

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

Introduction

These two books, that originally were only one, tell about the history of the people after their return from the Babylonian captivity. Cyrus, the Persian king, has conquered Babylon and has granted permission to the Jews to return to their land and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. The priest Ezra and the governor Nehemiah guide the people during this time of reconstruction and in the reorganization of the country. They did that of course based on the Covenant, pillar of the new protection of Yahweh.

The books were probably written towards the year 400 B.C.

EZRA

The return from the desert

1 In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, Yahweh willed to fulfill the word he had said through the prophet Jeremiah, so he moved the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, to issue the following command and send it out in writing to be read aloud everywhere in his kingdom, **2**“Thus speaks Cyrus, king of Persia: Yahweh, the God of heavens, who has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, has ordered me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, in the land of Judah. **3**To everyone belonging to his people, may his God be with him! Let them go up to Jerusalem with the help of their God and there build the House of Yahweh, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. **4**In every place where the rest of the people of Yahweh live, let the people of those places help them for their journey with silver, gold and all kinds of goods and livestock. Let them also give them voluntary offerings for the House of Yahweh which is in Jerusalem.”

5Then they rose up—the heads of the families of Judah and Benjamin, the priests and the Levites, and all those whose spirit God had stirred up—and they decided to go and build the House of Yahweh. **6**And all their neighbors gave them all kinds of help: gold, silver, livestock and precious objects in great quantity, besides every kind of voluntary offering.

7King Cyrus also brought out the vessels of the House of Yahweh which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods. **8**Cyrus, the king, gave them into the hands of Mithredath, the treasurer, who counted them and turned them over to Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.

9This is the list: golden cups for the offering, 30; silver cups for offering, 1000; knives, 29; **10**other cups of gold, 30; of silver, 410; other vessels, 1000.

11Total number of golden and silver vessels: 5400. All this was brought out by Sheshbazzar when the exiles were allowed to return to Jerusalem from Babylon.

NEHEMIAH

Reading of the Law

8 **1**In the seventh month, all the people gathered as one man in the square before the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which Yahweh had given to Israel. **2**Ezra brought the Law

before the assembly, both men and women and all the children who could understand what was being read. It was the first day of the seventh month. 3Ezra read the book before all of them from early morning until midday in the square facing the Water Gate; and all who heard were attentive to the Book of the Law.

4Ezra, the teacher of the Law, stood on a wooden platform built for that occasion and to his right were Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiiah, Uriah, Hilkiyah and Maaseiah; and to his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hasbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam.

5Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was in a higher place; and when he opened it, all the people stood. 6Ezra blessed Yahweh, the great God; and all the people lifted up their hands and answered, "Amen! Amen!" And they bowed their heads to the ground.

7The Levites Joshua, Bani and the rest of their brothers explained the Law to the people who were standing. 8They read from the Book of the Law of God, clarifying and interpreting the meaning, so that everyone might understand what they were hearing.

9Then Ezra, the teacher of the Law, said to the people:

—This day is dedicated to Yahweh, your God, so do not be sad or weep.

He said this because all wept when they heard the reading of the Law. 10Then he said to them:

—Go and eat rich foods, drink sweet wine and share with him who has nothing prepared. This day is dedicated to the Lord, so do not be sad. The joy of Yahweh is our strength.

11The Levites also calmed the people down, saying:

—Do not weep. This day is a festival day. Do not be sad.

12And the people went their way to eat, drink and share, and they had a great feast, because they had understood the words that had been proclaimed to them.

MACCABEES

Introduction

These events happen towards the year 200B.C. The Israelites are a small estate under the kings of Syria, successors of Alexander Magnus' empire. One of them, Antiochus Epiphanes, tries to force the Israelites to accept Greek customs, completely opposed to the prescriptions of the Law. The people of Israel resists passively but, later on, reach martyrdom before disobeying Yahweh. Afterwards the armed rebellion explodes, steered by one family: the Maccabees.

In these books, besides the regular theme of Yahweh's protection for his people, when the people are faithful there is another very interesting theme: faith in eternal life, and the recompense that the just ones will receive after death.

1 MACCABEES

Historical introduction

1 1Everything began with the conquests of Alexander the first, son of Philip, the Macedonian. Setting out from Greece, he killed Darius, king of the Persians and the Medes. Being already King of Greece, he took the throne of Darius. 2After fighting many battles, conquering strongholds and putting to death the kings of those

nations, 3he reached the ends of the earth and plundered several nations. And when the world became quiet and subject to his power, he became proud. 7Alexander had reigned for twelve years when he died.

8His generals assumed power, each one in the region assigned to him. 9And immediately after Alexander's death, they made themselves kings and their sons after them, filling the earth with evil for many years.

Persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes

10From their descendants there came a godless offshoot, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of King Antiochus, who had been held as hostage in Rome. He became king in the one hundred and thirty-seventh year of the Greek era (175 B.C.).

11It was then that some rebels emerged from Israel, who succeeded in winning over many people. They said:

—Let us renew contact with the peoples around us for we have endured many misfortunes since we separated from them!

12This proposal was well-received 13and some eagerly went to the king. The king authorized them to adopt the customs of the pagan nations. 14With his permission, they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem in the pagan style. 15And as they wanted to be like the pagans in everything, they made artificial foreskins for themselves and abandoned the Holy Covenant, sinning as they pleased.

20In the year one hundred and forty-three (169B.C.), when Antiochus returned after defeating Egypt, he passed through Israel and went up to Jerusalem with a strong army.

21He arrogantly broke into the sanctuary and removed the golden altar, the lampstand for the light with all its accessories, 22the table for the bread of offering, the libation vessels, the cups, the golden censers, the curtains and the crowns, and stripped away all the decorations, the golden moldings that used to cover the Temple entrance. 23He also took possession of the silver, gold, valuable objects and all the hidden treasures he could find. 24He took everything with him and left for his country, after shedding much blood and making arrogant statements.

29After two years, the king sent to the cities of Judah the chief tax collector and he came to Jerusalem with a strong army. 30He spoke to the people with words of peace in order to deceive them. But when he had gained their confidence, he suddenly fell on the city and dealt it a terrible blow, killing many Israelites. 31He plundered the city, burning and destroying the palaces and the surrounding walls.

32He took women and children captive and seized the livestock. 33Then they rebuilt the city of David with a high and solid wall protected by strong towers, and this became their fortress. 34There they set evil men and apostates who defended it. 35They stored up weapons and provisions, and everything they looted in the city, posing a constant threat. 36It became an ambush for the sanctuary, a grave and constant threat to Israel.

41Antiochus issued a decree to his whole kingdom.

Mattathias' rebellion

2 15In the meantime, the king's representatives, who were forcing the Jews to give up their religion came to Modein to organize a sacred gathering.

16While many Israelites went to them, Mattathias and his sons drew apart.

17The representatives of the king addressed Mattathias, and said to him:

—You are one of the leaders of this city, an important and well-known man, and your many children and relatives follow you. 18Come now and be the first to fulfill the king's order, as the men of Judah have already done, and the survivors in Jerusalem as well. You and your sons will be named Friends of the King and the king will send you gold, silver and many other gifts.

19But Mattathias answered in a loud voice:

—Even if all the nations included in the kingdom should abandon the religion of their ancestors and submit to the order of King Antiochus, 20I, my sons and my family will remain faithful to the Covenant of our ancestors. 21May God preserve us from abandoning the Law and its precepts. 22We will not obey the orders of the king nor turn aside from our religion either to the right or to the left.

27Mattathias then began to proclaim loudly in the city:

—Everyone who is zealous for the Law and supports the Covenant, come out and follow me!

28Immediately he and his sons fled to the mountains and left behind all they had in the city.

Judah makes alliance with Rome

8 1In the meantime, Judas was informed about the Romans. He was told that the Romans were valiant in war and that they showed goodwill towards all who sided with them; that they offered friendship to all who approached them, 2and were a strong ally in war.

He was told of their wars and of their exploits among the Gauls whom they conquered and forced to pay taxes, 3and of all they had done in Spain to gain possession of the silver and gold mines, 4and how they had conquered that land by dint of intelligence and perseverance, despite its great distance from their own land. He also learned how they had defeated the kings who came from the ends of the earth to attack them, how they managed to conquer and crush them. There were others who paid them an annual tax.

17So Judas sent Eupolemus the son of John, and Jason the son of Eleazar to Rome, entrusting them with the mission to make a covenant of friendship with the Romans. 18Since the Greeks treated the Israelites as slaves, Judas hoped to liberate them from oppression in this way.

19The envoys from Judas went to Rome, where they arrived after a long journey. When they entered the Senate they addressed the assembly:

20—Judas Maccabeus, his brothers and the people of Israel have sent us to you to conclude a covenant of peace with you and to be numbered among your allies and friends.

21The Romans approved this proposal.

2 MACCABEES

Persecutory laws

6 1After a while, the king sent an older Athenian to force the Jews to abandon their ancestral laws and no longer live according to the laws of God. 2And to have them also profane the temple in Jerusalem and dedicate it to the *Olympian god*. In the same way, he wanted them to dedicate the temple in Mount Gerizim to the *hospitable god*, according to the wishes of the inhabitants of the place.

Martyrdom of Eleazar

18Eleazar, one of the prominent teachers of the Law, already old and of noble appearance, was forced to open his mouth to eat the flesh of a pig. 19But he preferred to die honorably than to live in disgrace, and voluntarily came to the place where they beat him to death. He spit out bravely the piece of meat, 20as should be done by those who do not want to do things prohibited by the Law, even to save their life.

21Those in charge of this impious banquet took him aside, since they had known him for a long time, and tried to convince him to pretend to be eating the meat, but in reality, to eat something allowed by the Law and prepared by himself. 22In this way, he could escape death, and be treated with humanity for the sake of their long-time friendship.

23But he preferred to make a noble decision worthy of his age, of his noble years, of his shining white hair, and of the irreproachable life he had led from childhood. Above all, showing respect for the holy laws established by God, he answered that he would rather be sent to the place of the dead. And he added:

24—It would be unworthy to pretend at our age, and to lead many young people to suppose that I, at ninety years, have gone over to the pagan customs. 25If I led them astray for the sake of this short life I would bring disgrace to my old age. 26Even if I could now be saved from mortals, I cannot—whether living or dead—escape from the hands of the Almighty. 27I prefer to bravely sacrifice my life now, as befits my old age. 28So I shall leave an excellent example to the young, dying voluntarily and valiantly for the sacred and holy laws.

Having said this, he gave himself over to death.

29Those who escorted him considered his words foolishness, so their previous gentleness turned into harshness.

30When he was almost at the point of death, he said groaning:

—The Holy Lord, who sees all, knows that though I could have saved myself from death, I now endure terrible sufferings in my body. But in my soul, I suffer gladly because of the respect I have for him.

31In his death, he left a noble example and a memorial of virtue and strength, not only to the young but to the whole nation.

The seven brothers and their mother

71It happened also that seven brothers were arrested with their mother. The king had them scourged and flogged to force them to eat the flesh of a pig which was prohibited by the Law.

2One of them, speaking in behalf of all, said:

—What do you want to find out from us? We are prepared to die right now rather than break the law of our ancestors.

3The king became furious and ordered that pans and caldrons be heated over a fire. 4When these were red-hot, he commanded that the tongue of their spokesman be cut out, his head scalped, and his hands and feet cut off while his brothers and mother looked on.

5When he had been thoroughly mutilated, the king ordered that while still breathing, he be brought to the fire and roasted alive. While the smoke from the pan spread widely, the other brothers and their mother encouraged one another to die bravely. And they said:

6—The Lord God sees all, and in reality, has compassion on us, as Moses declared in his song, and clearly said:

—The Lord will have pity on his servants.

7When the first had left the world in this way, they brought the second for execution. After stripping the skin with the hair from his head, they asked him:

—Which do you prefer: to eat the flesh of a pig or to be tortured limb by limb?

8He answered them in the language of his ancestors:

—I will not eat.

And so he, too, was tortured.

9At the moment of his last breath, he said:

—Murderer, you now dismiss us from life, but the King of the world will raise us up. He will give us eternal life since we die for his laws.

10After this, they punished the third. He stuck his tongue out when asked to, bravely stretched forth his hands, 11and even had the courage to say:

—I have received these limbs from God, but for love of his laws I now consider them as nothing. For I hope to recover them from God.

12The king and his court were touched by the courage of this young man, so unconcerned about his own sufferings.

13When this one was dead, they subjected the fourth to the same torture. 14At the point of death, he cried out:

—I would rather die at the hands of mortals, and wait for the promises of God who will raise us up; you, however, shall have no part in the resurrection of life.

15They took the fifth at once and tortured him. But with his eyes fixed on the king, 16he said to him:

—Though you are mortal, you have authority over people and are able to do what you will. But do not think that our race has been abandoned by God. 17Wait, and you shall see his great power when he torments you and your descendants.

18After this, they took the sixth who, at the point of death, said:

—Don't be mistaken. We suffer all this because of ourselves for we have sinned against our own God; so these astonishing things have come upon us. 19But do not think that you are going to remain unpunished, after having made war with God.

20More than all of them, their mother ought to be admired and remembered. She saw her seven sons die in a single day. But she endured it even with joy for she had put her hope in the Lord. 21Full of a noble sense of honor, she encouraged each one of them in the language of their ancestors. Her woman's heart was moved by manly courage, so she told them:

22—I wonder how you were born of me; it was not I who gave you breath and life, nor I who ordered the matter of your body. 23The Creator of the world who formed man in the beginning and ordered the unfolding of all creation shall in his mercy, give you back breath and life, since you now despise them for love of his laws.

24Antiochus thought that she was making fun of him and suspected that she had insulted him.

As the youngest was still alive, the king tried to win him over not only with his words, but even promised to make him rich and happy, if he would abandon the traditions of his ancestors. He would make him his Friend and appoint him to a high position in the kingdom. 25But as the young man did not pay him any attention, the king ordered the mother to be brought in. He urged her to advise her son in order to save his life. 26After being asked twice by the king, she agreed to persuade her son. 27She bent over him and fooled the cruel tyrant by saying in her ancestral language:

—My son, have pity on me. For nine months I carried you in my womb and suckled you for three years; I raised you up and educated you until this day. 28I ask you now, my son, that when you see the heavens, the earth and all that is in it, you know that God made all this from nothing, and the human race as well. 29Do not fear

these executioners, but make yourself worthy of your brothers—accept death that you may again meet your brothers in the time of mercy.

30When she finished speaking, the young man said:

—What are you waiting for? I do not obey the king's order but the precepts of the Law given by Moses to our ancestors. 31And you who have devised such tortures against the Hebrews, shall not escape the hands of God. 32Know that we perish because of our sins. 33Our living Lord punishes and corrects us for a short time because he is angry with us, but he shall again be reconciled with his servants.

34And you, the most wretched and impious man, do not be proud or be carried away by your vain hopes. Do not raise your hand against the children of Heaven, 35for you have not yet escaped the judgment of the almighty God, who sees everything. 36Our brothers suffered a short time for the sake of eternal life and have already entered into the friendship of God. But you, for your part, shall suffer the punishment you deserve for your arrogance.

37With my brothers, I give up my body and my soul for the laws of my fathers, calling on God that he may at once have pity on our race, and that by trials and afflictions, you may come to confess that he is the only God. 38Through me and my brothers, may the wrath of the Almighty which has justly fallen on the whole of our race come to an end.

39The king was even more infuriated at him than at the others because of his mockery and he dealt more cruelly with him. 40So the youngest also died undefiled, putting his whole trust in God.

41After all her sons, the mother also died.

42This is enough to make known what happened regarding the pagan sacrifices and the tortures beyond all imagination.

New deeds of Judas

12 38Judas reorganized his army, and then went to the city of Adullam. Since it was the week's end, they purified themselves and celebrated the sabbath there. 39The next day the companions of Judas went to take away the bodies of the dead (it was urgent to do it) and buried them with their relatives in the tombs of their fathers. 40They found under the tunic of each of the dead men objects consecrated to the idols of Jamnia, which the Law forbade the Jews to wear. So it became clear to everyone why these men had died.

41Everyone blessed the intervention of the Lord, the just Judge who brings to light the most secret deeds; 42and they prayed to the Lord to completely pardon the sin of their dead companions.

The valiant Judas urged his men to shun such sin in the future, for they had just seen with their own eyes what had happened to those who sinned. 43He took up a collection among his soldiers which amounted to two thousand pieces of silver and sent it to Jerusalem to be offered there as a sacrifice for sin.

They did all this very well and rightly inspired by their belief in the resurrection of the dead. 44If they did not believe that their fallen companions would rise again, then it would have been a useless and foolish thing to pray for them. 45But they firmly believed in a splendid reward for those who died as believers; therefore, their concern was holy and in keeping with faith.

STORIES

RUTH

Introduction

The book of Ruth is a jewel of Hebrew narrative. Ruth, the Moabite foreigner, will be the great-grandmother of King David, through her wedding to Boaz, a rich farmer from Bethlehem. Out of this story, that probably has a historical root, a beautiful model to trust on God is made; God's piety extends even to a foreigner, because of his goodness and fidelity.

The foreigner girl

1 There was a famine in the land during the time of the Judges, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah departed with his wife and two sons to sojourn in the country of Moab. **2**The man was Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and his two sons Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. A little later, after they had settled in Moab. **3**Naomi's husband Elimelech died. She was left with her two sons, **4**who married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth.

After living in Moab for about ten years, **5**Mahlon and Chilion also died and Naomi was left bereft of husband and two sons. **6**Having heard that Yahweh had come to help his people by giving them food, Naomi prepared to return home. **7**With her two daughters-in-law, she took the road back to Judah.

8It was then that Naomi said to her daughters-in-law:

—Go back, each of you, to your mother's house. And may Yahweh be kind to you, as you have been to your dead and to me. **9**May he also grant each of you rest in the home of another husband.

She kissed them goodbye. But they wept aloud **10**and said to her:

—No, we will go back with you to your people.

11Naomi said:

—Return home, my daughters. Why should you come with me?

14Again they sobbed and wept. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

15Naomi said:

—Look, your sister-in-law returns to her people and her gods. You too must return. Go after her.

16Ruth replied:

—Don't ask me to leave you. For I will go where you go and stay where you stay. Your people will be my people and your god, my God. **17**Where you die, there will I die and be buried. May Yahweh deal with me severely if anything except death separates us.

18Realizing that Ruth was determined to go with her, Naomi stopped urging her.

19So the two went on till they reached Bethlehem. Their arrival set the town astir. Women asked:

—Can this be Naomi?

The rich man from town

2 1Naomi had a well-to-do kinsman, Boaz, from the clan of her husband Elimelech. 2And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi:

—Let me go to pick up the left-over grain in the field whose owner will allow me that favor.

Naomi said:

—Go ahead, my daughter.

3So she went to glean in the fields behind the harvesters. It happened that the field she entered belonged to Boaz of the clan of Elimelech.

4When Boaz came from Bethlehem, he greeted the harvesters:

—Yahweh be with you.

They returned the greeting:

—Yahweh bless you.

5Noticing Ruth, Boaz asked the foreman of his harvesters:

—To whom does that young woman belong?

6The foreman replied:

—She is the Moabite who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7She came this morning and asked leave to glean behind the harvesters. Since then she has been working without a moment's rest.

8Boaz said to Ruth:

—Listen, my daughter. Don't go away from here to glean in anyone else's field. Stay here with my women servants. 9See where the harvesters are and follow behind. I have ordered the men not to molest you. They have filled some jars with water. Go there and drink when you are thirsty. 10Bowing down with her face to the ground, she exclaimed:

—Why have I, a foreigner, found such favor in your eyes?

11Boaz answered:

—I have been told all about you: what you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband's death, how you have gone with her, leaving your own father and mother and homeland, to live with a people you knew nothing about before you came here. 12May Yahweh reward you for this! May you receive full recompense from Yahweh, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge!

13Ruth said:

—May I prove worthy of your favor, my lord. You have consoled your servant with your kind words, though I am not the equal of your maidservants.

14Boaz called her at mealtime:

—Come over, have some bread and dip it in the wine.

As she sat among the reapers, he handed her some roasted grain. She ate her fill and had some left over.

15When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his men:

—Let her glean even among the sheaves and do not scold her. 16And pull some stalks from the bundles; leave them scattered for her to glean.

17She worked until evening and when she threshed what she had gleaned it amounted to about an ephah. 18Ruth carried back to town the threshed barley, which she showed to her mother-in-law. She also gave her what she had left over from lunch.

19Naomi asked her daughter-in-law:

—Where did you glean today? Where did you work? May the man who took notice of you be blessed.

Ruth told her mother-in-law about the owner of the field where she had worked.

Ruth said:

—His name is Boaz.

20Naomi exclaimed:

—May Yahweh bless him! God indeed is merciful both to the living and the dead. This man is a close relative, one with a right of redemption over us.

21Ruth continued:

—He even told me to stay with his servants until they finish harvesting the grain.

22Naomi said:

—It will be better for you, my daughter, to go out with his maidservants than to go working in some other field where harm might come to you.

23Ruth, therefore, stayed close to the maidservants of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the wheat and barley harvests. And she continued living with her mother-in-law.

The night on the threshing floor

39Boaz asked:

—Who are you?

The answer came:

—I am Ruth, your servant. Spread the corner of your cloak over me for you are a kinsman who has right of redemption over me.

10Boaz said:

—May Yahweh bless you, my daughter! This kindness of yours now is even greater than that which you have shown earlier, for you have not gone after young men, rich or poor. 11Have no fear, my daughter; I will do for you all that you ask, since all my townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. 12It is true that I am a close relative, but there is another still closer. 13Stay here for the night. In the morning, if he wants to claim you—good! But if not—as surely as Yahweh lives—I will claim you myself. Lie here till morning.

15Then turning to Ruth, Boaz said:

—Hold out the mantle you are wearing.

She did so and he poured into it six measures of barley. He helped her lift the bundle, then went back to town.

16Ruth returned home to her mother-in-law, who asked:

—How did you fare, my daughter?

She told her everything 17and added:

—He gave me these six measures of barley because, as he said, he did not want me to go back to my mother-in-law empty-handed.

18Naomi said:

—Wait, my daughter, till you learn what happens, for he will not rest until it is settled today.

The wedding

4 1Meanwhile Boaz went to the town gate and sat there waiting for the closer relative about whom he had spoken to Ruth. When he saw him coming, he called him by name and said:

—Come here and sit down.

And so he did.

2Boaz picked out ten from the city elders and asked them to sit with them, which they did. 3Then he said to the other man who also had right of redemption:

—Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our brother Elimelech. 4I thought of bringing this matter to you before our elders here, because as the closer kin you have more right to lay claim to it. But if you have no wish to redeem it, let me know because I am next to you in line.

The man replied:

—I am willing to put in my claim. I will redeem it. 5Boaz continued:

—If you buy the land from Naomi, you will also have to take the Moabite Ruth, widow of the late heir, and her sons will inherit the name and the land of the dead.

6The man said:

—Then I cannot redeem it, because I might endanger my own estate. Redeem it yourself.

7It used to be the custom in Israel that for a contract of redemption or exchange to become binding, one party had to take off his sandal and give it to the other. This act legalized transactions.

8So the man took off his sandal and said to Boaz:

—Buy it yourself.

9Boaz turned to the elders and all those present.

—This day you are witnesses that I buy from Naomi all the holdings of Elimelech, Chilion and Mahlon. 10I also take Mahlon's widow, Ruth the Moabite, as my wife to raise up a family for her late husband, so that the name of the dead will be restored to his inheritance and be present among his brothers when they gather at the gate of his town. Do you witness this today?

11The elders and all those at the gate answered:

—We witness. May Yahweh make the woman coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you prosper in Ephrathah and be of good standing in Bethlehem. 12And through the offspring Yahweh will give you by this woman, may your house become like that of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah.

13So Ruth was taken by Boaz and became his wife. Yahweh made her conceive and give birth to a son.

14The women said to Naomi:

—Blessed be Yahweh who has provided you today with an heir. May he become famous in Israel! 15He will be your comfort and stay in your old age, for he is born of a daughter-in-law who loves you and is worth more than seven sons.

16Naomi took the child as her own and became his nurse. 17And the women of the neighborhood gave him his name, saying:

—A son has been born for Naomi.

They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, who was David's father.