

Ruth the Moabitess married an Israelite named Mahlon who had been living in Moab. When Mahlon died, Ruth chose to return with her mother-in-law to Israel and become an Israelite herself. She declared to her Jewish mother-in-law, “Your people will be my people and your God will be my God” (Ruth 1:16).

Ruth’s words inspired the Sages and became the formal statement of covenant that has since been uttered by millions of other converts to Israel. Ruth is depicted in Jewish tradition as an ideal wife. The Proverbs 31 תִּחִיל־אִשׁ (wife of noble character) may be an allusion to Ruth the Moabitess (Prov 31:10; cf. Ruth 3:11) and her values are recounted every *Erev Shabbat* (Sabbath eve) by Jewish men to their wives.

Ruth arrived in the Land of Israel and soon after married Boaz, the son of Rahab and Salmon (an intermarried couple) according to the Apostolic Writings (Matt 1:5; cf. Josh 6:25). It is notable that Ruth continued to be called רות המואביה (Ruth the Moabitess) even after becoming a convert to Israel (Ruth 1:22; 2:2, 6, 21; 4:5, 10). This is clearly due to the recognition that converts did not sever themselves completely from their own family or cultural upbringing. They continued to have a tie to their nation of origin.

Boaz and Ruth had a son named Obed. Obed had a son named Yishai (Jesse). And Yishai had a son named David who became the king of Israel. David’s great grandparents, then, were an intermarried couple, as were his great great grandparents. The book of Ruth, which is read by Jews every year during the harvest festival of *Shavuot*, memorializes the life story of Boaz and Ruth. It is an eternal reminder that even a marriage between a Jew and a Moabite can be a marriage made in heaven.