

The First Bethlehem Story: The Book of Ruth

The Hidden God Who is in Control is
Faithful to His Covenant

THE TWO BETHLEHEM STORIES

- **Second Bethlehem Story:** The story of God's Eternal Son entered into humanity, into the people of Israel, the Son of David, to deliver all humanity and also to ensure the fulfillment of God's everlasting and unconditional covenant with the people of Israel.
- **First Bethlehem Story:** Necessary for the second Bethlehem story to occur.

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

**ABRAHAMIC
COVENANT**
Genesis 12:1-13

“land” “seed” “blessing”

**ISRAEL LAND
COVENANT**

Deuteronomy 30

“land”

**DAVIDIC
COVENANT**

2 Samuel 7

“seed”

**NEW
COVENANT**

Jeremiah 31

“blessing”

Gentiles in the
Blessing through
Christ, the seed
Galatians 3:8, 16

Background to the Story of Ruth

BACKGROUND TO THE STORY OF RUTH

- The book is written **in the time of David** or Solomon about real people and events that occurred about **200 years earlier, in the period of the Judges**. Not everything that happened in the lives of the people in the book is included. The author selected the details that developed the theme or idea he wishes to teach in the book. Ruth is a **theological story**, not just a nice story. It is a book about **God's faithfulness to His covenant** with Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob.

Ruth in the Period of the Judges is Like a Diamond among Lumps of Coal

■ Introduction--Setting the Scene 1:1-5

- Ruth 1:1 ¶ Now it came to pass, **in the days when the judges ruled**, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

THE STORY

- Introduction--Setting the Scene 1:1-5
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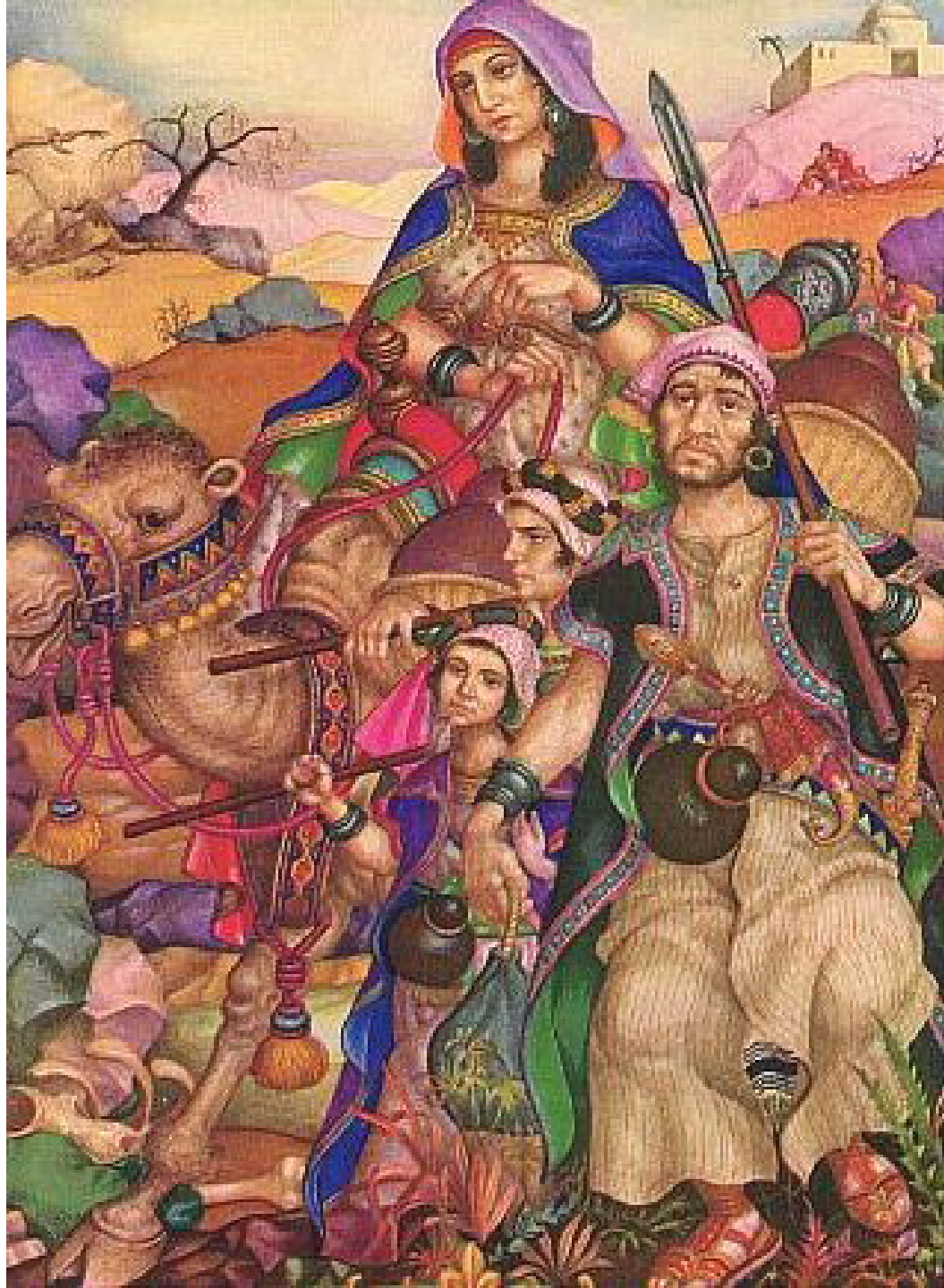






THE STORY

- **Introduction--Setting the Scene 1:1-5**
- Ruth 1:2 The name of the man was **Elimelech**, the name of his wife was **Naomi**, and the names of his two sons were **Mahlon and Chilion** — Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there.



THE STORY

- **Introduction--Setting the Scene 1:1-5**
- Ruth 1:3 Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons.
- Ruth 1:4 Now they took **wives of the women of Moab**: the name of the one was **Orpah**, and the name of the other **Ruth**. And they dwelt there about ten years.
- Ruth 1:5 Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

THE STORY

■ **Scene I--The Road to Bethlehem 1:6-18**

- Ruth 1:6 ¶ Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that Yahweh had visited His people by giving them bread.
- Ruth 1:7 Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

THE STORY



- **Scene I--The Road to Bethlehem 1:6-18**
- Ruth 1:8 And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “**Go, return each to her mother’s house.** Yahweh deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.
- Ruth 1:9 “Yahweh grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband.” Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.
- Ruth 1:10 And they said to her, “Surely we will return with you to your people.”

THE STORY

■ **Scene I--The Road to Bethlehem 1:6-18**

- Ruth 1:11 But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?”
- Ruth 1:12 “Turn back, my daughters, go — for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons,
- Ruth 1:13 “would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of Yahweh has gone out against me!”



THE STORY

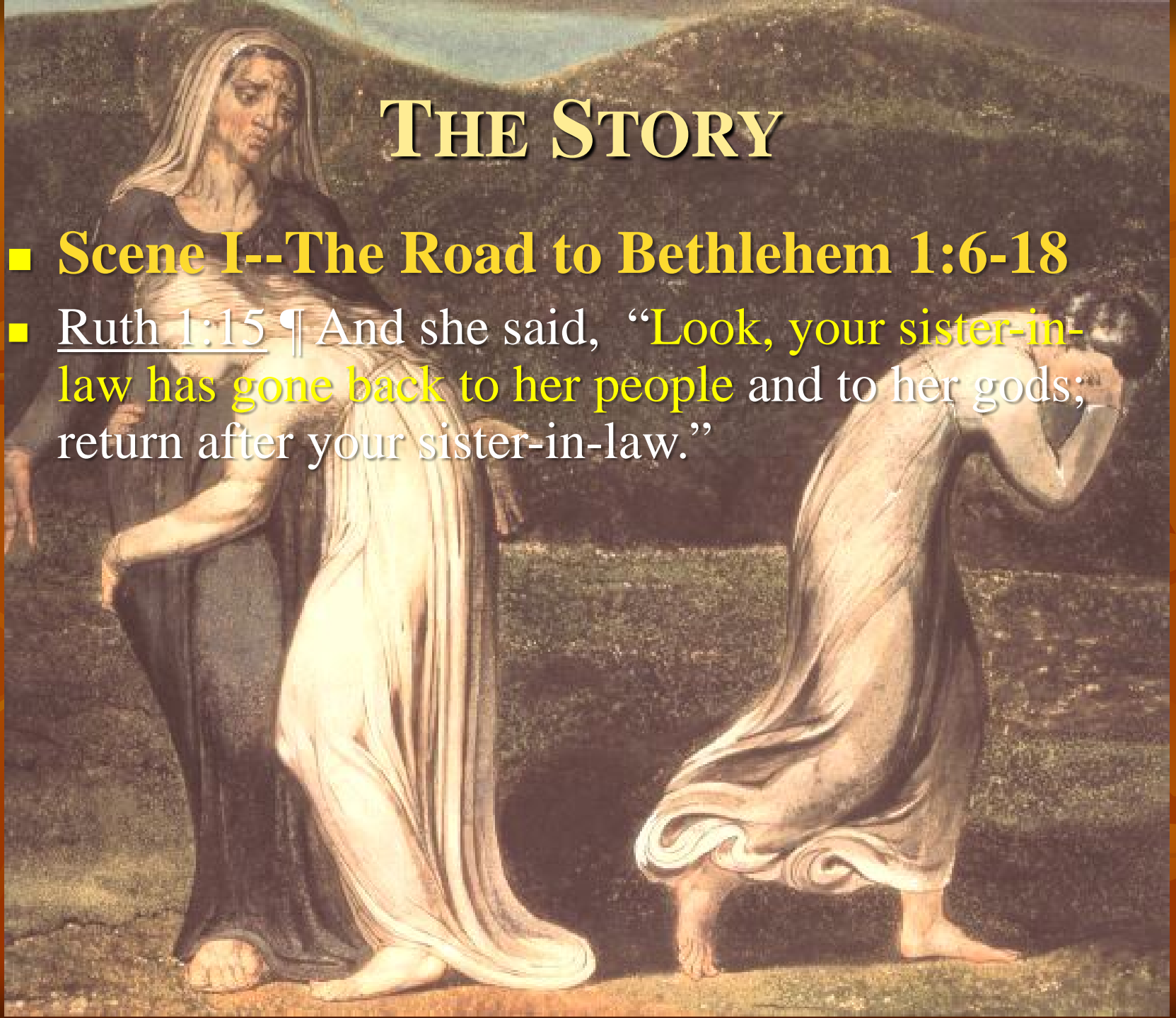
- **Scene I--The Road to Bethlehem 1:6-18**
- Ruth 1:14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but **Ruth clung to her.**



THE STORY

■ Scene I--The Road to Bethlehem 1:6-18

- Ruth 1:15 ¶ And she said, “**Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people** and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”







THE STORY

- **Scene I--The Road to Bethlehem 1:6-18**
- Ruth 1:16 But Ruth said: “Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; **Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.**
- Ruth 1:17 Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. Yahweh do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me.”
- Ruth 1:18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.

THE STORY

■ Interlude 1--Arrival in Bethlehem 1:19-22

- Ruth 1:19 ¶ Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, “Is this Naomi?”
- Ruth 1:20 But she said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me **Mara**, for the Almighty has dealt very **bitterly** with me.

THE STORY

■ Interlude 1--Arrival in Bethlehem 1:19-22

- Ruth 1:21 “I **went out full**, and Yahweh has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since Yahweh has testified against me, and the Almighty has **afflicted** me?”
- Ruth 1:22 ¶ So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the **beginning** of **barley harvest**.



THE STORY

■ **Scene II--The Field of Boaz 2:1-17**

- Ruth 2:1 There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.
- Ruth 2:2 So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please **let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain** after him in whose sight I may find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."
- Ruth 2:3 Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

Survey of the Book

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THE STORY

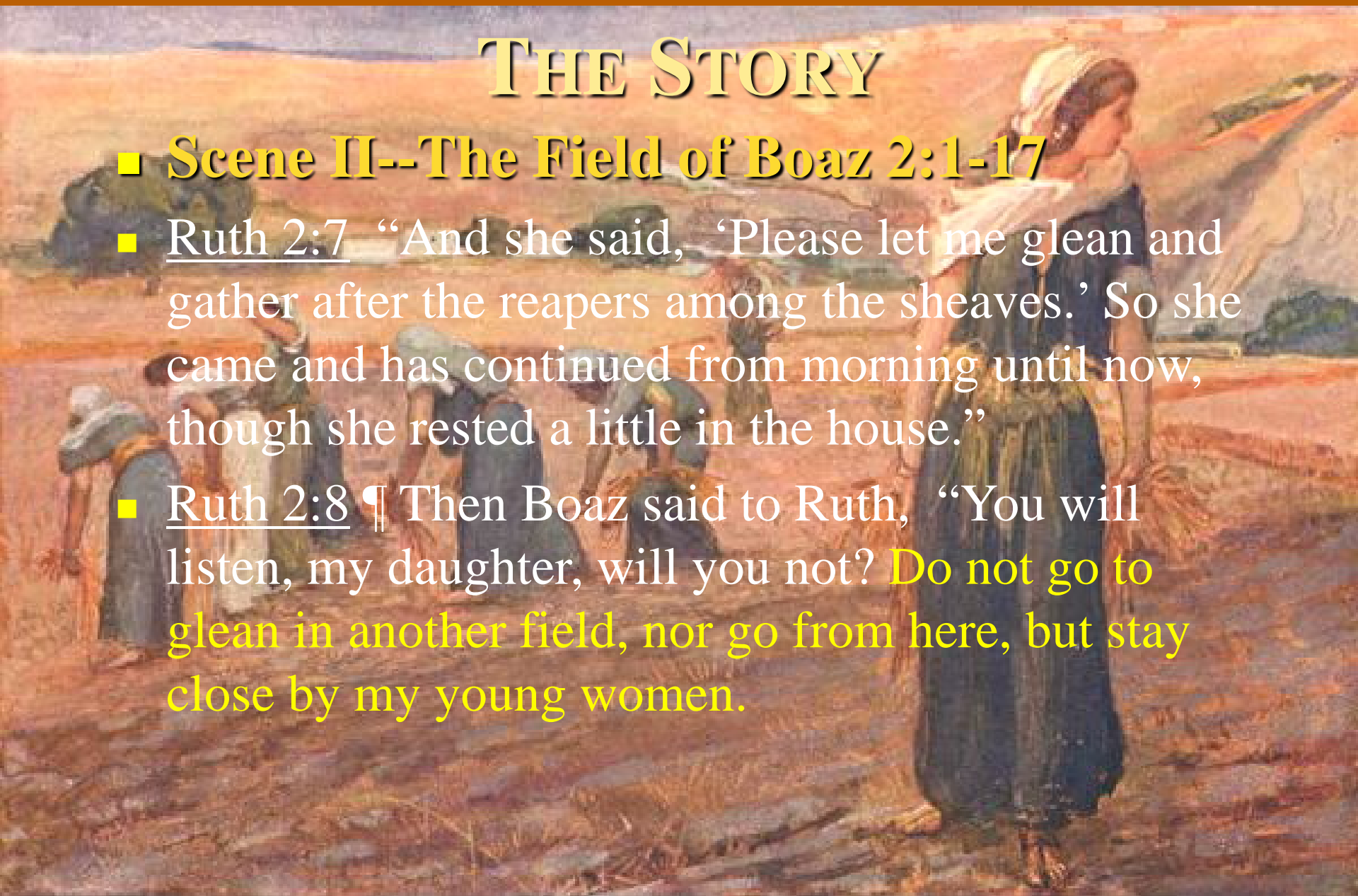
■ **Scene II--The Field of Boaz 2:1-17**

- Ruth 2:4 ¶ Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, “Yahweh be with you!” And they answered him, “Yahweh bless you!”
- Ruth 2:5 Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman is this?”
- Ruth 2:6 So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, “It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.

THE STORY

■ **Scene II--The Field of Boaz 2:1-17**

- Ruth 2:7 “And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house.”
- Ruth 2:8 ¶ Then Boaz said to Ruth, “You will listen, my daughter, will you not? **Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women.**





THE STORY



- **Scene II--The Field of Boaz 2:1-17**
- Ruth 2:9 “Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn.”
- Ruth 2:10 So **she fell on her face, bowed down** to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?”



THE STORY

■ **Scene II--The Field of Boaz 2:1-17**

- Ruth 2:11 And Boaz answered and said to her, “It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before.
- Ruth 2:12 “Yahweh repay your work, and a full reward be given you by Yahweh God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.”
- Ruth 2:13 Then she said, “Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.”

THE STORY



■ **Scene II--The Field of Boaz 2:1-17**

- Ruth 2:14 ¶ Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, “Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.” So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back.
- Ruth 2:15 And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her.
- Ruth 2:16 “Also **let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean,** and do not rebuke her.”
- Ruth 2:17 ¶ So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

THE STORY

■ **Interlude 2--Ruth's Report 2:18-23**

- Ruth 2:18 Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied.
- Ruth 2:19 And her mother-in-law said to her, “Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you.” So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, “The man’s name with whom I worked today is Boaz.”

THE STORY

■ Interlude 2--Ruth's Report 2:18-23

- Ruth 2:20 Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “**Blessed be he of Yahweh, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!**” And Naomi said to her, “This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives.”
- Ruth 2:21 Ruth the Moabite said, “He also said to me, ‘You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.’”

THE STORY

■ Interlude 2--Ruth's Report 2:18-23

- Ruth 2:22 And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field.”
- Ruth 2:23 So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

THE STORY

■ **Interlude 3--Naomi's Plan 3:1-5**

- Ruth 3:1 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?”
- Ruth 3:2 “Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.
- Ruth 3:3 “Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.

THE STORY

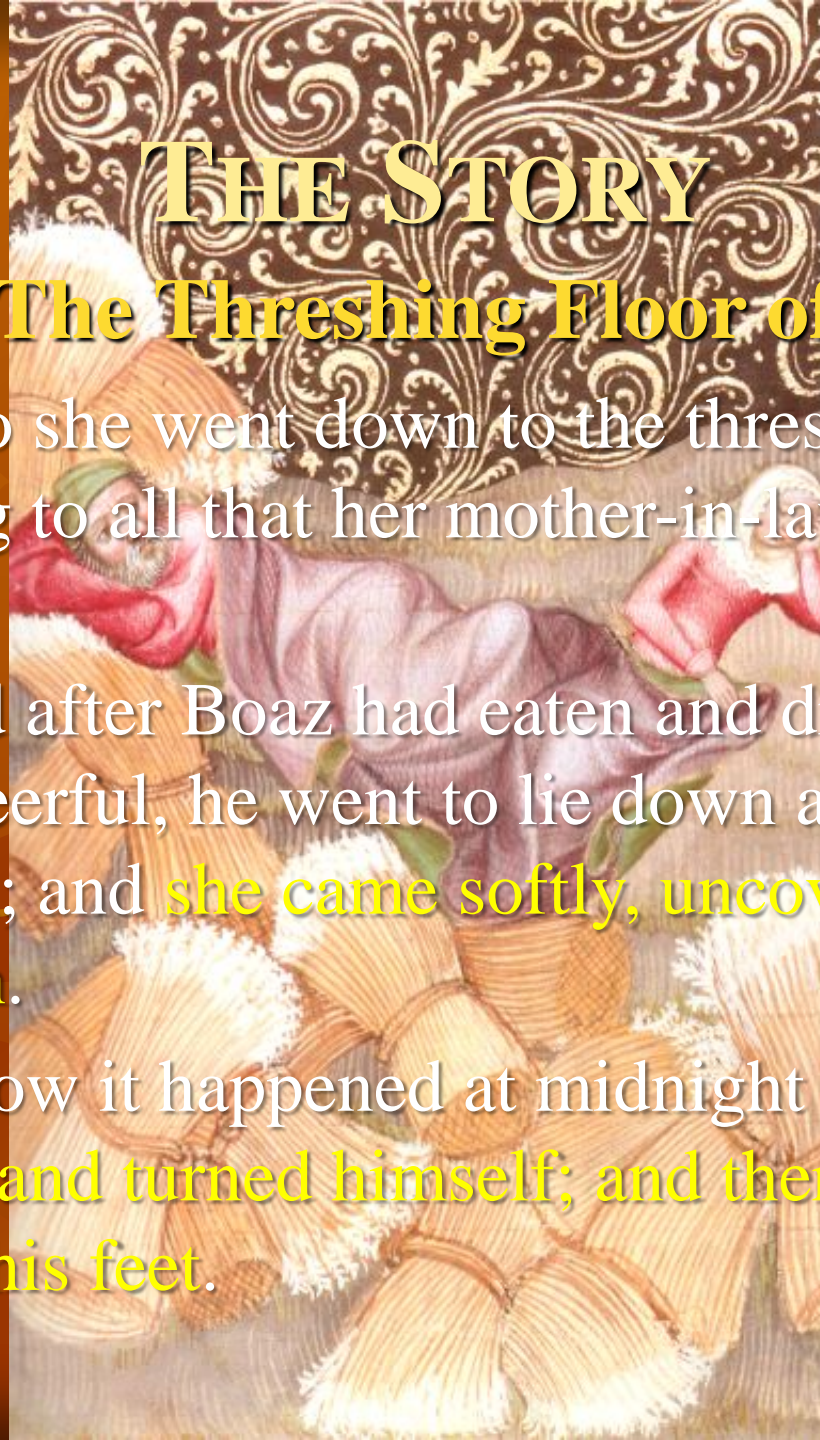
■ Interlude 3--Naomi's Plan 3:1-5

- Ruth 3:4 “Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.”
- Ruth 3:5 And she said to her, “All that you say to me I will do.”

THE STORY

■ Scene III--The Threshing Floor of Boaz 3:6-15

- Ruth 3:6 ¶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her.
- Ruth 3:7 And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.
- Ruth 3:8 ¶ Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet.







THE STORY

- **Scene III--The Threshing Floor of Boaz 3:6-15**
- Ruth 3:9 And he said, “Who are you?” So she answered, “I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.”
- Ruth 3:10 Then he said, “Blessed are you of Yahweh, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich.
- Ruth 3:11 “And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman.

THE STORY

- **Scene III--The Threshing Floor of Boaz 3:6-15**
- Ruth 3:12 “Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.
- Ruth 3:13 “Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative [**kinsman-redeemer**] for you — good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as Yahweh lives! Lie down until morning.”

THE STORY

- **Scene III--The Threshing Floor of Boaz 3:6-15**
- Ruth 3:14 ¶ So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, “Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.”
- Ruth 3:15 Also he said, “Bring the shawl that is on you and hold it.” And when she held it, he measured six ephahs of barley, and laid it on her. Then she went into the city.

THE STORY

■ **Interlude--Ruth's Report 3:16-18**

- Ruth 3:16 So when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “Is that you, my daughter?” Then she told her all that the man had done for her.
- Ruth 3:17 And she said, “These six ephahs of barley he gave me; for he said to me, ‘Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’ ”
- Ruth 3:18 Then she said, “Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day.”

THE STORY

■ **Scene IV--The Gate of Bethlehem 4:1-12**

- Ruth 4:1 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, “Come aside, friend, sit down here.” So he came aside and sat down.
- Ruth 4:2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down.
- Ruth 4:3 Then he said to the close relative, “Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech.

THE STORY

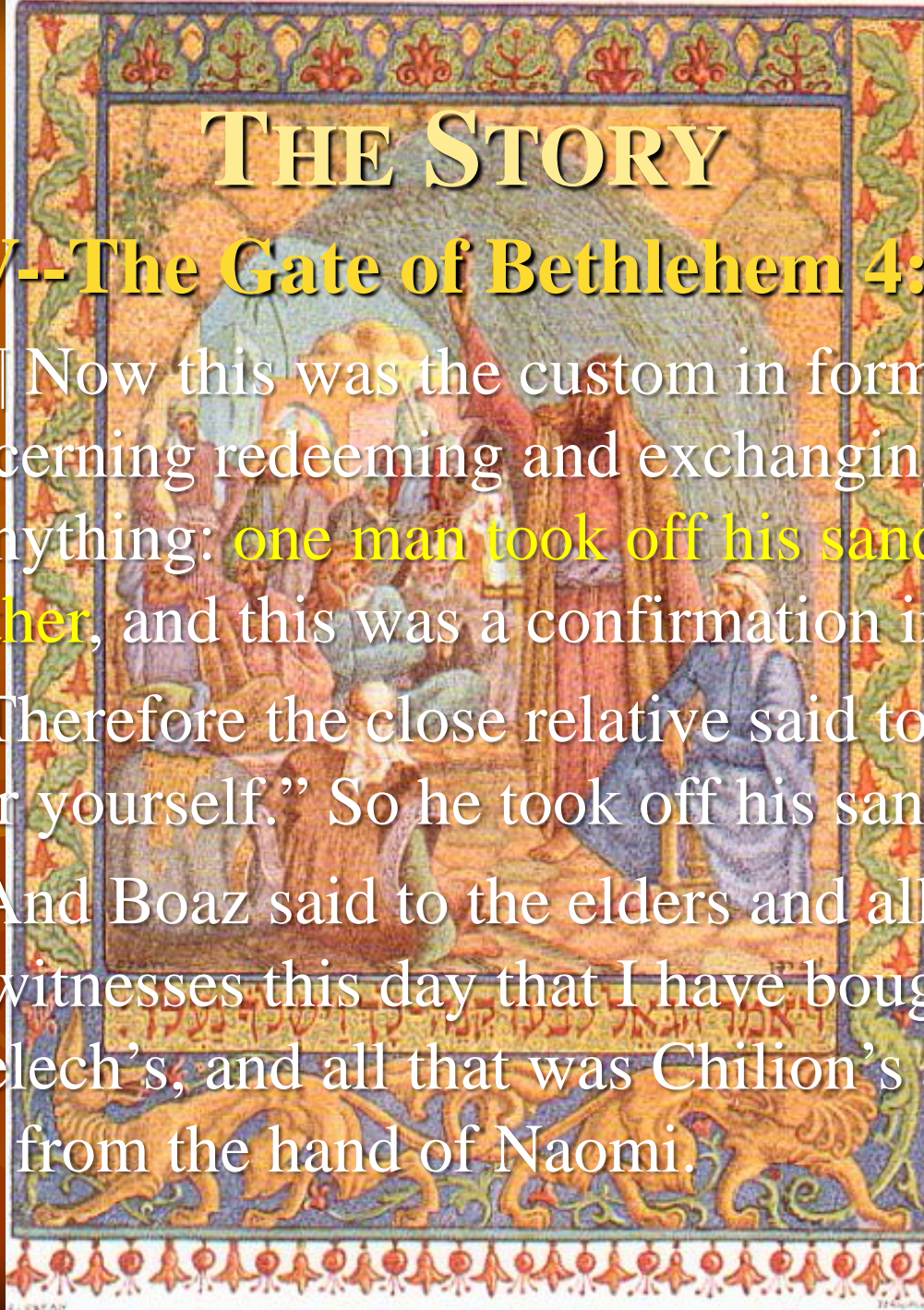
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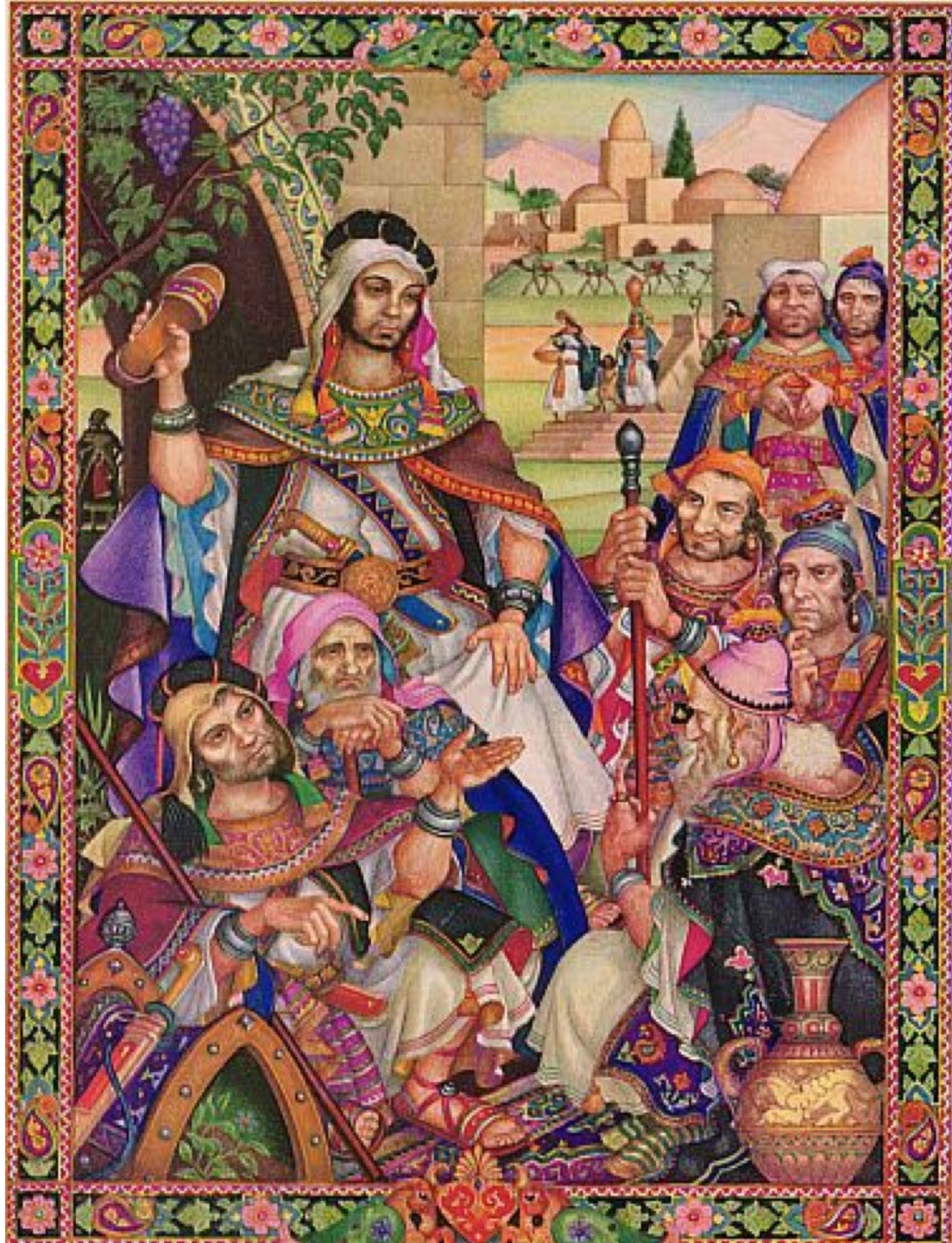
- Ruth 4:4 “And I thought to inform you, saying, ‘Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.’ ” And he said, “I will redeem it.”
- Ruth 4:5 Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance.”
- Ruth 4:6 And the close relative said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it.”

THE STORY

■ Scene IV--The Gate of Bethlehem 4:1-12

- Ruth 4:7 ¶ Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: **one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other**, and this was a confirmation in Israel.
- Ruth 4:8 Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself.” So he took off his sandal.
- Ruth 4:9 And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s, and all that was Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, from the hand of Naomi.







וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֵּמַל לְבָנֵי קַמְחָה - לֵךְ וְיִשְׁלַף נֵעֶלְוֹ:

THE STORY

■ **Scene IV--The Gate of Bethlehem 4:1-12**

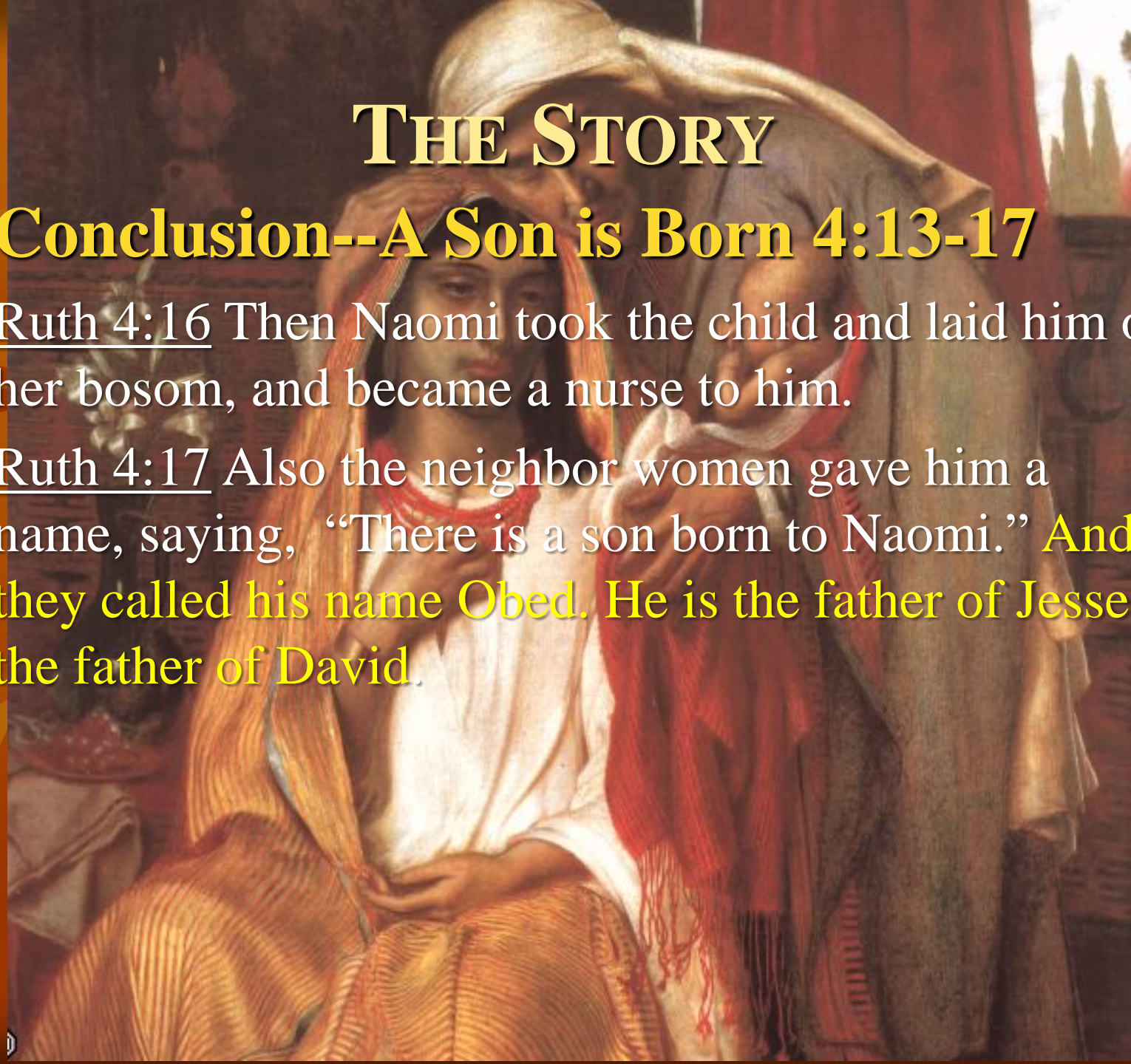
- Ruth 4:10 “Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day.”
- Ruth 4:11 And all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, “We are witnesses. Yahweh make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem.
- Ruth 4:12 “May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which Yahweh will give you from this young woman.”

THE STORY

- **Conclusion--A Son is Born 4:13-17**
- Ruth 4:13 ¶ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, **Yahweh gave her conception, and she bore a son [Obed]**.
- Ruth 4:14 Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be Yahweh, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and **may his name be famous in Israel!**”
- Ruth 4:15 “And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.”

THE STORY

- **Conclusion--A Son is Born 4:13-17**
- Ruth 4:16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him.
- Ruth 4:17 Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, “There is a son born to Naomi.” **And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.**







THE STORY

- **Genealogical Appendix** (Birth of David the King)--4:18-22
- Ruth 4:18 ¶ Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron;
- Ruth 4:19 Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab;
- Ruth 4:20 Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon;
- Ruth 4:21 Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed;
- Ruth 4:22 Obed begot Jesse, and **Jesse begot David.**

Theology of the Story of Ruth

THEOLOGY OF THE STORY

- Major Character: Not Ruth, Naomi, Boaz, etc., but Yahweh
- Theme: YAHWEH, THE HIDDEN GOD WHO IS IN CONTROL IS FAITHFUL TO HIS COVENANT

THEOLOGY OF THE STORY

- Theme Developed:
 - * NAMES OF GOD in the Book
 - **Yahweh-Covenant Name of God** (He Who is and will be); cf Ex 3. The God of faithfulness used **17 times**
 - **God**-basic meaning is He who is great or mighty; refers to God of Israel 3 times and God of Moab (Chemosh) 1 time
 - **Almighty**-Used in the two verses where Naomi speaks and says that Yahweh came against her.

THEOLOGY OF THE STORY

■ Direct References to God (Prayer and Actions)

* PRAYER

- Naomi prays for Ruth to receive kindness from Yahweh and that she may find a home and a husband 1:8-9

In 2:20 **kindness of Yahweh** to Ruth mentioned

In Boaz she **receives the latter request**

THEOLOGY OF THE STORY

- Direct References to God (Prayer and Actions)
 - Prayer
 - Benediction of Boaz by Naomi 2:19-20
 - Benediction of Ruth by Boaz 3:10 (finds fulfillment in story's happy ending)
 - Prayers for Family's Prosperity 4:11-12, 14b (fulfilled by couple's great-grandchild; David became king)

THEOLOGY OF THE STORY

- **Boaz prays** that Ruth may find shelter under the wings of Yahweh 2:12
- **(Fulfilled in Ruth's request** for Boaz to do the part of the next of kin (3:9) where “wing” or skirt is the same word. Here Boaz became the answer to his own prayers)

PRAYERS IN RUTH

	Prayed		Fulfilled	
1:8, 9	Naomi prays for Ruth		2:20	Ruth in favor with Boaz
2:19, 20	Naomi for Boaz		No reference	Conclusion
3:10	Boaz for Ruth		No reference	Conclusion
4:11, 12 & 4:14b	For family's prosperity		No reference	In couple's great grandchild-- David
2:12	Boaz for Ruth		No reference	In Boaz taking Ruth

THEOLOGY OF THE STORY

- We wonder, is God hidden sometimes. Our lives are filled with difficulties, sickness, and persecution and God seems sometimes absent. The book of Ruth displays forcefully the truth that God is acting to fulfill His promises and care for His people. He answers prayers and He acts upon His promises.

THEOLOGY OF THE STORY

■ God's ACTIONS

- Narrator speaks and has the action of **Yahweh initiating the movement of the story** 1:6
- Narrator shows action of **Yahweh bringing the story to a happy ending** 4:13
- Naomi mentions **God's action against her** 1:13, 20-21
- Naomi mentions **God's action of favor** 2:20
Women of Bethlehem report **God's goodness**

THEOLOGY OF THE STORY

□ INDIRECT REFERENCES TO GOD

- Blessed in 2:19 implies “by Yahweh”
- Ruth “happened to come to the field of Boaz” 2:3b
- Scheme of Naomi and actions of Ruth 3:1-13

THEOLOGY OF THE STORY

- THE STORY ALSO SPEAKS OF THE FAITHFULNESS OF YAHWEH TO HIS COVENANT. He committed Himself to the unconditional covenant He made with Abraham. He guaranteed that the tribe of Judah would be the kingly line:
 - Gen. 49:10 The **scepter** shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people

THEOLOGY OF THE STORY

- Though the people sinned gravely against God, and even insisted on a king, one from the line of Benjamin, nonetheless He establishes the Davidic throne, which became an everlasting kingdom finally in David's Son, Messiah Jesus.

Application from the Story of Ruth

APPLICATION OF THE STORY

- **Conclusion:** THE STORY SPEAKS TO US. Various events take place in our lives and God is spoken of, but no great events from God usually take place, but He is there none the less taking care of His world and His own, and He is ensuring that everything works according to His plan and time schedule.