



## Judah's Wife: A Novel of the Maccabees

*Angela Elwell Hunt*

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## **Judah's Wife: A Novel of the Maccabees** Angela Elwell Hunt

Seeking peace and safety after a hard childhood, Leah marries Judah, a strong and gentle man, and for the first time in her life Leah believes she can rest easily. But the land is ruled by Antiochus IV, descended from one of Alexander the Great's generals, and when he issues a decree that all Jews are to conform to Syrian laws upon pain of death, devout Jews risk everything to follow the law of Moses.

Judah's father resists the decree, igniting a war that will cost him his life. But before dying, he commands his son to pick up his sword and continue the fight--or bear responsibility for the obliteration of the land of Judah. Leah, who wants nothing but peace, struggles with her husband's decision--what kind of God would destroy the peace she has sought for so long?

The miraculous story of the courageous Maccabees is told through the eyes of Judah's wife, who learns that love requires courage . . . and sacrifice.

## **Judah's Wife: A Novel of the Maccabees Details**

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Author : Angela Elwell Hunt

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## From Reader Review *Judah's Wife: A Novel of the Maccabees* for online ebook

### Eva says

I didn't know much about the Maccabees before I read *Judah's Wife*, but I knew that I'd learn more about them through Hunt's writing, as she does great research. I wasn't disappointed in that regard (in fact, I kind of want to read First and Second Maccabees now). As always, Hunt's writing style is clear, precise, and very *interesting* - something that I've found to be a rarity in most Christian fiction. I'm never bored while reading one of her books and that certainly held true for *Judah's Wife*.

Despite the title of the book, I felt that there was more focus on Judah than on his wife, Leah. The accounts of Judah's battles, struggles, and victories took up a large part of the book and were fascinating (and awe-inspiring; God was so very present). Judah was an amazing man and a character I would have gladly spent even more time with. His courage and bravery, as well as his tenderness and care for Leah was wonderful.

Leah did annoy me at times (girl, there's a clear difference between domestic abuse and fulfilling God's will by striking down the enemies of His people) but she matured and grew throughout the book and by the end, I really liked her. I also liked Judah's brothers (lots of brothers = cool family dynamic). And Philander + his son.

The only things I didn't like about *Judah's Wife* were that at times the characters didn't feel super fleshed out, it was a 'kissing book' and sometimes a little uncomfortable in that regard, and some of the violence/torture was...\*shudders\*.

That being said, I truly did enjoy this book. It just made me cry a lot right at the end. (But, hey, that isn't necessarily a bad thing.)

*I received this book for free in exchange for my honest review.*

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### Anna says

This book follows Leah, the daughter of a merchant in Jerusalem, in her marriage to Judah Maccabaeus, the son of Mattathias (from 1 Maccabees in the Apocrypha). Leah grew up with an abusive father, so she is grateful to be able to leave with Judah, but at the same time she struggles believing that he truly isn't going to hurt her, especially when her father-in-law Mattathias begins a war on the Gentiles overtaking and persecuting Jews. Her fears put a pressure on their marriage, and she must learn how to love and be loved.

Things I liked about this book: The time period. I had never read anything written about the Silent Years or the Apocrypha. It was fascinating reading about the challenges they faced, and how the Jews responded to Greek rule. I also liked the questions it posed to readers. There were several instances where characters had to choose between obeying God or obeying the Greeks, at the consequence of death if they were found out. It really challenged me to think about that and what I would do in the situation.

Things I didn't love: The story of Judah's family was told through the perspective of his marriage with Leah.

While this was such an interesting perspective, I feel like they didn't address their relationship enough in the end. They had their ups and downs in the beginning, but after the climax of their relationship you hardly see them interact at all, which I found odd that the times they were supposed to be the closest, we didn't see it. I also didn't love the ending. It was based off of the actual occurrences of 1 Maccabees, so there was only so much that Hunt could do for her ending, but it was still sad.

Overall it was an interesting read, telling the story of ancient Jews from a new perspective. I would recommend for older readers since it does follow their marriage closely, though without giving details.

This review was originally posted here.

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## **Jeanie says**

**They say this movement springs from the great Alexander, who wanted to unite the world into one race and one people. But he failed, as all men will fail if they attempt a task only HaShem can perform. How can a man unite the world when Adonai has set people apart. We are the seed of Abraham, a chosen race and a peculiar people. The world will be blessed through us, but we are commanded to remain separate.**

Angela Hunt does not disappoint with this one. I am not familiar with the struggle of the Maccabees. The Silent Years are the years between the Old Testament and the New. In the time of the Maccabees, God has not spoken thru a Prophet in over 300 years. The Maccabees came from the Levite tribe who lead the people of Israel to worship God. During this time in Israel's history, the people drew away from the proper worship of God and worshiped idols. Many Jews placed their trust in other men or themselves. The Maccabees started a revolt to bring the worship back to Jerusalem and the people back to the one true God. I have not read the book of the Maccabee's which this one is based on. In pivotal parts, a quote from the book brings the reader to a point. The author was able quite well to bring history to life in the story of Judah and his wife Leah.

Leah came from an abusive family and all that she has known is violence. She abhors it. It has taken away her innocence and trust. Judah came to her rescue and pursued her to become his wife. Judah's family is a family of community. With Judah's father a strong leader in his own household and the outside community, he sees the evil in Jerusalem and moves his family to a safer village. However, forces of evil, the family must take a stand and fight.

This becomes a pivotal point in the marriage of Judah and Leah as she longs for peace. She cannot reconcile the husband she married to the warrior he has become in fighting for HaShem. Leah is constant turmoil with HaShem and her own desire for peace.

Their story is our own story and the turmoil we face in desiring peace but always being in the battle to remain separate. There is a true picture of Judah as Christ and Leah as the church that will ignite a heart towards the true meaning of what salvation really is. I highly recommend this one.

*A Special Thank You to Bethany House and Netgalley for the ARC and the opportunity to post an honest review.*

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## **Alicia Ruggieri says**

Wow! What a tremendously powerful novel this was - This book is proof that fiction can convey deep truths within story. I came to Judah's Wife not really knowing what to expect. I don't think that I've read anything by Angela Hunt - at least nothing novel-sized - and I nearly passed by this novel when it came up for review, despite the prettiness of the cover, because I thought that the book was going to be about Judah-the-son-of-Jacob-the-Patriarch's wife. But the description hooked me when I realized that this was not about the wife of one of Jacob's sons, but about a family who has always fascinated me but whom I haven't spent enough time reading about: the Maccabees!

Yes, this thick novel tells the story of Judah Maccabee - "the Hammerhead" - the liberator and leader of the Army of Israel. It is also the story of his wife Leah, though I felt like the book was more about the two of them than about her exclusively, as the title seemed to imply. (This didn't disappoint me at all - the story felt very balanced as a result.)

When I finished this novel, I felt like my spirit and emotions had gone through an old-fashioned clothes-wringer... It was that intense - everything from LOTR-worthy battle scenes (some of the most detailed, interesting, and vivid that I've found in Christian Fiction) to the marriage difficulties between Judah and Leah to the spiritual agonies and victories of the characters. The intensity was necessary, \*so well-done\*, and believable.

Perhaps what brought this story head-and-shoulders above much CF that I've read is the stark and very Biblical challenge that the story of Judah and Leah offer the reader. The novel shows the depth of sacrifice sometimes necessary - even the sacrifice of life itself - not only to follow Christ quietly, but to follow Him in bold, uncompromising, humble obedience, even when no one else will do so. Judah demonstrates this over and over again throughout the novel; he becomes a "type of Christ" and a "messiah" to both his wife and the Israelites. Rarely do I come across a male character who deeply impresses me. This Judah is one of them. No wonder Israelites in the time of Christ (150 years later) were still naming their sons after him.

Judah's Wife is an intensely encouraging, inspiring novel with clearly well-done research threading throughout. I recommend it highly to anyone looking for a deep, richly spiritual story.

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## **Molly Cafinated Reads Jaber says**

Oh my goodness. This book, y'all. THIS. BOOK. Angela Hunt is an amazing author. Her style is so incredibly unique. I was blessed to have EGYPT'S SISTER and now I've been doubly blessed to get to read another incredibly moving, mind altering novel by the uberly talented Ms. Hunt.

In this incredible novel, we get to see Judah and Leah. I had a deep sadness for all Leah went through. As someone who has dealt with an abusive man before, I felt all her trust issues, I felt all her pain and suffering. I can't imagine what it was like during that time period to be abused by your father and not be able to trust.

And Judah....oh, how I loved his flaw filled self. He was not someone I would have normally enjoyed seeing in a book, but as I read the story, I fell in love with him hard. He was such a wonderful person for the story. Seeing him with Leah, well I cheered them on throughout the book.

Ms. Hunt has, once again, hit the Biblical fiction nail on the head. This book will shake you to the core, and leave you with all the feels that a book can leave you with. The inspirational messages from the Lord are perfectly pieced together within the pages of this book. If I could give this book 5 million stars I would. Go grab it now! You won't be sorry!

\*I received a complimentary copy of this book from Publisher and was under no obligation to post a review, positive or negative.\*

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### **Jeanne Alfveby crea says**

I am studying salvation history in my bible study, and during one session, we talked about the brave Maccabees, who lead a courageous and ultimately successful resistance to violent suppression of their religion by their Seleucid rulers. So I was very interested in reading Judah's wife by Angela Hunt. She always writes thought provoking historical and biblical fiction. I love how she brought to life Judah and his family. Judah was such a loyal self-sacrificing hero who encouraged the army of Israel to take a stand and not lose their religious heritage or compromise their faith. It is a continual example to every age. They put their trust completely in God, and though outnumbered, fought battle after battle with God's help. Makes me want to go back and re-read Maccabees! Angela Hunt does an amazing job, making their story come to life.

(If you are interested in more information about how this story fits into the bible: There is some confusion about why the Maccabee's are in Catholic and Orthodox bibles and not in Protestant Bibles. The Jewish people had two canons: The Canon among the Palestinian Jews (Protocanonical Books), the Hebrew Old Testament, and The Canon among the Alexandrian Jews (Deutero-canonical Books), also known as the ancient Greek Old Testament known as the Septuagint. Scholars generally admit that the Septuagint faithfully represents the O. T. as it was current among the Hellenist or Alexandrian Jews in the age immediately preceding Christ. It is this version of the Old Testament that the Jews and the authors of the New Testament were using. After the Jewish temple was destroyed in 70AD by the Romans, and the increasing growth of the Christians, the Jews decided to go back to the Hebrew Old Testament, (minus the 7 books found in the Greek Version). The Christians continued using it. The canon of the entire Bible was essentially settled around the turn of the fourth century includes the Greek version of the Old Testament. Around this time there were no less than five instances when the canon was formally identified: the Synod of Rome (382), the Council of Hippo (393), the Council of Carthage (397), a letter from Pope Innocent I to Exsuperius, Bishop of Toulouse (405), and the Second Council of Carthage (419). In every instance, the canon was identical to what Catholic Bibles contain today. By the time of the Reformation, Christians had been using the same 73 books in their Bibles (46 in the Old Testament, 27 in the New Testament)--and thus considering them inspired--for more than 1100 years. Martin Luther adopted the Hebrew version rejecting the version used by Jews and Christians in the first century, and what Christians had been using since the time of Christ. He put the 7 books of the Old Testament not found in the Hebrew canon in the appendix. He also put the letter of James, the letter to the Hebrews, the letters of John, and the book of Revelation from the New Testament in an appendix. His followers went along with his changes in the Old Testament, but not the New Testament.)

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### **Fiction Aficionado says**

I have always found it interesting that the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes is prophesied in Daniel, and yet the account of the Maccabees' courageous stand against him is not part of the official Biblical canon (although it is a part of the Apocrypha in I & II Maccabees). The story of the Maccabean Revolt is well known to Jews through the annual celebration of Hannukah, which commemorates the rededication of the Temple following its purification, but it's less well known to Christians unless they've studied the prophecies of Daniel or intertestamental Jewish history. So when I found out that Angela Hunt's next book

was going cover the Maccabean Revolt, I was eager for a front row seat.

Having said that, it's a pretty ugly and brutal time in Jewish history, and for that reason, I think it was a great decision to make the historical events the backdrop for what is in some ways a coming-of-age story—and a moving one at that. From a young girl who lived her life in constant fear of her father's violence and doubted HaShem's love, Leah grew to be a woman of strength who could see HaShem's loving hand even in the midst of her sorrow. But it was not an easy path.

One of the greatest strengths of this novel is Hunt's portrayal of Leah's and Judah's characters; they were complex, but entirely believable. Judah was both a gentle giant and a ferocious warrior, and Leah's struggle to understand and accept this was a big part of her journey. So too was her struggle to understand genuine love in all its different guises—both here on earth and from HaShem in heaven—and to reach a place where she could offer that love in return, particularly to Judah. It's a testament to Hunt's storytelling ability that this maturation in Leah was so convincing amidst the upheaval and violence she so abhorred.

Backed as it was by Hunt's solid historical research and masterful narrative, this was a gripping and emotional read.

I received a copy of this novel from the publisher. This has not influenced the content of my review, which is my honest and unbiased opinion.

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### **Torn Pages and Roses says**

I really enjoyed this book and the end was super bittersweet I was bawling my eyes out and trying to pretend I'm okay because my mom was like 5 feet away from me lol I will definitely be checking out Angela Hunt's first book because I loved her writing so much. This is supposed to be 4 1/2 stars but Goodreads doesn't deal like that so I left it to four.

Highly recommend though! Also if you want to read my full review, it's available on my blog check it here!

*I got this book from Bethany House through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my views and opinions in any way.*

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### **Christian Fiction Addiction says**

The second novel in "The Silent Years" series is every bit as fascinating and absorbing as the first, "Egypt's Sister". Angela Hunt's historical detail will transport you back in time until you will feel like you are walking the streets of Jerusalem at Leah's side, or breathing in the dust raised by the horses hooves of the enemy armies advancing upon Judah and the faithful followers of Adonai. Hunt has crafted some engaging characters in Judah and Leah, and Leah's story of witnessing extreme domestic abuse in her home especially engaged my sympathies. I loved watching God's hand at work in her life and in the love that grew between Judah and Leah, in the midst of pain and fear and uncertain times. I thought Hunt did an excellent job at switching between each of their viewpoints, as this added more complexity to the story.

I always love it when I encounter a historical novel featuring a people group that I've never read about

before, and such was the case with this novel and the story of the Maccabees. I was struck especially by the humility of the Israeli people as they humbled themselves before God and truly repented and wept for the evil they had participated in. In looking at my own life and that of the church today, this position of humility is one that is needed today. The weapons we fight with are not physical, but the weapon of prayer and a posture of reliance on God certainly remains the same.

Let yourself be swept into history and into a grand tale that will have your pulse pounding as you are engaged in a story of God's faithful standing up for truth. Grab a copy of "Judah's Wife" - you will be glad you spent time with this well-written novel! I award this book a high rating of 5 out of 5 stars.

Book has been provided courtesy of Baker Publishing Group and Graf-Martin Communications, Inc.

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## **Kristin says**

**Note:** Kristin reads and reviews both Christian and secular fiction on A Simply Enchanted Life. Out of respect for my readers, I am including a content review. This content review will help you decide whether this book is suitable for you.

**Christian or Secular:** Christian

**ASEL Rating:** Mild. Semi-detailed violence that may be upsetting to some readers

Full Content Review:

Profanity: None

Sex & Violence: Non-descriptive sexual encounters. Semi-detailed domestic violence.

Trigger Warning: Some people may be triggered by instances of domestic violence as well as miscarriage.

Judah's Wife is book #2 in The Silent Years series by Angela Hunt. Other books in the series include Egypt's Sister (#1) and Jerusalem's Queen (#3) which is expected to release on November 6th, 2018.

If you read my review of Egypt's Sister, you'd see that I didn't care too much for that book. I was unsure if I would read Judah's daughter but ultimately decided that I have loved other books by this author and that I would give this book a shot. I am so glad that I did!

I have read twenty-five books as of 2/16/18 and Judah's Wife is one of the most moving and compelling books that I have read out of those.

I want to talk about the 4-star rating right fast (which is actually closer to 4.5 but Goodreads doesn't allow half-stars).

When it comes to plot and characters, this book is 100% a five-star book. I was emotionally engaged with the story and there is a certain scene in Judah's Daughter that is perhaps one of the most gripping scenes I've ever read in this genre. Without giving too much away; Leah is completely broken and begs Judah to do to her what she expects that he eventually will. Judah places his life in her hands and proves to her that he will not harm her—not matter what she chooses to do to him. My heart dropped at her response. I was shocked, sad and completely overwhelmed. Judah's response won my respect and a piece of my heart.



So, as I was saying about this 4-star rating. It has absolutely nothing to do with the characters or the story. Although, the ending did leave me so melancholy that I wanted to cry out of frustration. In fact, I did. More on that in a bit...

I had only two issues with this book and they're fairly minor.

In a particular battle scene in this book, Judah and his brothers encounter men on elephants. Judah's brother dives under the legs of the armored elephants and slashes at them. This felt too much like a particular battle scene in Lord of the Rings. It detracted from the story to me in a small way as that is all I could picture. This will not be an issue for readers who have not read the books or watched Lord of the Rings. Two characters deaths were mentioned in passing. After having been an integral part of the story for me; I wanted to know how they died. I needed closure for their deaths.

This book comes to a melancholy end. If you're looking for a book that has a happy ending then this book is not the one for you. However, if you're looking for a book that features a broken woman who learns to put her trust in God then I would definitely suggest this book. Leah's life is one that many women live. She experiences abuse, love, and loss; realizing that God never promised that life would be easy. But that He would be there for her through all of life's trials.

**This book was provided to me by Bethany House Bloggers. I was not required to write a positive review, and have not been compensated for this. All opinions are my own.**

This review originally posted on A Simply Enchanted Life

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### **Tina at Mommynificent says**

Recently, I found myself very interested in understanding the origins of Hanukkah. So I started looking at historical texts like the Books of Maccabees and the writings of Josephus, and I looked for lots of helps from others in understanding these ancient documents. Providentially, right in the middle of this search, I was asked to review an ARC of Angela Hunt's next book, Judah's Wife. I agreed, actually thinking it was Biblical fiction about Jacob's son Judah, but then quickly found out that it was fiction about the life of Judah Maccabaeus, also know as Judas Maccabee, the human hero of the story of Hanukkah (because of course, God is the real hero!) I couldn't believe God had sent me this book to read right as I was desiring to learn more about the origins of this holiday!

I so enjoyed reading this book! It met a desire I had to understand the story behind Hanukkah by making me feel as if I were right there, living it with Judah and Leah. I am so glad that Hunt chose to tell the story by alternating between their perspectives because hearing Leah's perspective every now and again made the gruesome battles and rather boring tactical stuff that is the bulk of Judah's story palatable and relatable. I said to my husband at one point that the book had more violence and fighting than I would have liked, but that the Maccabees themselves probably would have said the same thing about their lives so it was probably appropriate.

While others of Hunt's books have bothered me because I felt like she took too much leeway with historical and Biblical facts, I knew so little about this period of history that I have no idea how much leeway she took other than what she discloses in the author's note at the end, which was very informative and helpful to my learning. So that was not a problem for me with this book.

I think what I enjoyed the most about this book is how much I learned from the Maccabaeus family. I never realized how relevant their story would be to my life, but I was truly inspired by their refusal to compromise when it came to worshiping and obeying God. Whether the pressure to conform came in the form of persecution or in the form of promises of comfort and ease, they saw it for what it was and refused to stray from the path marked out for them by Scripture. This book added much to our family's first celebration of Hanukkah, and I know I will return to it often as we celebrate in the future.

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### **C.E. Hart says**

I love Biblical fiction. Not only does it inspire and entertain me, but it also gives me a strong sense of the customs and practices of those living during ancient times.

**Judah's Wife**, by Angela Hunt, is the second book in *The Silent Years* series. It has such a spiritual feel, and a powerful message. I like the shifting points of view between Leah and Judah, giving me an inside look at each of their hearts and happenings. I sympathized and empathized with them both, but especially bonded with Leah. She endured much and had many of the same fears and doubts I imagine I would've had in similar situations.

I enjoyed the relationship between Judah and Leah—I just wish it went a little deeper. I wish there was more internal passion. The relationship was sweet and respectful, but didn't have as much depth as I'd hoped. With that said, this is still a fascinating story and I look forward to reading more stories in this series.

I learned a lot about the silent years, the Maccabees, and ancient Israelite customs and difficulties. I love a book that makes me see the world or humanity differently.

*Cover: Love*

*Title: Love*

*Pages: 384*

*Series: The Silent Years*

*Publisher: Bethany House*

*First Line: In those days Mattathias...had five sons, Johanan surnamed Gaddi, Simon called Thassi, Judas called Maccabaeus, Eleazar called Avaran, and Jonathan called Apphus.*

*I received a complimentary copy of this book from Barbour Publishing (and NetGalley) and was under no obligation to post a review.*

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### **Nadine Keels says**

Leah never felt safe in the home she grew up in. So when she marries a kind man named Judah, she believes she can finally experience a life of peace. But when Judah is challenged to fight for his people's sacred way of life, Leah's hopes for peace are threatened in *Judah's Wife: A Novel of the Maccabees* by author Angela Hunt.

I was intrigued by The Silent Years series from the get-go, as I'd never read Biblical Fiction that addresses

the four hundred years of (apparent) "silence" between the biblical books of Malachi and Matthew. I liked the first novel in this series, and have either liked or loved every novel I've read by Hunt, so I started anticipating this book way before its publication.

I was quickly drawn into the place, the period, and the setup of dual first-person narrators, which I've seen in other novels by this author. Although I'm sure I would have enjoyed this book at a different time, I only got a fifth of the way through before I decided not to continue. I've heard of the Maccabees and was most interested in reading about their revolt, but I'll admit there are some aspects of Biblical Fiction I find much harder to read now than I used to.

As I recently said about another novel in the genre, my struggle with this book is reflective of a changing reader, not the quality of the story. While this likely means I'll have to take a personal step back from the genre for now, I wouldn't discourage other ChristFic readers from checking this novel out.

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Bethany House provided me with a complimentary copy of this book for an honest review.

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### **Kav says**

I'm a toe-dabbling biblical fiction reader so I approach this genre with a bit of trepidation. Hence Judah's Wife sat on my TBR pile for a couple of weeks while I gathered the gumption to crack it open. And wouldn't you know it? Once I did, I couldn't stop reading. Seriously, I was instantly mesmerized. Hunt's words seamlessly flow, creating captivating images that helped me feel like I was actually witnessing events as they unfolded.

Using alternate points of view, this story comes to life through the eyes of both Leah and Judah. Now I'm not a biblical scholar. At all. And I knew absolutely nothing about the Maccabean Revolt -- or even thought much about that 400 year gap between the Old and New Testament so I learned a lot from this novel. It's a brutal piece of history so not always the easiest of reads but the author balances that with Leah's and Judah's developing love story.

There's tragedy and triumph and deep sorrow -- all the hallmarks of an epic tale. And as I read, I found myself making modern day connections. In 168 BC, the Jewish faith was threatened by assimilation from Greek culture. The result was the watering down of the old ways which led to unimaginable hardships. Thousands of years later Christians face the same challenge -- do we assimilate current cultural mores in order to please the society we live in? Or do we stand true to biblical teachings? It really got me thinking about where I stand and if I'm ready to answer the hard questions when my answers aren't going to be popular with today's culture. Pretty humbling...and, if I'm truthful, terrifying. I love it when a novel challenges like that!

Book has been provided courtesy of Baker Publishing Group and Graf-Martin Communications Inc.

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### **Sarah Elizabeth says**

There's much I could say, and if you love the Biblical, historical side of stories, then you may very well enjoy this one. I encourage you to give it a try! I just could not get into it. Leah was an absolute brat, in my

opinion, and annoyed me to no end. I found myself wanting to slap her silly. Grrr. . . I apologize, but I just did not connect with this story. She does come to her senses (by the END of the book), and gives her husband her full support, encouraging him as she ought, and eventually accepting his role as commander. Judah, on the other hand, was an upright and righteous young man, who gave his all to his God and was used greatly by Him. I must say this though, **[SPOILER]** this novel does not have a very happy ending. . .

Full review: <http://sarah-plainandaverage.blogspot...>

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