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## *Ruth & Esther*

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## THE BOOK OF RUTH

The book of Ruth is very important for at least two reasons. First, it traces the ancestry of David through whom the Messiah was born. Second, the relationship between Boaz and Ruth is an allegory or picture of the redemption of the church by Christ.

The authorship of Ruth is not actually known, but Jewish tradition has assigned it to Samuel.

The events recorded in this story are believed to have taken place during the time of Gideon (Judges 6-8), and covered a period of about ten years. This beautiful story emerges as a bright spot during the time of strife and unrest in Jewish history.

1. What characterized the period of the judges? Judges 21:25b \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. According to Leviticus 26:19-20, what would happen to their land and trees if Israel did not obey the commandments of the Lord?  
\_\_\_\_\_

This judgment, of course, indicates a time of famine.

### CHAPTER ONE - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

1. As the book of Ruth begins, what condition existed in Israel? v. 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What were the names of the husband, wife and two sons that moved from Bethlehem-judah to Moab? v. 2 \_\_\_\_\_

The name Elimelech means "my God is King". When Elimelech moved to Moab, he denied his very name. As a Jew, he knew his trust was to be in God, but instead he relied upon his own strength and understanding. Rather than staying with the other Israelites and submitting to God, he went to the land of his enemies to find deliverance and relief.

3. What happened to Elimelech in Moab? v. 3 \_\_\_\_\_
4. After Elimelech's death, Mahlon and Chilion married Moabite women. What were their names? v.4 \_\_\_\_\_

According to Deuteronomy 7:3, mixed marriages were against the Hebrew law. Once again this family was in rebellion against the will of God. Nevertheless, the grace and divine providence of God took these wrongs and used them to bring about His own purpose and will.

5. After being in Moab for about ten years, Mahlon and Chilion (whose names mean "sickly" and "wasting") died. What did Naomi decide to do then? v. 6 \_\_\_\_\_
6. What had Naomi heard about her homeland? v. 6b \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Who went with Naomi when she left Moab? v. 7 \_\_\_\_\_

8. In verse 8, what were Naomi's instructions to her daughters-in-law? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What was their response? v. 10 \_\_\_\_\_

The significance of Naomi's words in verses 11-13 can be explained through the customs of that time. If a man died and left a widow, the brother or nearest relative was to marry the widow. The first-born son of this second marriage was then given the name of the first husband, in order that his name might be carried on. Naomi had no other sons to marry Ruth and Orpah, and so she was concerned for their future.

10. What did Ruth do? v. 14 \_\_\_\_\_

11. What did Orpah finally do? vv. 14-15 \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 16 shows Ruth's true submission and commitment, not just to Naomi, but to God. For Ruth, there was no turning back.

12. Read and memorize verse 16. Write it from memory. \_\_\_\_\_

13. When Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, what did the people ask? v.19 \_\_\_\_\_

14. Naomi, whose name means "pleasant", asked to be called \_\_\_\_\_

15. Why did she want to be called Mara? v. 20 \_\_\_\_\_

16. Naomi had gone out \_\_\_\_\_ but returned \_\_\_\_\_

Naomi had left Bethlehem with a husband and two sons, but she returned as a poor, childless widow. In asking to be called Mara (which means "bitterness") rather than Naomi, she was giving expression to her bitter condition.

17. At what season did Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem? v. 22 \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER TWO - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

1. What was the name of the man who was related to Naomi's husband? v. 1 \_\_\_\_\_

2. When Ruth, as a respectful daughter-in-law, asked permission to glean in the fields, what was Naomi's response? v. 2 \_\_\_\_\_

As impoverished widows, Naomi and Ruth were protected and provided for by the law. Read Deuteronomy 24:19-21. Workers in the field were instructed to leave the gleanings for the stranger, fatherless and widow.

3. Ruth's request to glean implied a faith in God to lead her to someone who would be kind to her. Whose field was she directed to by divine providence? v. 3 \_\_\_\_\_

4. After his arrival, what was the first question Boaz asked? v. 5 \_\_\_\_\_

In verses 6 and 7, the servant gave an account of Ruth's background and her industrious attitude toward work.

5. In verse 8 what did Boaz tell Ruth to do? \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 9 records the provision that Boaz made for Ruth's welfare.

6. Why was Ruth surprised that she found grace in the eyes of Boaz? v. 10 \_\_\_\_\_

Since she was a stranger, Ruth was conscious of her unworthiness to receive such favor. In like manner, we who were once strangers to the kingdom of God were also unworthy, but we received grace in the eyes of God through the love of Jesus.

7. Boaz's reply showed his knowledge of Ruth's love and care for Naomi and also her complete commitment to this new life. What blessing for Ruth did Boaz ask of the Lord? v. 12 \_\_\_\_\_

8. What did Ruth say that Boaz had done for her? v. 13 \_\_\_\_\_

9. What did Boaz invite Ruth to do? v. 14 \_\_\_\_\_

Verses 15 and 16 tell of the provision that Boaz continued to make for Ruth. Boaz wanted Ruth to have much more than just the gleanings.

10. How much barley did Ruth glean? v. 17 \_\_\_\_\_

An ephah is a bushel.

11. Seeing how much had been gleaned, Naomi asked Ruth where she had worked that day. Then Naomi said, " \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_." v. 19

In verses 20-22, Naomi blessed Boaz and counseled Ruth to continue working in the field of Boaz.

12. How long did Boaz tell Ruth to work in his field? v. 21 \_\_\_\_\_

### CHAPTER THREE - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

In order to obtain security for Ruth, Naomi began to plan for Ruth's future marriage. Even though she was only her daughter-in-law, Naomi took the place of Ruth's mother.

1. What question did Naomi ask in verse 1? \_\_\_\_\_

Verses 1-5 can be understood in the light of Jewish law and custom. Boaz, as a kinsman of Elimelech, could redeem Elimelech's property lost through poverty; he could also marry Ruth to fulfill the claim that Naomi had on him. Naomi told Ruth to lie at the feet of Boaz as a reminder of this duty.

2. Did Ruth do as she was told? v. 5 \_\_\_\_\_

3. When Boaz woke up and saw a woman at his feet, what did he ask? v. 9 \_\_\_\_\_

4. What did Ruth ask Boaz to do? v. 9 \_\_\_\_\_

Ruth's statement was an indication to Boaz that he not only had the right, but the request to proceed as kinsman-redeemer. Boaz respected Ruth for the kindness and compassion she had bestowed upon Naomi. He also knew she was a virtuous woman. Now, by this act of obedience, Boaz saw that she was submissive to the God of Israel and the Jewish laws and traditions.

5. Was Boaz willing to undertake this duty? v. 11 \_\_\_\_\_

6. What was the one obstacle that stood in the way of this marriage? v.12 \_\_\_\_\_

7. What would Boaz do if the other kinsman would not marry Ruth? v. 13 \_\_\_\_\_

8. What did Boaz put into Ruth's vail just before she left? v. 15 \_\_\_\_\_

9. Why had Boaz given the barley to Ruth? v. 17 \_\_\_\_\_

10. Naomi knew that Boaz would not rest until he finished the business that \_\_\_\_\_. v. 18

#### CHAPTER FOUR - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

1. Boaz went to the city gate and waited. When the other kinsman came by, Boaz asked him to sit down. Who else did Boaz ask to join them?

v. 2 \_\_\_\_\_

In verses 3 and 4, Boaz clearly explained to those present the reason for the meeting.

2. What was Naomi selling and to whom had it belonged? v. 3 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did the kinsman agree to buy the parcel of land? v. 4 \_\_\_\_\_

In verse 5, Boaz told the kinsman that the responsibility of raising up a son by Ruth went along with the privilege of redeeming the land.

4. Why did the kinsman give up the right to buy the land? v. 6 \_\_\_\_\_

The nearer kinsman had another inheritance with which he was more concerned.

5. How was the transaction between Boaz and the other kinsman confirmed? v.7 \_\_\_\_\_

6. What did Boaz buy? vv. 9-10 \_\_\_\_\_

Boaz willingly and eagerly paid the required price for his bride. In like manner, Christ was even more willing to pay the full price to purchase His bride, which is the Church. Like Ruth, we were heathens and foreigners, in poverty and bondage to sin. Like Boaz, Jesus showed us His grace, and we were brought into a full and everlasting relationship with our great and eternal Bridegroom.

7. What did the women say the child born to Ruth and Boaz would be to Naomi? v. 15 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What was the name of the child born to Ruth and Boaz? v. 17 \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who were Obed's son and grandson? v. 17 \_\_\_\_\_

Verses 18-22 are actually the climax of this entire book. Because these scriptures trace the descent of David, they reveal the main purpose of the book of Ruth.

Boaz who was a Jew, married Ruth who was a Moabite or Gentile, and they became one. Thus, the blood of the Jew and Gentile became intermingled in the veins of Jesus. Similarly, through the redeeming work of Jesus, which is extended to whosoever will, the Jew and Gentile are as one in the body of Christ.

"For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him."  
Romans 10:11-12

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are".  
John 17:11

## THE BOOK OF ESTHER

Israel had experienced severe judgment because of her continued sin and rebellion. God had allowed the Assyrians and Babylonians to destroy Israel's cities and take the people captive. First, in 722 B.C. the northern ten tribes of Israel had been captured and dispersed by Assyria. In 586 B.C. the two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin, had suffered the same fate at the hands of Babylon. In 538 B.C. Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon, and the Jews became Persian captives. Cyrus however, was a more liberal ruler than the Babylonians, and the Jews prospered in his kingdom. Within a few years, all that remained of Israel was under the dominion of the Medo-Persian Empire. The book of Esther provides valuable historical and spiritual insight into this period of Medo-Persian rule.

Esther is an exciting story about a Jewish girl who became the queen of Persia and was used to save the nation of Israel from destruction. Although the name of God is never mentioned in this book, it is unmistakably a story of God's divine care for His people. His intervention and guidance can be seen in the lives of Mordecai and Esther throughout the entire story.

The author of this book is unknown. However, because the writer obviously had detailed knowledge of the events of this story, Mordecai is thought to have been the author.

Esther is the last book in the section of the Bible called the Historical Books. (Joshua through Esther) Even though the events of the book occurred after the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem (as recorded in Ezra), they actually preceded the lifetime of Nehemiah by about 30 years.

### CHAPTER ONE - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

This chapter recounts Queen Vashti's fall from the throne of Persia.

1. What was the name of the king? v. 1 \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the extent of his kingdom? v. 1 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Over how many provinces did Ahasuerus reign? v. 1 \_\_\_\_\_
4. In what year of his reign did Ahasuerus make a great feast for his nobles and princes? v. 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What did Queen Vashti do at this time? v. 9 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Why did the king want Queen Vashti brought before him? v. 11 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What was the queen's response? v. 12 \_\_\_\_\_

According to Persian custom, women were kept in the background. In refusing to go to the king, Vashti was not only upholding tradition, but also her modesty and respect. However, because she disobeyed her husband and his royal command, she was divorced and banished. The end of Queen Vashti's reign was the beginning of a chain of events forged by the hand of God.

8. What did Memucan say would happen to all the other Persian women if Vashti was not punished?  
v. 17 \_\_\_\_\_



9. How did Memucan say the royal commandment should read? v. 19 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. According to Memucan, what would happen when the decree was published? v. 20 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Did the king issue the decree? vv. 21-22 \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER TWO - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

This chapter introduces Esther, who became Persia's new queen, and her cousin and guardian, Mordecai.

1. Who did the king's servants decide should be queen instead of Vashti? vv. 2-4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Mordecai was a \_\_\_\_\_ from the tribe of Benjamin. v. 5
3. What was Mordecai's relationship to Esther? v. 7 \_\_\_\_\_
4. What did Mordecai do with Esther when her parents died? v. 7 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. When the king's command was heard, what was done with Esther? v. 8 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Who was Hegai? v. 8 \_\_\_\_\_
7. Why did Hegai help Esther and treat her with kindness? v. 9a \_\_\_\_\_
8. Why did Esther not tell anyone she was a Jew? v. 10 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Esther had been raised to be obedient. When Mordecai instructed her not to disclose her Jewish heritage, she did not question his reasons. Esther's unknown background formed yet another link in the chain of events. Although Esther was unaware of what lay ahead, the Lord was carefully preparing her for an important ministry.

9. Why did Mordecai walk before the court of the women's house? v. 11 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. How long did each woman have to wait to appear before the king? v. 12 \_\_\_\_\_
11. When was Esther taken before the king? v. 16 \_\_\_\_\_
12. Because King Ahasuerus loved Esther as soon as he saw her, what did he do? v. 17b \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. After Esther became queen, where did Mordecai sit? v. 19 \_\_\_\_\_
14. Who were the king's doorkeepers? v. 21 \_\_\_\_\_
15. What did they conspire to do? v. 21 \_\_\_\_\_
16. What did Mordecai do when he discovered the plot? v. 22 \_\_\_\_\_
17. What happened to Bigthan and Teresh? v. 23 \_\_\_\_\_

Mordecai's faithful deed was recorded in the palace book of records and chronicles. Although Mordecai was not rewarded at the time, his action would play an important part in later events.

### CHAPTER THREE - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

For reasons which are not recorded, King Ahasuerus suddenly promoted a man named Haman to the high office of chief prince. Haman was a very proud and arrogant man. When Mordecai refused to bow to him, Haman used his newly gained power to turn against all Jews.

1. To what position was Haman advanced? v. 1 \_\_\_\_\_
2. What did the king's servants do? v. 2 \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was Mordecai's response? v. 2 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Mordecai would not bow, for he was a \_\_\_\_\_

The Persians thought of their kings as gods. Therefore, any person appointed by the king was also highly honored, and the people freely gave these men reverence and bowed down to them. On the other hand, because he was a Jew, Mordecai would bow only to the Lord God.

5. What did Haman decide to do to all Jews when he saw that Mordecai would not bow to him? v. 6  
\_\_\_\_\_

In order to decide when to destroy the Jews, Haman cast Pur, or lots, for each day and then for each month. The delay of the Jews' execution until the twelfth month was not by coincidence or luck. The Lord had arranged circumstances so as to work all things together for the good of His people, and to destroy the plans of the enemy. (Romans 8:28)

6. What did Haman tell King Ahasuerus about the Jews? v. 8b \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What did the king say to Haman? v. 11b \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. In verse 10, the king gave Haman his ring. Why? v. 12 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. According to the letter or decree, what was to happen to the Jews? v.13 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. When was the destruction of the Jews to take place? v. 13 \_\_\_\_\_

### CHAPTER FOUR - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

This chapter tells how Queen Esther learned of the decree and how she responded by asking all the Jews to fast in her behalf.

1. What did Mordecai do when he heard about the decree? vv. 1-2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What were the Jews throughout the kingdom doing? v. 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. When Esther learned that all the Jews were mourning and in sackcloth, what was her reaction? v.4  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why did Queen Esther send Hatach to Mordecai? v. 5 \_\_\_\_\_
5. What did Mordecai give to Hatach? v. 8a \_\_\_\_\_
6. What did Mordecai charge Esther to do? v. 8b \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Though Esther was queen of Persia, she had never revealed that she was a Jew. However, now God would use this situation to achieve His purpose.

Esther's uninvited entrance unto the king would be dangerous. No one was allowed to go before the king unless specifically called. An intruder could be executed.

7. How long had it been since the king had sent for Esther? v. 11 \_\_\_\_\_

In verse 13, Mordecai reminded Esther that her position as queen would not exclude her from Haman's decree. Mordecai revealed his faith when he stated that if Esther did not go to the king, then deliverance would surely arise from some other source. (verse 14)

8. What was Mordecai's concluding remark to Esther? v. 14b \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This statement is the key to understanding the purpose of the book of Esther. The entire story illustrates God's unfailing providence for His people; He had arranged the characters and circumstances of history in order that His people might be delivered. Today, we Christians should also consider **why** we have been placed in our present position. For who knows whether, by the purpose of God, we too "art come to the kingdom for such a time as this".

9. What did Esther tell Mordecai to do? v. 16a \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What was Esther's attitude about entering the king's presence without his permission? v. 16b  
\_\_\_\_\_

This is also the right attitude toward doing God's will--if we perish, we perish. God is in full control, and He will take care of any life fully entrusted into His hands.

## CHAPTER FIVE - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

Esther accepted the challenge and went in to the king. God had highly favored Esther in the king's sight, and therefore when she entered the royal court, King Ahausuerus extended his golden scepter indicating his acceptance of her presence.

1. When Esther went before the king, what did she put on? v. 1 \_\_\_\_\_
2. King Ahasuerus offered Esther anything, even to half of his kingdom, but what was her request? v. 4 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Did Haman and the king go to the banquet? v. 5 \_\_\_\_\_

While at the banquet, the king inquired about Esther's wish. However, cautious about perfect timing, Esther arranged for yet another banquet.

4. As Haman left the banquet, he was feeling proud and important; but what did he feel when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate? v. 9

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Who was Zeresh? v. 10 \_\_\_\_\_

In verses 11 and 12, Haman arrogantly boasted of his riches and high position. With great swelling pride, Haman told how the queen had invited him to both of her personal banquets. Yet in his own words, Haman felt it was all worthless as long as Mordecai refused to pay him homage. (verse 13)

6. What did Zeresh and his friends tell Haman to do? v. 14 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER SIX - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

In Chapter 2, we read of Mordecai's loyal but unrewarded act in saving the king's life. Now as Mordecai stood in peril of his very life, the workings of divine providence became evident. It was no coincidence that the king was sleepless and called for the book of records to be read to him. (verse 1)

1. When the king asked what had been done to honor Mordecai for saving his life, what was the answer? v. 3 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why had Haman come to the king's court? v. 4 \_\_\_\_\_
3. To whom did Haman think the king was referring when he asked how he should honor someone? v. 6 \_\_\_\_\_

Presuming that the king had him in mind, Haman was very extravagant in suggesting how honor should be bestowed. (verses 8-9)

4. What did the king instruct Haman to do? v. 10 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. After he led Mordecai through the city, what did Haman do? v. 12 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

With his pride crushed, Haman began to tell his wife and friends of his terrible misfortune.

6. Haman's counselors were truly wise, for they told Haman, "Thou shalt not \_\_\_\_\_, but shall surely \_\_\_\_\_." v. 13
- Zeresh and the wise men must have sensed that the Jews were under divine protection.

## CHAPTER SEVEN - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

Esther had been careful to wait for the perfect time to make known her request to King Ahasuerus. At the second banquet, Esther had her opportunity.

1. In response to the king's inquiry, what did Esther request? v. 3 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What did the king want to know after Esther told him of the destruction set for her people? v. 5 \_\_\_\_\_
3. When Esther told the king that Haman was responsible, what was Haman's reaction? v. 6 \_\_\_\_\_

The king was full of wrath and went into the palace garden. While he was there, Haman fell on his face asking Esther to intercede for his life. Ahasuerus became even angrier when he returned from the garden and saw Haman entreating Esther. (verses 7-8)

4. When Harbonah told the king about the gallows Haman had erected, what did the king say? v. 9 \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER EIGHT - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

1. To whom did King Ahasuerus give Haman's house? v. 1 \_\_\_\_\_
2. What did Esther want the king to put away? v. 3 \_\_\_\_\_

In verse 5, Esther asked the king to reverse the decree made against the Jews. However, once a decree had been sent from the king, it could not be reversed. Therefore, King Ahasuerus gave Esther and Mordecai authority to send out another decree sealed with his ring. Mordecai's decree gave the Jews a right to slay those who attempted to carry out Haman's original decree against them. (verses 8-13)

3. What was the Jews' reaction to this second decree? v. 16 \_\_\_\_\_
4. What did many of the people of the land do? v. 17b \_\_\_\_\_

## CHAPTER NINE - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

In spite of the second decree, some of the Persians still rose up against the Jews. With God's help, the Jews defended themselves and defeated all their enemies. The feast of Purim was instituted at this time as a continual celebration of this wonderful victory.

1. What did the enemies of the Jews hope to do on the thirteenth of Adar? v.1 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why could no man withstand the Jews? v. 2 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who helped the Jews? v. 3 \_\_\_\_\_
4. What did the Jews do to their enemies? v. 5 \_\_\_\_\_
5. At the palace in Shushan, how many men did the Jews destroy? v. 6 \_\_\_\_\_
6. When the ten sons of Haman were killed, what did the Jews do with the spoil (their goods)? v. 10 \_\_\_\_\_
7. After news of the battle was brought to the king, he again asked Esther what she would like from \_\_\_\_\_

him. What two things did Esther ask of the king? v. 13 a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

8. How many men were slain in Shushan on the fourteenth day of Adar? v. 15 \_\_\_\_\_

Although the Jews were entitled to take the spoils of their enemies, they refrained from doing so. They desired nothing except their own preservation.

9. What two days were instituted as the Feast of Purim? v. 21 \_\_\_\_\_

Jews today still observe this celebration by feasting and reading the book of Esther in their synagogues.

## CHAPTER TEN - READ THE CHAPTER FIRST

Mordecai was placed second in power to King Ahasuerus. In spite of this honor, Mordecai never forgot his people or sought wealth for himself. His total concern and commitment were directed to the welfare of the Jews.

1. How does verse 3 describe Mordecai's attitude toward his people? v. 3b \_\_\_\_\_

The Jews have been a persecuted people for almost 2,300 years of history. Many have tried to destroy the entire race, but without success. The Jews are God's people and He preserves His own! Just as this wonderful story of Esther illustrates, no matter how the circumstances appear, God's will and His Word shall be done.

I have answered all questions and completed all memory work to the best of my ability.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_