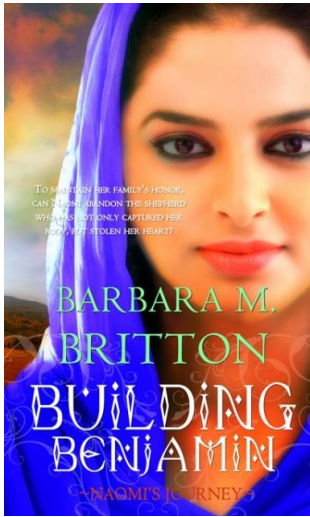


## Discussion Questions

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### **BUILDING BENJAMIN: NAOMI'S JOURNEY**

Tribes of Israel

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ISBN (e): 9781611169775

ISBN (tp): 9781611168839

Imprint: Harbourlight Books

Publisher: Pelican Book Group

Pages: 237

eBook SRP: 4.99

### **About the Book**

Love Grows Where God Grafts the Tender Shoot.

Naomi desires to dance well enough to catch the eye of a wealthy landowner. Her father needs a substantial bride price due to the deaths of her brothers at the hands of the tribe of Benjamin. But when Benjamites raid the Ephraimite feast and capture young girls, Naomi is bound and carried from her home by Eliab, a troubled shepherd who needs a wife.

As Naomi awaits rescue, she finds Eliab has a strong faith in God and a just reason for abducting her. A reason that affects all the tribes of Israel. The future of the tribe of Benjamin hangs in the balance, but if Naomi follows her heart and stays with Eliab to rebuild his lineage, she must forfeit her family and become a traitor to her own tribe.

TITLE: Building Benjamin: Naomi's Journey  
Discussion:

Question 1: Why did you decide to write this Bible story?

Answer 1: I didn't know this Bible story existed until I was reading through Judges and stumbled upon the chaos. I mentioned the story to my son who was in high school at the time and he didn't believe that it was in the Bible. He read chapters 19-21 and laughed when the Benjamites kidnapped the girls from Shiloh and ran off with their future wives. How could I pass up a story my son found so funny.

Question 2: Why are the Benjamites important?

Answer 2: Saul, the first king of the Israelites, was from the tribe of Benjamin. The apostle Paul (formerly Saul of Tarsus) also came from the tribe of Benjamin. If the tribe did not exist, these men would not have been born.

Question 3: Is there a verse that sums up this time period in the Bible?

Answer 3: Judges 21:25 states, "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit." Some of the Israelites had abandoned God's moral law and were living according to their sinful nature. We see the immorality of the tribe of Benjamin on full display, but we all need to examine our hearts and make sure we are producing the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Question 4: Where does Naomi get her strength?

Answer 4: Naomi recites a verses from Deuteronomy (6:18a) which encourages the Israelites to trust in God as they lay siege to the Promised Land. Naomi needs to trust God to keep her safe and to give her wisdom. She does what is "right and good in the Lord's sight" in her dealings with Eliab and his family.

Question 5: Why does Eliab wait to make Naomi his wife?

Answer 5: Eliab is mourning the loss of his family. A family he had the job of burying. He loses two sisters in the battle to destroy Gibeah. Eliab understands the grief Naomi suffers for the loss of her brothers and does not want to cause her more pain. He would like love to flourish in their relationship. I guess you could say Eliab is thinking of long term happiness instead of instant pleasure.

Question 6: The women in your story all seem to want different things. How did you characterize them?

Answer 6: At times I think of the story of the three bears. Cuzbi was excited to be chosen by an elder. She hadn't been fortunate in having a choice of suitors and Ashbanel stole her heart—literally. Jael desired someone to protect her and provide for her since she was the daughter of a

poor widow. Isa fit the bill. Naomi was ice cold since she despised the Benjamites. Eliab and God had to warm her heart to stay and rebuild the tribe.

Question 7: The Bible account in Judges 21 has no battle between the Benjamites and the tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh. Did you add to the Bible?

Answer 7: “Building Benjamin: Naomi’s Journey” is a work of fiction. The tribal elders mention the fathers will complain about the raid but the text doesn’t show this conflict. I added more tension with the made up battle, but the essence of the story comes from history.

Question 8: Are you a Bible scholar?

Answer 8: I wish. My husband is an ordained minister so I have listened to many, many sermons. My basement is a library of Bible commentaries and Christian books. I have been fortunate to be in Bible studies for many years and have had the privilege to teach chapel to kids, but I don’t have a degree in Biblical Studies.

Question 9: Do you have any more Bible stories planned?

Answer 9 . I am working on one now from the time of Nehemiah. I also have a story from the New Testament rolling around in my brain.

Question 10: What was the hardest part of this book to write?

Answer 10: I do not think I will ever write an “enemy to lover” story again. It is difficult to write authentic love when it happens in a short period of time. I hope you felt that Naomi and Eliab loved each other and would have a beautiful life together.

