribes of Judah and Benjamin

¹⁶The descendants of Moses' father-in-law, the Kenite, went on with the people of Judah from Jericho, the city of palm trees, into the barren country south of Arad in Judah.

^a Some ancient translations *Othniel urged her*; Hebrew *she urged Othniel*.

There they settled among the Amalekites.^b 17The people of Judah went with the people of Simeon, and together they defeated the Canaanites who lived in the city of Zephath. They put a curse on the city, destroyed it, and named it Hormah.^c 18-19The LORD helped the people of Judah, and they took possession of the hill country. But they did not capture^d Gaza, Ashkelon, or Ekron, with their surrounding territories. These people living along the coast had iron chariots, and so the people of Judah were not able to drive them out.

20 As Moses had commanded, Hebron was given to Caleb, who drove out of the city the three clans descended from Anak.

21 But the people of the tribe of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites living in Jerusalem, and the Jebusites have continued to live there with the people of Benjamin ever since.

The Tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh Conquer Bethel

22-23The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh went to attack the city of Bethel, at that time called Luz. The LORD helped them. They sent spies to the city, 24who saw a man leaving and said to him, "Show us how to get into the city, and we won't hurt you." 25So he showed them, and the people of Ephraim and Manasseh killed everyone in the city, except this man and his family.

^b Some ancient translations *Amalekites*; Hebrew *people*.

^c *Hormah*: This name in Hebrew means "destruction".

^d One ancient translation *But they did not capture*; Hebrew *And they captured*.

²⁶He later went to the land of the Hittites, built a city there, and named it Luz, which is still its name.

People who were not Driven Out by the Israelites

²⁷The tribe of Manasseh did not drive out the people living in the cities of Beth Shan, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, Megiddo, and the nearby towns; the Canaanites continued to live there.

²⁸When the Israelites became stronger, they forced the Canaanites to work for them, but still they did not drive them all out.

²⁹The tribe of Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites living in the city of Gezer, and so the Canaanites continued to live there with them.

³⁰The tribe of Zebulun did not drive out the people living in the cities of Kitron and Nahalal, and so the Canaanites continued to live there with them and were forced to work for them.

³¹The tribe of Asher did not drive out the people living in the cities of Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphek, and Rehob.

³²The people of Asher lived with the local Canaanites, since they did not drive them out.

³³The tribe of Naphtali did not drive out the people living in the cities of Beth Shemesh and Bethanath. The people of Naphtali lived with the local Canaanites, but forced them to work for them.

Ruth the Moabite

Ruth travelled with Naomi to her home in Bethlehem. The Book of Ruth does not mention the hostility between the peoples of Moab and Judah.



J U D A H

Jerusalem

Bethlehem

River Jordan

Rabbah

Heshbon

▲ Mt. Nebo

The King's Highway
(the main route
through Moab)

D E A D S E A

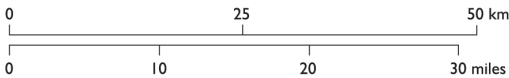
Dibon

Aroer

River Arnon

M O A B

Kir Hareseth



Ruth

The foreigner in the family tree

What's it about? Set in the dangerous time of the judges, this is the story of Ruth, a foreigner who followed her mother-in-law, Naomi, to Israel. She risked her life to save herself and Naomi.

Who wrote it? The author is unknown, but the book was probably written after David became king.

Why read it? The book is full of kindness and redemption. It mirrors the story of God's desire to redeem his people.

What's it to me? Ruth was a foreigner, but she became part of Jesus' family tree. Outsiders aren't excluded from God's salvation.

Chapter 1

Elimelech and his Family Move to Moab

¹⁻²Long ago, in the days before Israel had a king, there was a famine in the land. So a man named Elimelech, who belonged to the clan of Ephrath and who lived in Bethlehem in Judah, went with his wife Naomi and their two sons Mahlon and Chilion to live for a while in the country of Moab. While they were living there, ³Elimelech died, and Naomi was left alone with her two sons, ⁴who married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. About ten years later ⁵Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left all alone, without husband or sons.

Naomi and Ruth Return to Bethlehem

⁶Some time later Naomi heard that the LORD had blessed his people by giving them a good harvest; so she got ready to leave Moab with her daughters-in-law.

⁷They started out together to go back to Judah, but on the way ⁸she said to them, "Go back home and stay with your mothers. May the LORD be as good to you as you have been to me and to those who have died.

⁹And may the LORD make it possible for each of you to marry again and have a home."

So Naomi kissed them goodbye. But they started crying ¹⁰and said to her, "No! We will go with you to your people."

¹¹ “You must go back, my daughters,” Naomi answered. “Why do you want to come with me? Do you think I could have sons again for you to marry?”

¹² Go back home, for I am too old to get married again. Even if I thought there was still hope, and so got married tonight and had sons, ¹³ would you wait until they had grown up? Would this keep you from marrying someone else? No, my daughters, you know that’s impossible. The LORD has turned against me, and I feel very sorry for you.”^a

¹⁴ Again they started crying. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye and went back home,^b but Ruth held on to her.

¹⁵ So Naomi said to her, “Ruth, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her god.^c Go back home with her.”

¹⁶ But Ruth answered, “Don’t ask me to leave you! Let me go with you. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.

¹⁷ Wherever you die, I will die, and that is where I will be buried. May the LORD’s worst punishment come upon me if I let anything but death^d separate me from you!”

^a *sorry for you; or bitter about what has happened to you.*

^b *One ancient translation and went back home; Hebrew does not have these words.*

^c *god; or gods.*

^d *anything but death; or even death.*



“They went on until they came to Bethlehem” (1.19)

18 When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

19 They went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived, the whole town got excited, and the women there exclaimed, “Is this really Naomi?”

20 “Don’t call me Naomi,” she answered; “call me Marah,^e because Almighty God has made my life bitter.

21 When I left here, I had plenty, but the LORD has brought me back without a thing. Why call me Naomi when the LORD Almighty has condemned me and sent me trouble?”

22 This, then, was how Naomi came back from Moab with Ruth, her Moabite daughter-in-law. The barley harvest was just beginning when they arrived in Bethlehem.

^e Naomi... Marah: In Hebrew Naomi means “pleasant” and Marah means “bitter”.