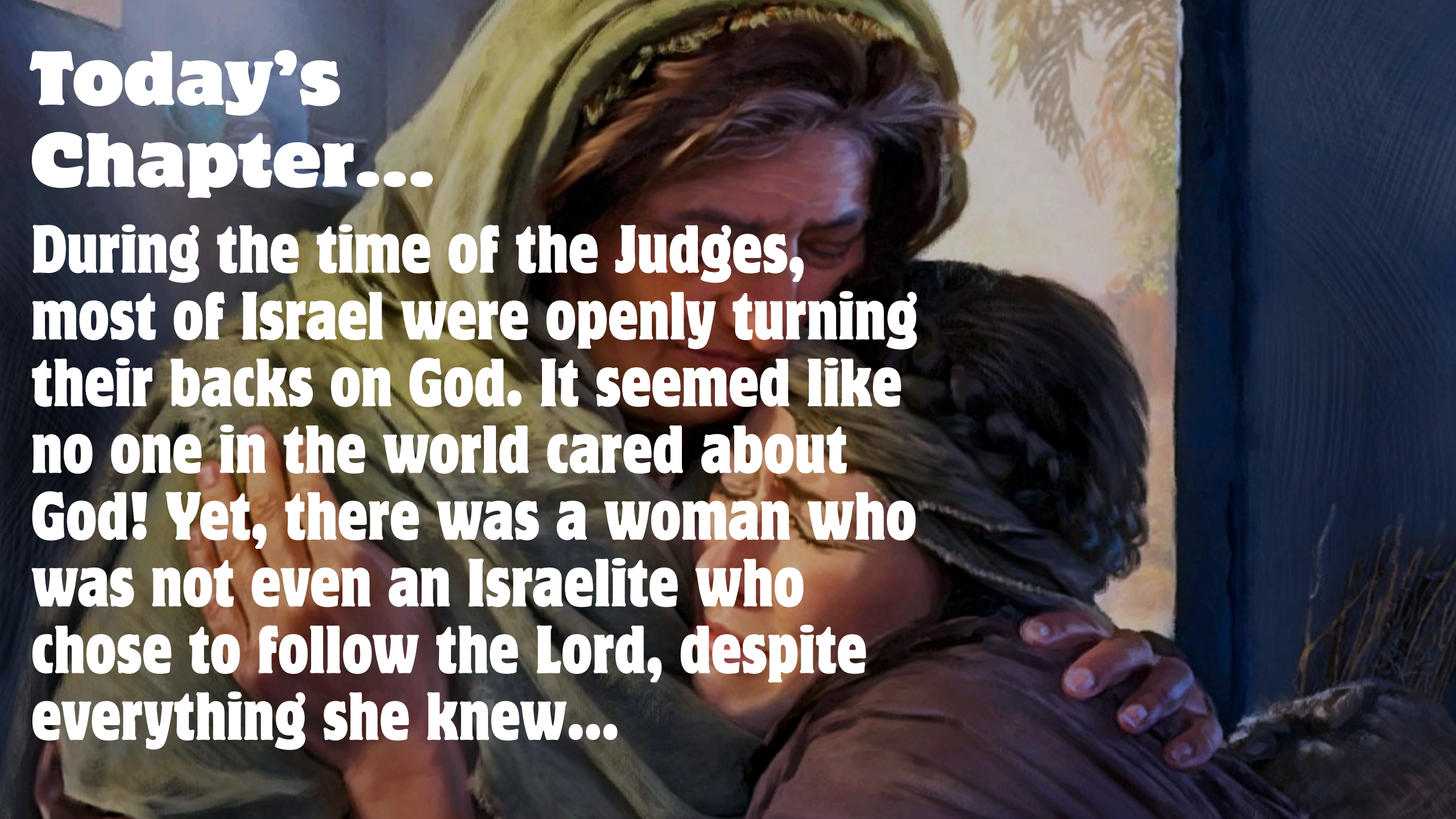




THE BIG STORY CHAPTER 12/25

Ruth & Naomi:
Outsiders Let In

A painting depicting a man and a woman in a close embrace. The man, with long brown hair and a beard, wears a green robe and a head covering. He has his eyes closed and a peaceful expression. The woman, with dark hair, is seen from the side, her face resting against the man's. She wears a dark, patterned garment. The man's hand is gently placed on the woman's shoulder. The background is dark and indistinct, with some foliage visible on the right side. The overall mood is intimate and tender.

Today's Chapter...

**During the time of the Judges,
most of Israel were openly turning
their backs on God. It seemed like
no one in the world cared about
God! Yet, there was a woman who
was not even an Israelite who
chose to follow the Lord, despite
everything she knew...**

Today's Scripture:

Ruth 1:15-18

And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.



The Story: Ruth and Naomi

- **Ruth was not born or raised an Israelite. She did not know God's Word or believe in God as she grew up.**
- **When she became a woman, she married a man who later died. She could have chosen to return back to her old gods and people, but she chose to stay with Naomi, her mother-in-law instead.**
- **She didn't just choose Naomi, however. She chose Naomi's God, and swore to serve the living God of Israel over the false gods of her childhood.**
- **Instead of being viewed as an outsider, God accepted Ruth with open arms! Not just that, but Ruth would go on to change the bible story forever...**

Why it Matters in the Big Story

- We like to think of ourselves as better than people that don't look or sound like us.**
- However, God's family includes everybody, no matter what they look or sound like!**
- This is very good, because none of us are born into God's family – we're all welcome in if we seek after Him!**



GOD IS...

God is welcoming. To be welcoming means to accept someone who doesn't look like or sound like us. None of us look or sound like God and are an outsider to Him, but He welcomes all who come to Him with open arms!

Reflection Questions

1. **What hard choice did Ruth choose?**
Ruth chose to follow God, even though she wasn't part of His people.
2. **Even though she wasn't an Israelite, did God accept Ruth?**
Yes, with open arms!
3. **What does it mean to be welcoming?**
It means to accept someone who doesn't look or sound like us!

Challenge Question: How will you welcome others this week?