

Ruth 1

“Losing Everything: How is God at Work When Times Are Really, Really Hard?”
(pt. 1)

INTRO- Ruth is a universal story because everyone goes through seasons of suffering and loss!
(note Job 5:7; John 16:33; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 4:12)

What are some of the hardships and difficulties brought about by COVID 19? How has this global pandemic impacted you? How has it most impacted those in your church family?

Why is Ruth the perfect Word from the Lord for such a time as this?

Who are the three main (human) characters in Ruth?

1) _____, 2) _____, 3) _____.

The overarching theme of this grand love story is *God’s lovingkindness*; **חֶסֶד** (*chesed*)

How do Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz demonstrate extraordinary loving-kindness and how does this point to God’s overflowing love for His people (note also Lamentations 3:22-26)?

Naomi, in many ways, is the female version of _____

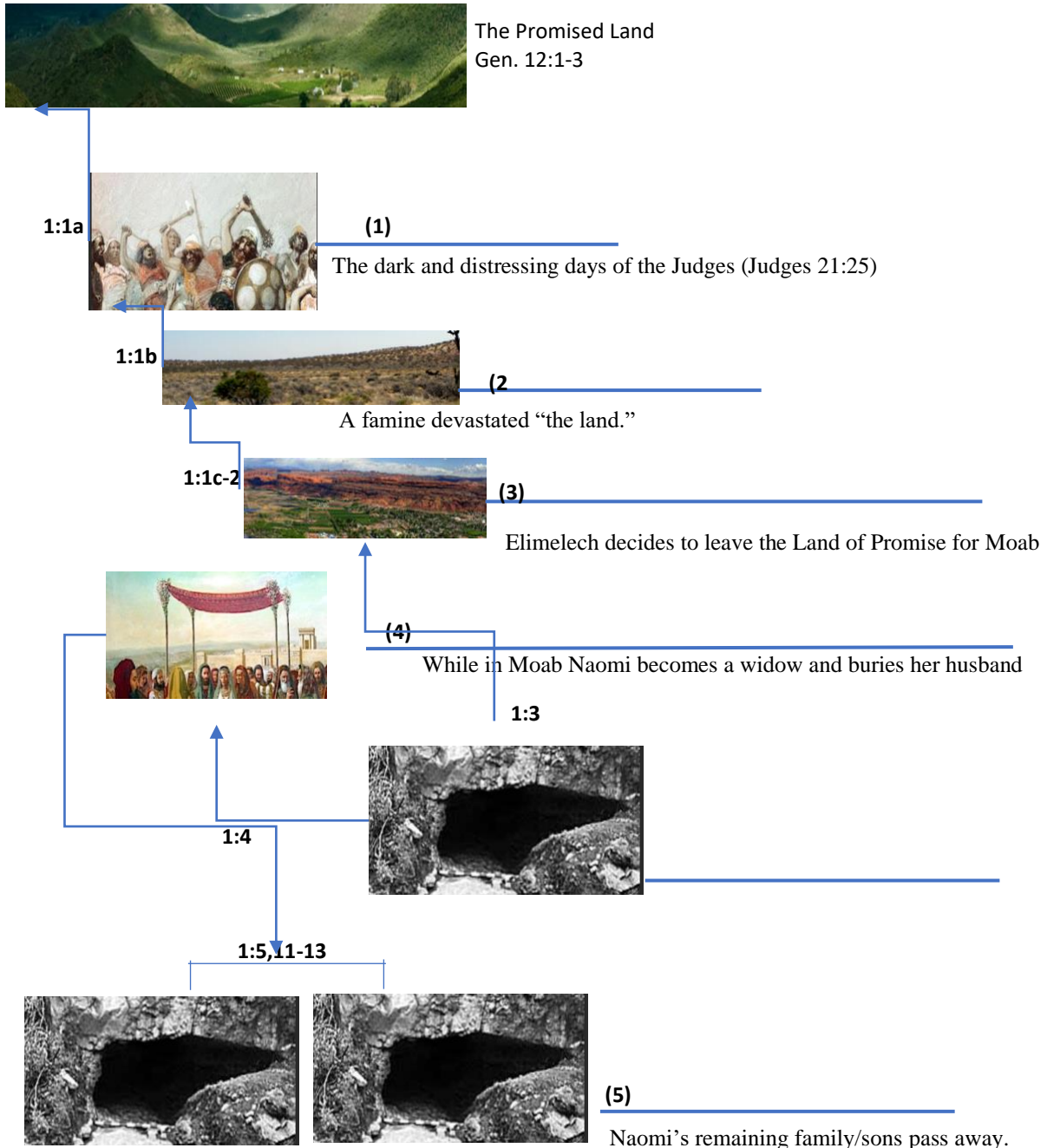
I) **LOSING EVERYTHING** (*How is God at Work When Times Are Really, Really Hard?*)

(Ruth 1:1-5)

Naomi's life seemingly goes from bad to worse, to almost excruciatingly unbearable!

Let's trace the first half of Naomi's "Losing Everything" story in 5 stages.

Naomi's descent



Application Questions

How is the Ruth story a universal story? Why is it easy for believers to connect with these characters and with this historical book and story?

How have you been impacted by the Coronavirus Pandemic? What are some of the ways your church family has been greatly impacted by this trial and tribulation?

List some of the ways you have reached out to encourage those who are struggling during this crisis? To show them that you care? How have you helped them fix their eyes on Jesus?

What are some of the ways you could use the biblical principles from this message to comfort those who are really struggling with fear, worry, and anxiety?

What might biblical loving-kindness look like in terms of you caring and showing the love of Christ for your neighbor? Your spouse? Your family? Your church family? Your co-workers? Your classmates and roommates? Those impacted by this virus? Note John 13:35; 14:26; Phil. 2:1-4; Col. 3:12-14; 1 Cor. 13:4-7.

How does Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz's extraordinary loving-kindness ultimately point to and flow out overflowing loving-kindness/compassion for His people? (note also Lam. 3:22-26)

The English language does not have a good word to really capture the depth and beauty of the wonderful Hebrew word חֶסֶד (*chesed*)

Are you pinning your HOPE in the God of the famine, flood, and plague? How does the sovereignty of God help us to not lose heart or to be overcome with despair during dark valleys?

Summarize the 5 stages of Naomi's "losing everything" story. In what ways do you relate to Naomi? Who in our congregation is suffering the most and how might we rally around them?

Naomi is tempted to believe the lie that all hope is lost. That God is against her. Her faith is fragile and she *almost* loses all hope. As a result of the storms of life, Naomi is a heartbroken and battered lady. We must be careful not to judge her too harshly (like Job's "friends").

How does Ruth's FAITH in Yahweh and her steadfast love for Naomi help this godly and broken woman get through this terrible series of tragedies? Has anyone every been this kind of friend to you?

How does this story reflect the heart of God for His own? When is the last time God brought you through some particularly painful season of life?

Am I walking "by faith" or "by sight" during this virus pandemic? Does inner peace truly characterize my life? How have you used social media, email, texting to proclaim the need for repentance and faith and the gospel of hope to unbelieving friends/family? How could I do a better job of this?

Am I really holding onto to the HOPE of Romans 8:28-29 and Genesis 50:20? Am I using technology to demonstrate my confidence in the Sovereign plan of an always good, never late GOD?

Though written much later Lamentations 3:22-26 could be the overarching theme verse of Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi's story. The same is true for all of us who have placed our trust in the Divine kinsman Redeemer Jesus Christ! Meditate on these verses this week. Ask God to drive away the clouds of fear and worry away. Let's commit to pray more, to take in the Word of God more, and to worship more this coming week (1 Peter 5:7).