

# **RAHAB AND RUTH: WHO WERE THEY?**

**By  
R. K. Phillips**

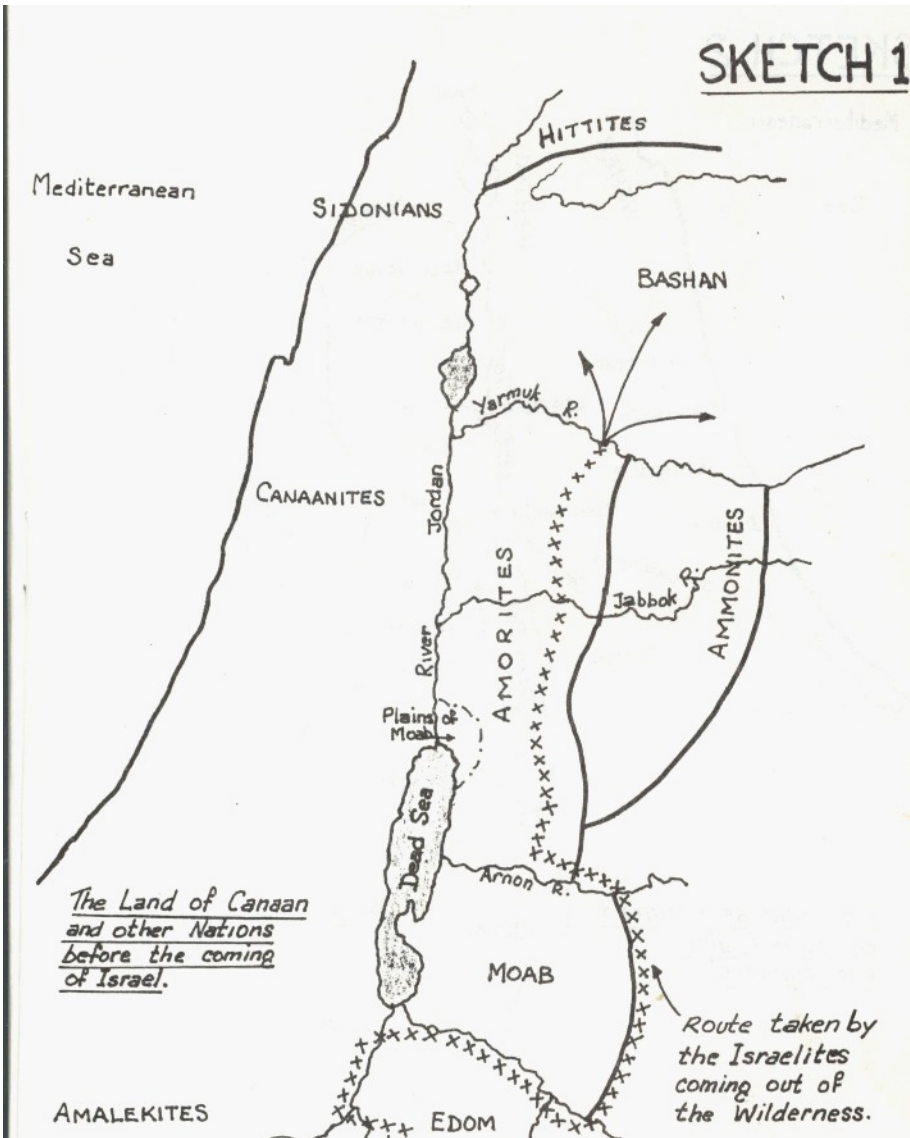
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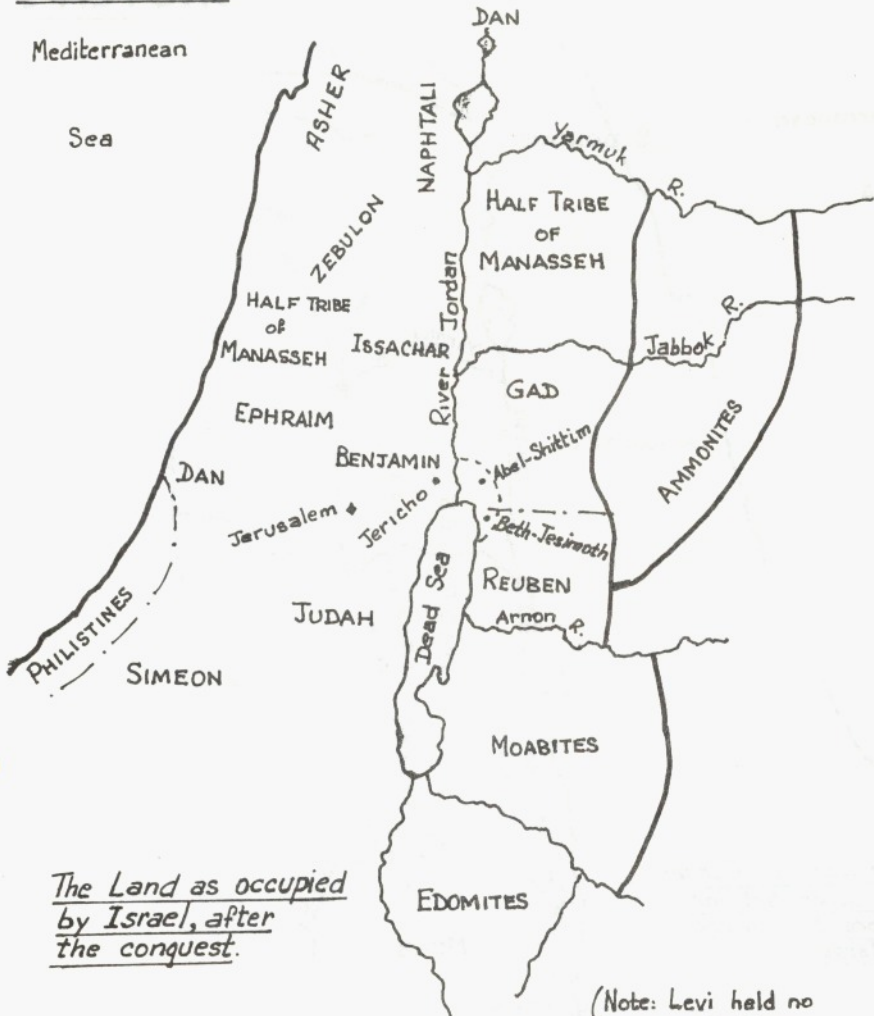
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# SKETCH 1



## SKETCH 2



The Land as occupied  
by Israel, after  
the conquest.

(Note: Levi held no territory but had possession of 48 towns in the whole nation.)

# **RAHAB AND RUTH: WHO WERE THEY?**

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### **The Truth About Ruth**

There is no Book of the Bible so poorly translated as the Book of Ruth, and no single chapter so distorted by religious bias and dogma as the first one. Before we can get down to the straight-forward information that God

gave us in the Hebrew text of His own Book we must learn a few simple geographical, judicial and historical **FACTS**.

### (A) The Geographical Evidence:

Sketch 1 shows the nations which occupied the area in and around the Promised Land before the arrival of Israel from out of the Wilderness. Long before the Israelites arrived on the scene, however, the Moabites had occupied all the land on the east side of Jordan from the River Jabbok right down the eastern coast to the southern end of the Dead Sea. The 'Plains of Moab' was a small area flanking the eastern bank of the Jordan for 10 miles or so north of the Dead Sea and extending 5 or 6 miles to the east.

Then the Amorites, who were descendants of Canaan, moved eastward across the Jordan and drove the Moabites out of the northern section of Moab, and out of the Plains of Moab, down the eastern coast of the Dead Sea and across the River Arnon. The **Amorites** then occupied the 'Plains of Moab' and all the country of Moab north of the River Arnon to the River Jabbok, as shown in sketch 1.

Thus, Numbers 21:13 tells us quite definitely that 'Arnon' was the border of Moab at the time when the Israelites came north out of the Wilderness. The Israelites followed a devious path (sketch 1) right around the territory in which the Moabites were then living and came into Amorite occupied territory just north of the River Arnon.

Numbers 21:22 states that they then asked permission of the Amorite King Sihon to pass through his land. When this was refused, the Israelites - under God's instructions - fought and destroyed the whole Amorite nation (men, women and children). Deut. 2:34 and 20:16-17 state that this was done because these people were descendants of the Nephilim. Numbers 21:24 states that the Israelites then possessed all the land from Arnon to the River Jabbok, **including the Plains of Moab**.

The Israelites continued their campaign northwards and conquered all the land of Bashan, north of the River Jabbok, right up to Hittite territory.

And they completely wiped out the entire population of Bashan as they had done with the Amorites. They then returned south and camped in the Plains of Moab ready for crossing the Jordan, opposite Jericho, into Canaan.

**NOTE:** These nations were totally destroyed because they were descendants of the Nephilim, and because they were so diseased as a result of their idolatrous practises, that they would quickly pollute any clean race that came into contact with them. God said that He would not use water to drown the human race again so this time He used Israel - His weapon of war - to destroy this section of them. The Nephilim were the result of marriage or illicit union between members of Noah's descendants (or Cain's) with the alien peoples round about them. These Nephilim were the giants which Genesis 6:4 tells us would be in the earth "After those days", that is, after the Flood.

Now Numbers 32 states that the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, elected to take their inheritance in those conquered lands on the eastern bank of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, north of the River Arnon. These lands, as we have seen, included the "Plains of Moab" and were never called the "Land of Israel" even though occupied by these tribes continuously until the fall of Israel under Assyrian attack 700 years later - 1 Chron. 5:26.

This land was granted to them providing their fighting men crossed the Jordan and helped to drive out the Canaanites. This they agreed to do.

**Sketch 2** shows the disposition of the different tribes after Canaan had been conquered. Thus the tribes of Reuben and Gad each had a part of the Plains of Moab in their territories, and no Amorites, and no Moabites lived there any more.

And why was it these tribes elected to stay on the east side of Jordan? Numbers 32:1 gives us the reason - because it was excellent cattle country, plenty of water and grass, and it could withstand droughts and famines.

**(B) The Judicial Evidence:**

Deuteronomy, the Book of God's Royal Law, states categorically (Deut.23:3) that an Ammonite or a Moabite **cannot** enter the Assembly of the Lord. Even a tenth generation (descendant of one) shall not enter the Assembly of the Lord for 'the Age' = for ever.

Now Ruth was the great-grandmother of King David, hence if Ruth was a Moabite by race, then:

1. she could not, by law, have married an Israelite, either Mahlon her first husband, or Boaz her second.
2. If Elimelech and Naomi, and Mahlon and Boaz, had by their own will chosen to ignore God's law and allowed a racial Moabite to be their daughter-in-law and wife, respectively, then God Himself could not have chosen David (Ruth's great-grandson) to be king over Israel without making nonsense of His own Law.
3. The women of Israel could not have welcomed Ruth into their midst and likened her to Rebekah without repudiating all of God's racial laws from start to finish.
4. If Ruth was a racial Moabite then the meticulous observance of every detail of God's Law, after Naomi came back to Bethlehem with Ruth, would have been a studied mockery of the Law, and a studied insult to God, and even an insult to ordinary human intelligence. For, as a racial Moabite, Ruth would have been disqualified from association with any Israelite on an equal basis, and marriage with her would have been forbidden to all Israelites who observed the Law. Hence no assiduous observance of God's Laws could, in God's sight, make an Israelite out of a Moabite by race.

5. If God slew the two eldest sons of Judah in order to prevent the Royal Line of Israel from coming down through the progeny of a Canaanitish woman (Shuah) why would God turn around now and allow it to come down through the progeny of a Moabitish woman? God does NOT change.

6. But most Bible commentators are quite happy to believe and to state (by inference) that God ignored His own Law whenever it suited Him. So where it appears to them that God has made a mistake, they try to make excuses to explain it away and to hide from our sight the fact that God means what He says and NEVER deviates from it.

The commentators all want to believe that Ruth was a gentile. So where God said that an Ammonite or a Moabite can NOT enter the Assembly of the Lord (Deut 23:3) they try to cover up this apparent mistake on God's part (with regard to Ruth) by pointing out that the words "Ammonite" and "Moabite" are masculine; therefore that means that only male Ammonites and Moabites were excluded - not the women. Hence according to this specious reasoning it was quite alright for Ruth to be a racial Moabite and still keep the Law intact, even though possibly a bit tattered at the seams.

Unfortunately these commentators never quote other passages of Scripture which would reveal how stupid and silly their explanations are. For example: In Ex.23:28 God said He would send 'hornets' to drive out "the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite" from before the Israelites. But these are also masculine words, so are we to assume from this that the 'hornets' discriminated between men and women and only drove out the male Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites and left all the women for the Israelites?

Again in Numbers 25:1 we are told that, while waiting in Abel-Shittim, the Israelites committed harlotry with the daughters of Moab who were friendly at this stage because Israel had defeated their enemies, the Amorites. Harlotry has a double meaning here. It means worship of heathen gods primarily, but in this case the Moabite and Midianite



women who invited the Israelites to participate in this worship were the prostitutes necessary for the licentious worship of their god Chemosh.

God ordered 1000 of the backsliding Israelites to be executed and their bodies shamefully hung or nailed to stakes in view of all the people. God also sent a plague upon the children of Israel and a further 23,000 people of Israel died. In the midst of this a member of the Tribe of Simeon flaunted his Midianitish woman in front of the now penitent Israel Assembly. Then Phineas, the son of the High Priest, took a javelin and went into the Simeonite's tent and slew both the man and his mistress. And so the plague upon Israel was stayed. Paul confirms this slaughter of Israelites in 1 Cor. 10:8.

**NOTE: 23,000 is 10 x 2300.**

Ten is the number of Divine perfection - there were 10 commandments; 10 plagues fell on Egypt, the tithes are one tenth; 2300 is the number associated with the 'cleansing of the Sanctuary'. Thus the Sanctuary of Israel was thoroughly cleansed of its idolatry. When this had been done God ordered Moses to send out 12,000 armed men to slaughter the Midianites. And Numbers 31 tells us that they slew all that they found of men, women and the male children.)

Thus all the judicial evidence shows that it was impossible for a non-Israelite girl to have filled the role of Ruth without total disregard of God's Word, God's Law, and of the Facts that God has given us in His Word. Let us then go to the Book of Ruth (in the Hebrew text) and see for ourselves what God did say.

### **(C) The Historical Evidence:**

Chapter 1 verse 1 of the Book of Ruth starts off with the words, "Now it came to pass". This expression is used five times in this book and we know, or we should know, that the number 5 is always associated with the Spirit of God. Hence God Himself was, directly concerned with the actions of the people in this account.

Verse 1 states that it was in the days "when the Judges ruled (Israel)". Now why did God give us this bit of information? He did it because this provides the first vital clue to the understanding of later events, so keep it in mind for the time being. Then we are told that a man of Bethlehem-Judah left his home, and this is the second clue.

Verse 1 in the A.V. then says "--- a certain man went to sojourn in the **country** of Moab". The word used here for 'country' is 'seday' and it means 'fields of'. This word can be translated as 'country' only in the sense that we say we are going for a picnic in the country. We don't mean a foreign land, we mean the rural scene as opposed to the city - the natural for the artificial.

Now just where were these 'Fields of Moab' in which Elimelech (whose name means 'My God is King') and his family went to live? When the Israelites finally came out of the Wilderness we are told (Numbers 33:49) that they pitched their camp:

- (a) by the Jordan
- (b) from Beth-Jesimoth to Abel-Shittim
- (c) in the **Plains of Moab.**

Verse 50 then states that Jehovah spoke to Moses:

- (a) by the Jordan
- (b) near Jericho
- (c) in the **Plains of Moab.**

Jericho is at least 30 miles north of the River Arnon which, as we have already seen, was the nearest border of the land where the Moabites were then living. Jehovah told Moses to speak to the children of Israel, and Deut.1:5 states that Moses started to do this:

- (a) 'beside the Jordan'
- (b) in '**a land** of Moab!

(**Note:** In the Hebrew text, there is no Definite Article in front of the word 'land' in this verse.)

Deut. 2:9 states that Moses reminded the Israelites that (when they were coming out of the Wilderness near Moab) Jehovah had warned Moses not to quarrel with the Moabites for Jehovah said, "I will **NOT** give thee of **their land**". That is, God would **NOT** give Israel any land **occupied** by Moabites. The literal Hebrew reads "I will not give thee from his (Moab's) **THE** land". Notice carefully that the Israelites did not take any of **THE** land of the Moabites from them. Yet here was Moses speaking to the Israelites in a 'land of Moab'. The whole distinction between which land of Moab was occupied by Moabites and which was occupied by Israelites lies in God's use of the Definite Article to distinguish whose land belonged to whom.

Moses was speaking in **a land** of Moab, and there is no Definite Article - **THE** - in front of it. It thus means land which used to belong to Moab, land which our geographical evidence showed that **the Amorites** had taken from the Moabites, and which the Israelites, in their turn, had taken from **the Amorites**. Judges 11:15-18 repeats the fact that the Israelites took none of 'eth-land of Moab', nor of 'eth-land of children of Ammon'. The Hebrew particle 'eth' is used here like the Definite Article to give prominence to that particular land which was **NOT** taken from the Moabites or the Ammonites.

Thus we can now see that all the references to 'a land of Moab' and to plains of Moab' and 'wilderness of Moab' (which the Israelites occupied) did not have racial Moabites living in them. In fact history tells us that the Moabites were a determined enemy continually at war with the Tribes of Israel. Yet our religious translators would have us believe that Naomi and her family could migrate as they wished:

**\* into hostile Moab territory**

**\* stay there ten years without being molested**

**\* inter-marry with them**

and then come back bringing a daughter of this enemy nation with them, who was then given a royal welcome by the whole Tribe of Judah and hailed as the equal of Rebekah!

Now referring back to the Book of Ruth, we are told in verse 1 that Elimelech was a 'man of Bethlehem-Judah' (that is a Judahite) but in verse 2 his two sons were called 'Ephrathites'. Ephrath was the ancient name of Bethlehem, so this little snippet of information shows us that people were called not only by their tribal name, but were even known by the local name of the district in which they lived. Consequently those Israelites of the Tribes of Gad and Reuben who lived in 'a land of Moab' were called Moabites, in the same way as Englishmen settling in Australia are called Australians.

Ruth therefore was one of those Israelites living in the 'Fields of Moab' which were occupied and cultivated by Israelites. She was a country-girl as distinct from a city girl, and she is called a Moabite because of where she lived, NOT because of any supposed differences in racial origin. Moreover she is called a Moabite five times in this Book, thus again emphasising by the use of this number that the Spirit of God was associated with her and with her selection as a daughter-in-law to Naomi.

Then when her husband and sons died, Naomi decided to return to her own tribal land near Bethlehem, and we come to the touching scene where Naomi tries to part with her two husbandless daughters-in-law and Ruth refuses to leave her. In verse 15, Naomi said to Ruth, "Behold, thy sister-in-law has gone back to her 'elohim', return after your sister-in-law". But Ruth answered and said, "Urge me not to leave you --- for whither thou goest, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy 'elohim', my 'elohim'. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: JEHOVAH do so to me and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

Now it has been shown in the preceding paragraphs that Naomi and her family did NOT go to the country of the Moab people, but to the 'Fields of Moab' east of the Jordan, occupied by her own countrymen. Therefore Ruth could not have been anything else but an Israelite born and bred. But

let us look at another scriptural fact which God has given us in His book to prove these statements:

Look at this word 'elohim' which both Naomi and Ruth use and which some bibles translate as the "heathen gods" (plural) or Orpah, but the "Holy God" (singular) of Ruth. Other bibles translate 'elohim' - which is a plural word - as God (singular) for both Orpah and Ruth. In other words, the translators didn't know how to translate it in this context, so literally they tossed for it, and some of them made it plural and some made it singular. How can any serious student put his trust in such conflicting translations?

What then does this word 'elohim' mean? Its primary meaning is 'creators' (plural) but it has several other meanings which can only be determined by the context **IN WHICH GOD HAS USED IT. NOT** - repeat **NOT** - by the pious bias of any translator.

In the Bible we find the word 'elohim' used in several different ways:

- (a) It is used of angels (incorrectly) Psalm 8:5
- (b) It is used of heathen gods Ex. 20:3
- (c) It is used of a woman (a goddess) 1 Kings 11:5
- (d) It is used of God Almighty (but generally only in conjunction with another word or Name of God)
- (e) It is used of the Creators of Genesis 1
- (f) It is used 5 times of Judges, human judges. (Exodus 22:8,9 or in the marginal notes)

If **you** were asked to translate this passage in Ruth, how would **you** translate this word 'elohim'? Look at the problem yourself.

- (a) It is a plural word
- (b) It is used in exactly the same way for both Orpah and for Ruth; therefore it must be translated the same way, either both singular or both plural.

(d) It can NOT refer to God or gods because when Ruth has finished speaking to Naomi, she appeals to God to bear witness to what she has said, and she does **NOT** use the word 'elohim'. She uses the Name 'Jehovah' which only an Israelite would use in such a personal manner.

(e) When Naomi speaks of God Himself in verses 6 & 8 & 9, she also uses the Name 'Jehovah' not 'elohim'. Therefore both Naomi and Ruth demonstrated beyond question that when they used the word 'elohim' in verses 15 and 16, they were **NOT** referring to God at all. They used **Jehovah** to refer to God. So who were the elohim?

Let us go back to the first clue that God gave us in the very first verse of Chapter 1 where we are told that "it was in the days when the **JUDGES** ruled". Then look at the last definition of 'elohim' which shows that 'elohim' can be translated as 'judges', and there we find the complete and the **ONLY** satisfactory translation of this word in **THIS** context, for it satisfies every single condition.

Naomi said, "Behold thy sister-in-law has gone back to her people (her own tribe) and to her 'Judges'." Now why would they be Orpah's Judges? Because in those days the people of each tribe **elected their own Judges**. Why did Ruth say that Naomi's Judges shall be her (Ruth's) Judges? Because Ruth, being of a different tribe, would have had no part in electing the Judges which ruled over Naomi's Tribe on the other side of the Jordan. And finally, the fact that Ruth called upon God using the Name 'JEHOVAH' is indisputable evidence that Ruth was **NOT** using the word 'elohim' to mean 'God'; and proof also that she was of pure Israel stock, for the Name 'Jehovah' was **revealed and given to Israel only**. (Ex. 6:3).

**NOTE:**

This name 'JEHOVAH' was known as **THE COVENANT** Name, and it was given to **THEM** - Israel - Ex. 6:4. And this is why the revelation of

this Name **JEHOVAH** as the God of "**THE LIVING**" ensures the **resurrection of the People to whom it is given.**

No Priest or man of Israel such as Samuel, who presumably wrote this Book of Ruth, would have dared to record Ruth as using the Name 'Jehovah' in this way if she had **NOT** been of pure Israel stock and had every **right** to use it. And use it Ruth did, in a manner which implied long knowledge and understanding of what that Name meant; for her words to Naomi have the force of 'May JEHOVAH slay me and worse if ought but death part thee and me.'

Following Naomi's return to her own country we are treated to further exclamations of approval from all our pious commentators, as each of the parties concerned observe every detail of God's Law. That same Law, by the way, which Naomi and her family had - according to the same commentators and translators - **completely** disregarded when they had gone away, 10 years before', and supposedly let their sons marry foreign women.

Not one of these commentators and translators seem to have noticed that, since these kinsmen of Naomi were so **carefully** observing the Law, then the **only** reason they were doing it was because everyone of them recognised Ruth as a pure racial **ISRAELITE**.

That same Law they were all observing so diligently and correctly, expressly forbade marriage with a foreign woman. The children of such marriages were regarded and treated as outcasts in Israel. If Naomi's son, Mahlon, had been so reckless and stupid as to marry a foreign woman, then there was NO law which required any other Israelite to perpetuate the offence. Naomi could have her land redeemed, yes, but in no way could observance of that Law be made to include marrying a foreign woman.

Therefore that avaricious kinsman who chose to relinquish his right to redeem Naomi's land by undergoing the severe public disgrace of the ritual of the loosed shoe (Deut. 25:7-10) would have been one of the first to draw attention to the fact that no law existed which could make him or

even expect him to marry a foreign woman and raise up outcasts in Israel. (Deut. 23:2).

(NOTE:

The Hebrew word 'mamzer' used in Deut. 23:2 (and elsewhere in the Bible) means a half-breed or outcast. Let me quote Fuerst's Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon, as translated by S. Davidson, D.D. 1867 - "Mamzer = Masculine, a mongrel, i.e. one whose father is a Jew and whose mother is a Philistine. Zech 9:6 :- a bastard; Deut 23:2, so called from illegal sexual mixtures, and therefore applied to the fruit of adultery. The numerous attempts to explain this word as 'to despise' or 'to be corrupt', must be rejected."

The lexicon of Brown Driver & Briggs concurs with Fuerst.

Thus we see from Deut. 23:3 that Ammonites and Moabites were placed on the same level as those born of mixed racial marriages and their entry into the Congregation of the Lord forbidden **for 'the Age'**. Moreover in verse 6 God says to the Israelites that, "thou shalt not seek their (the Ammonites and Moabites) peace nor their prosperity (benefit) all thy days **for ever.**"

It is therefore a measure of the spiritual blindness of our religious translators that they all gladly hail Ruth as a descendant of a people abhorrent to God, and proclaim her as the 'hallowed and saintly ancestor of our Lord Jesus! And that in selecting such a repugnant foreigner as His ancestor, Jesus was 'showing His condescension in taking on 'our' nature. But Ruth could NOT have been a racial Moabites under any circumstances, and the falseness and hypocrisy of all and every statement to the contrary has been amply demonstrated in the preceding pages.

## Appendix A

### SCRIPTURE NOTE

There remain a few other points which need clarification.



In Ruth 2:10 she said to Boaz (in the A.V. and some other Bibles) "--- Why have I found grace in thy sight that thou shouldst care for me seeing that I am a **stranger**". The N.E.B., Ferrar Fenton, and the Jerusalem Bibles put "seeing I am only a foreigner", but this translation is quite wrong. The Hebrew word used here is 'Nokriah' and it is a feminine adjective, **NOT** a noun, although it is being used in this passage as an adjectival noun. Therefore its meaning can be **either** 'foreign' or simply 'not known to you' --- 'an outsider to your family', and the **context alone** determines which is the correct reading. If Ruth had wished to state that she was a foreigner or stranger **by race**, then (in Hebrew) she would have had to use entirely different terms such as, "I am a woman, a foreign one --- "ishah Nokri" or "I am a daughter of the foreigner - bart ha Nakar". But Ruth uses the adjective in a purely local sense of being a stranger to his family and therefore not one for whom he should show anything more than ordinary courtesy.

In Gen. 31:15, Rachel and Leah use exactly the same word of themselves when speaking of their own father, Laban. They said, "Are we not accounted of him strangers?" Laban could not, under **any** circumstances, call his own daughters 'foreigners' but a greedy man, as he showed him-self to be, could and did quickly regard his daughters as 'strangers' - persons having no further financial or other claim on him once they were married to Jacob. Ruth uses this word in the same way to Boaz saying, "--- seeing I am unknown to you" --- that is, one having no financial or other claim for special consideration by Boaz.

It should be noted that at this stage Ruth does not know that Boaz is her kinsman, and she does not find out until Naomi tells her so in Chapter 2 verse 20; for verse 1 of this chapter is only a narrative statement and not something that was spoken to Ruth. Hence when she does meet and speak to Boaz - verses 8-13-she expresses great gratitude to him for his kindness to one who (as she believes) is a complete and utter stranger to him and having no claim on him at all. Thus her 'strangeness' is not of RACE, but only an affirmation of the limits of responsibility between any Israel family and another. So in ignorance of his identity as a kinsman she is surprised that he should treat a 'stranger' to his family in such a generous fashion.

In Ruth 2:12 Boaz said to her, "May Jehovah reward your decision, and may Jehovah, the God of Israel, pay thee well since thou hast come to shelter under His Wings."

These words are often quoted to 'prove' that Ruth was an idolater, and that Boaz was praising her for changing over to Jehovah worship. This is quite wrong. Boaz is simply referring to her decision to leave her own tribe and land to come to Naomi's land and tribe, trusting in God for the future --- not to the Judges in her own land who were duty bound to look after her and to find a husband for her.

In Psalm 17:8, King David also asks God "to hide him in the shadow of God's Wings" using the same metaphor that Boaz uses. Nobody would assume that King David was changing from idolatry to the worship of Jehovah so why should Ruth be accused of it?

Finally, let us turn to Ezra (Chapters 9 & 10) and to Nehemiah 9:1-3. In these chapters we find that those of God's People who returned from the Babylonian captivity, to rebuild Jerusalem, bewailed the fact that some of them had married women of the Canaanites, the Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, **Ammonites, AND Moabites**, Egyptians and Amorites. The **crime** they committed was specified in Ezra 9:2, "for they (the Israelites) have taken of their **daughters** for themselves and for their sons." **SO! Neither** Ezra nor Nehemiah regarded Deut. 23:3 as applying to **male** Moabites and Ammonites only. To them, and to any unbiased translator, the prohibition applied to both male **AND** female Moabites.

Ezra tore his hair and his beard and roared that, as a result of this crime, "**SEED, THE HOLY** will mingle itself with the (other) peoples in The Land." The verb used here is 3rd person **SINGULAR**, and **SEED, THE HOLY**, refers to that **SEED OF GOD HIMSELF**, implanted by the HOLY SPIRIT, in Israel --- through Abraham and Sarah. This Holy Seed would now become mingled, and thus perish, in these other races if those forbidden marriages were not annulled and the Israel People separated from their foreign alliances. And this action was taken - Ezra 10:3 -in great repentance. They (the Israelites) not only separated themselves

from those foreign women, but also from the children that had **already been born from them.**

Consider for a moment the implications of this recognition of, and return to, the Law. What chance would Ezra and Nehemiah have had to enforce this Law if **Ruth had been a racial Moabites** and, as such, had been welcomed by the Israelites of Ruth's time as the equal of Rebekah? They would have had absolutely no chance at all.

Thus the witness of Ezra and Nehemiah alone is evidence **beyond question** that Deut. 23:3 did apply to **female** as well as **male** Moabites, and that under no circumstances whatsoever could Ruth have been anything else than a woman of pure Israel stock. The very exact and explicit words of God in the Hebrew text make no error on this important matter. They show with finality that the popular religious teaching that Ruth was a Moabites by race is completely false and without **any** foundation in fact,

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### **RACHAB WAS NO HARLOT**

Deuteronomy, the Book of God's Royal Law, Chapter 7, makes it very plain that when the Israelites crossed the Jordan into Canaan:

- (a) they were to destroy the entire population of those lands and everything that lived, including the cattle, sheep and asses;
- (b) they were NOT to make marriages with any of those peoples themselves, nor allow their sons and daughters to marry any of the descendants of those peoples.

It is quite evident that the Israelites of that generation which finally crossed the Jordan did observe these commandments. After the initial set-back at Ai was sorted out, their unbroken success in conquering the land for the next 30 years was proof positive that not one man dared to

disobey even the least of those commandments --- for they suffered swift and fatal consequences every time they stepped out of line.

The Israelites had received the Law at Sinai and had said they would keep it --- Exodus 24:3. Then they broke the Law by setting up a golden calf to worship, and for this rebellious act, some 3,000 men were summarily slain --- Exodus 32: 27-28.

This lesson lasted for 35 years or so until they came out of the Wilderness and camped in that part of the land of Moab which the Amorites had taken from the Moabites and which the Israelites had, in their turn, taken from the Amorites - "The Plains of Moab".

Here, on the advice of Balaam, the Moabites and Midianites sent the most beautiful of their young women to entice the Israelite men to commit idolatry and fornication with them. And for that flagrant breach of His Law, God ordered 1000 of the backsliding Israelites to be slain and their bodies shamefully hung (impaled or crucified) on stakes, and He caused a further 23,000 Israelites to die of plague. God then ordered the surviving Israelites to send out 12,000 armed men to slaughter all the men, women and male children of the Midianites. Num. 31:1 - 20. (Note: the 24,000 of Israel - Numbers 25:9 - who are stated to have 'died in the plague', included the 1000 who were hanged, but those who were hanged were not included in the 23,000 mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. 10:8 who 'fell' in one day. The number 23,000 is 10 times 2300 which is the Biblical number for 'cleansing the sanctuary' - of Israel - and 10 is the number of completion of an action before the commencement of a new order or cycle. The execution of this large number of the Israel people not only 'cleansed' the nation of all idolatrous practices, but provided a salutary example of what would happen if they failed to keep God's Laws and commandments in future.

Immediately after the capture of Jericho, God again inflicted sudden death on the Israelites when one soldier (Achan) disobeyed the instruction not to take anything for themselves from that city, for all the gold and silver found in Jericho was to go into the Lord's treasury. But Achan took some of the gold and silver which he found and hid it in his tent.

Therefore God caused 36 of the Israel forces to be slain by the men of Ai in the next battle. When Joshua learned the reason for those deaths, he located the guilty soldier and, after his summary court-martial in front of all the people, the stolen goods were brought out and placed on the ground. Then, his whole family was assembled and the people stoned the man and his sons and daughters to death, slaughtered all his cattle, burnt his tent and all that he and his family had possessed, and covered the remains and the stolen goods with a mound of stones.

Threatened with swift and draconian punishment on this scale if even one of His people disobeyed the least of God's commands, it is unlikely that any male member of the Israel Forces would have dared to be so foolish as to marry an idolatrous Canaanite woman in open defiance of the Law of Deut. 7:3 & 4, which expressly forbade such marriages. The fact that the Israelite armies suffered no more setbacks for the next 25 to 30 years is sufficient evidence in itself that no further transgressions of God's Law occurred during that period.

Who, then, was this female ancestor of our Lord - Rachab - who is stated, in Matt.1:5, to have married Salmon the son of Naashon, a prince of the Royal line of Judah, some time either before or after the Israelites occupied the Promised Land?

Every Bible translator and commentator, without exception, associates her with, or directly identifies her as 'Rahab the harlot' who was saved alive from the massacre of Jericho. But the foregoing evidence shows that after the debacle at the first battle for Ai, no Israelite had dared to disobey God by marrying a Canaanite or any other foreign woman for at least 30 years after crossing the Jordan. Furthermore, Lev. 21:7,14, state that no priest of God's Tabernacle was to take a harlot for his wife, and verse 9 states that if even the daughter of a priest played the harlot, she was to be killed and burnt in the fire.

Therefore, in view of these severe strictures, it is beyond the bounds of possibility for Jesus, who was a Priest after the Order of Melchisedek, to be the descendant of that 'Rahab' who was saved out of Jericho unless it could be proved that she was neither a harlot nor a Canaanitess by race.

It has already been proved, by the evidence of Scripture itself, that Ruth --- who is similarly claimed by all the churches and commentators to be a heathen Moabitess - was neither a heathen foreigner nor was she a Moabitess by race, but a true daughter of Israel who lived in that land of Moab which the Israelites had taken from the Amorites. That land was still called Moab even though it was occupied by the tribe of Reuben until they were taken into captivity several hundred years later - 1 Chron.5:8, 16, 18-26. What, then, has Scripture to say concerning Rahab of Jericho? Was she neither a harlot nor a Canaanitess as stated in Scripture?

**Several attempts have been made:**

(a) to identify Rahab as an Israelite descendant of Sherah, the daughter of Ephraim, who went to Canaan about two centuries or so before the Exodus - 1 Chron. 7:24 - and built the strongholds of Beth-horon and Uzen-sherah some 25 miles west of Jericho,

(b) to clear her name of the term "harlot" by describing her as a 'widow' or an 'inn-keeper' or as a 'trader in flax'.

But the term 'harlot' is not only used by Joshua in the Old Testament; it is used again both by Paul and James in the New Testament 1500 years later. Thus there had been ample opportunity since Joshua's day to clear her name from that obnoxious designation if there had been no justification for it. Paul in particular, as a learned disciple of Gamaliel, would most certainly have taken swift action to correct any mistaken slight on the ancestry of Israel kings. Moreover Joshua, himself, was a ninth generation descendant of Ephraim (1 Chron. 7:24-27) and would have been related to Rahab if she was, in truth, a descendant of Ephraim's daughter Sherah.

Therefore not only would Joshua have given his two spies careful instructions for rescuing Rahab on the grounds of consanguinity but he would also have cleared her name of any undeserved accusations of being a harlot had they not been true. Neither would he have left her fate to a chance encounter with his two spies; nor have left it to her to extract a

promise of safekeeping from them. She herself would have sent a direct appeal to her kinsman for safekeeping as well as bringing the fact of her own racial origin to the attention of the two spies.

On the contrary, she had no hesitation - Joshua 2:11 - in identifying herself as a Canaanite, and at the same time inadvertently fulfilling a prophecy made 40 years earlier — Exodus 15:16, where it is stated that "fear and dread" would fall upon the Canaanites and that "all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away". In Joshua 2:10, she states that **we** (the people of Canaan) **heard** how Jehovah dried up the waters of the Red Sea before **you** (the Israelites); and in verse 11 she says that when we heard these things "**our** hearts did melt ---".

If Rahab and her family had been Israelites, she would never have included herself among those who heard and whose hearts had melted. She would have said that when **they** (the Canaanites) heard these things **their** hearts had melted. Furthermore, it should be noted that when she and her family were finally rescued from Jericho --- as stated in Josh. 6:23 --- they were "left **outside** the camp of Israel". This statement once again emphasizes the fact that they were members of a foreign race whose presence within the camp of Israel would have polluted it in God's sight and brought God's swift punishment upon the Israel forces --- Deut. 23:14 --- quite apart from the risk of sudden death to themselves or to any unauthorised persons who unwittingly ventured close to the Tabernacle (Numbers 1:51).

It is therefore established beyond question, by the record of Scripture itself, that Rahab was a Canaanite **by race**. Hence it must also be accepted, on the same authority, that she was indeed a harlot. In fact it was because of the dissolute and diseased condition of both the people of Canaan and their animals, that God ordered the Israel armies to slaughter every living thing in the cities they captured (Joshua 6:21) men, women, children and animals, and then burn their cities to the ground in order to cleanse the area by fire.

This fact alone --- quite apart from the Laws forbidding marriage with members of other races - makes it unthinkable that either Salmon, a

prince of the Royal line of Judah, would even have considered marriage with such a woman, or that his comrades in arms would have allowed him to do so when they themselves would, most likely, be the very ones to suffer sudden destruction by God for condoning such a deliberate transgression of God's commands.

Joshua 6:25 states that Rahab was given land in the midst of Israel in return for risking her own life by hiding the two spies that were sent to Jericho. Josephus in his "Antiquities of the Jews", Book 5 chapter 1, sections 2 and 7, records the same story but neither he nor Joshua make any reference to a marriage taking place between Rahab and Salmon. That deafening silence is itself the strongest proof that no such marriage did take place. Nor did it take place in fact, because --- as the Scripture record shows --- the Israelite armies suffered no further setbacks through breaking God's Laws for at least 30 years.

However, let us assume for a moment that Salmon **did** marry Rahab the harlot within a year or so of the fall of Jericho, and that Boaz was born a year or so after that. If such were the case, then Boaz would have been about 115 years old when he married Ruth: On the other hand, if we assume that Rahab was about 30 years of age when Jericho fell, and that Salmon did not marry her till 30 years or more later, then not only would Rahab have been at least 60 years of age and no longer able to bear children, but Boaz, even if born 30 years after the fall of Jericho, would still have been 85 years of age when he married Ruth.

Furthermore, it is impossible to believe that Naomi would have urged Ruth, her attractive young daughter-in-law, to seek marriage with a kinsman so aged that he would be incapable of begetting children. Thus all the evidence confirms the fact that Salmon did not marry Rahab the Canaanite harlot. In fact, the Bible states, in plain writing, that Salmon married a different woman altogether. A woman with a different name, and without any distinguishing appellation, obnoxious or otherwise, attached to her name. It is the religious translators and commentators who have made the mistake in translation and identified Salmon's wife as the harlot of Jericho.



But the most surprising fact is that the harlot's name is **NOT** Rahab after all, for there is **NO** woman with the name of Rahab in the whole of the Bible: In the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, Rahab is a poetic or metaphorical name applied on three occasions to the land of Egypt, with the meaning of being 'haughty' or 'proud', (see Ps 87:4, 89:10 and Isa 51:9). But these three passages have nothing to do with Joshua, Jericho, or the harlot who lived there. The same Hebrew word 'rahav' is, in fact, quite correctly translated in the Authorised version as 'proud' in Job 9:13 and 26:12, but in Isa 30:7 it is incorrectly translated as 'strength'. This verse reads --- in the Hebrew text --- " Egypt's help is vain and worthless therefore I have called her Rahab sitting still" --- (or 'Egypt the motionless').

The harlot's name is 'Rakhab' (English pronunciation: 'Raackharb') A different Hebrew word to 'Rahab', with a totally different meaning of "to widen" or "to make broad". It is not spelt with the Hebrew letter 'He' as in Rahab, but with the letter 'khet' (which has a hard guttural aspirated sound like the 'ch' in 'loch' or in the German 'macht').

The Greek alphabet, however, has no equivalent letters corresponding to either 'he' or 'khet'. Hence, in the Septuagint version of the Book of Joshua, the harlot's name is spelt 'Ra'ab' in all passages where it occurs. And **exactly the same** spelling is used in the New Testament in the Greek text of Heb. 11:31 and of James 2:25 --- but **NOT** in Matt.1:5. Furthermore, her name is always coupled with the designation 'harlot', either directly or by association with this designation in the same context in which her name appears.

If Salmon's wife was indeed 'Rakhab' the harlot, why is it then that, in the Greek text of Matt. 1:5, it is spelt 'Raxab' and not Ra'ab as it is in Heb.11:31 and James 2:25 and in every passage of the Greek text of the Septuagint where the harlot's name appears? And why is it that Raxab's name in Matt.1:5 is **not** coupled with the term 'harlot'? This is the first and only occurrence of this name in the New Testament. Therefore **IF** Raxab was in actual fact the harlot of Jericho, then it is even more necessary to identify her here. as the harlot than it is in Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25. It should be noted that the letter 'x' in Raxab's name is the Greek letter

'chi' which has the hard 'ch' sound' as in the English 'chord' or 'Christ'. Therefore the English pronunciation of the Greek name 'Raxab' in Matt.1:5 should be 'Rachab' --- with a short second 'a' as in cab --- **NOT** 'Rahab' and **NOT** 'Raackharb'.

This is not just another way of spelling or of pronouncing 'Rahab' or 'Rakhab' either in Greek or in Hebrew. 'Rachab' is a **different name altogether in the 'original' Greek**. Therefore it cannot refer to Ra'ab the harlot, it can only refer to a **different woman**. Now it has been shown time and time again that God never uses two different words, or two different names in the **same** verse or context to refer to the same thing or person. The different words or names are **always** put there to draw our attention to the fact that He is referring to **different** things or persons.

But Matt. 1:5, Heb. 11:31 and James 2:25 cannot be classified as being 'in the same context'. There-fore more positive methods have been used in these passages to identify the person concerned precisely and exactly, and to distinguish between one person and another. Thus in Heb. 11:31 and Jas. 2:25, the reader is told explicitly that these passages refer to Ra'ab the harlot of Jericho:

- (a) by stating her name,
- (b) by repeating her designation of a harlot,
- (c) by mentioning the action which she took to help the two spies. These are all positive marks of identification.

On the other hand in Matt. 1:5 Rachab the wife of Salmon is clearly distinguished from **ANY** identification or association in any way with the harlot of Jericho:

- (1) by the different spelling of her name in the 'original' Greek,
- (2) by the different pronunciation of her name,

**(3) by the absence of any offensive designation attached to her name,**

**(4) by the absence of any reference to Jericho or any activity that took place there.**

Nor is the absence of any such additional information about Rachab designed to 'cover up' possible unfavourable personal references to individual members of Israel's Royal Line and of the human ancestors of Jesus in this genealogy. The Bible does not shrink from stating unsavoury 'incidents' in the lives of any of Israel's famous people. This is demonstrated in the very next verse (Matt 1:6) by the cutting reference to Bathsheba --- not by recording her name, but by bringing her name to mind only through her degrading act of adultery with King David. Again, there is the story of Judah's seduction by Tamar as told in Gen. 38 11-30.

Thus the whole evidence of Scripture is that Salmon's wife was **NOT** the harlot of Jericho, and in the absence of any other conflicting information concerning her, then the conclusion must be that her ancestry was as impeccable as that of her husband.

## **Appendix A**

### **SCRIPTURE NOTES**

There still remains the question about the age of Boaz, at the time he married Ruth. If we assume that Salmon married Rachab either before, or soon after, the fall of Jericho, then Boaz would have been about 115 years old at the time of his marriage. For the genealogies of Matt. 1, Luke 3 and Ruth 4, list only four generations covering the 460 years from the fall of Jericho to the birth of David.

It is apparent therefore that, in a Royal dynasty of the one tribe (Judah), it is not necessary to list **every** link in the chain in order to establish or confirm the legal succession to the throne. For example, Ruth 4:17 states that Obed was called the 'son' of Naomi who was actually his grandmother. Hence there must also be similar unlisted generations between Salmon, Boaz, Obed, and Jesse, who was the father of David, in order to fill

out the whole period of some 460 years. In fact, it would seem that the only reason why Salmon, Boaz, Obed and Jesse are listed in the genealogies is because they lived at points of marked change in the transition from tribal to national status on the one hand, or from administrative development through elders, military leaders, and judges to a monarchy on the other; or simply because, in this transitional period, these men had each married a woman from one of the other tribes of Israel.

It would appear from the Book of Ruth that Ruth was of the tribe of Reuben, and if the wives of those other three men were also from different tribes, then this inclusion of women from different tribes into the Royal line would have done much to assist in the final federation of the Nations of Israel under one king.

The reference to Rakhah's 'faith' in Heb. 11:31 and Jas.2:25 does not refer to any 'religious conversion' on her part, for, as a Canaanite, she would not even have been allowed into the Assembly or Congregation of Israel, let alone to partake of the holy things. Both Paul and James were simply contrasting her faith, and the action she took as a result of it, with that of the Israelites of her day and also of Paul's day.

After only **hearing** about the miracles which the God of Israel had wrought for Israel at the Red Sea, and in destroying the Amorites, Rakhah not only believed that God was God over Heaven as well as the Earth and would do as He had promised, but she had such great faith in His ability to do those things, that she was willing to risk her own life to protect the two spies in return for their promise to save her and her family when Israel took the city.

In striking contrast to the strength of her faith and positive reaction, many of those Israelites --- who had **actually witnessed** with their own eyes the miracles which Rakhah had only heard about - not only failed to believe in God's power and promises to help them, but were too fearful for their own safety to even risk crossing the Jordan. For that reason God sent them back to wander about in the wilderness for the next 40 years. And so

that whole generation perished there for their lack of belief and faith in God's word and also for their lack of faith in His mighty acts of deliverance from their enemies **which they had not only witnessed**, but in which they themselves had been involved.

Note, The Hebrew grammars contradict each other as to the pronunciation of the Hebrew vowels in the harlot's name. One giving 'a' as in lark, another (with the same 'pointing') as 'a' in mat, and another as 'a' in awe.

Now it may be noticed that Rachel's name in the Old Testament is spelt with the same letter 'khet' as for Rakhah the harlot. And in Matt 2:18 the Greek version of Rachel's name is spelt with the same Greek letter 'chi' as is used for Rachab in Matt, 1:5. Therefore it could be argued from this that the woman of Matt. 1:5 and the harlot of Jericho must be one and the same person.

This is a reasonable assumption but it is not acceptable because there is no mention in Matt. 1 of Rachab being a harlot, or as being a Canaanite, or as having any part in the fall of Jericho. Moreover if Rachab was the Greek equivalent to the harlot's name in Hebrew then we would expect to find it used again in Heb. 11:31 and James 2:25. But, as stated on page 23, in these passages the harlot's name is written as Ra'ab, just as it is in the Greek text of Joshua in the Septuagint. This sharp distinction between the spelling together with context details reject the assumption that the names refer to the same woman.

In the Hebrew text, the vowel pointing for Rachel differs from that for the harlot and this fact may be the reason why the Greek letter 'chi' could be used for the translation of Rachel's name but not for that of Rakhah.



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