

THE ANCESTRY OF KING DAVID

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE

Ruth 1–4; Luke
3:23–38

A VERSE TO REMEMBER

The women . . . gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David. (Ruth 4:17)

Daily Bible Readings

M	Nov. 25	Luke 3:23–38	We Belong to Christ’s Family
T	Nov. 26	Ps. 128	A Household Built by God
W	Nov. 27	Ruth 1:1, 3, 6–18	Determined Loyalty
Th	Nov. 28	Ruth 2:1–3, 17–23	An Act of Kindness
F	Nov. 29	Matt. 12:46–50	Bound Together by More Than DNA
Sa	Nov. 30	Ruth 3:1–13	Daring Faith

STEPPING INTO THE WORD

Four-year-old Mia wants to be a princess when she grows up. Her father hugs her and tells her she is already a princess in his eyes. Her mother looks at princess dresses with Mia to include on Mia’s Christmas list. No one, of course, tells darling Mia that royalty is usually related to lineage—either one’s own lineage or marriage into a family with royal ancestry.

King David, however, was not born into a royal lineage. David’s father was a landowner and farmer. David was chosen directly by God through the prophet Samuel. Ruth’s story shows that the lineage of King David included faithfulness and loyalty across ethnic boundaries. The many beautiful psalms attributed to David, and David’s sincere repentance after his sin with Bathsheba, reveal his inheritance from Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz. Truly David was born into a significant lineage.

The story of Ruth has inspired Jews and Christians for millennia. Themes of loyalty, faithfulness, and God’s provision so visible in this story encourage our faith. Ruth challenges us to love extended family members in concrete, supportive ways. Naomi’s wisdom and perception show us the helpful

role that older members in a family can play. Boaz is an agent of God's provision for Ruth and Naomi. Ruth and Boaz's son, Obed, becomes the grandfather of King David (Luke 3:31b-32).

Jesus was born into the house of David. Jesus' lineage includes Ruth (Matt. 1:5), a woman from the Gentile country of Moab. This foreigner and outsider in Jesus' heritage foreshadows Jesus' love for all peoples, which will result in the spread of the Gospel to the world.

God of our ancestors, give us the loyalty of Ruth, the wisdom of Naomi, and the faithfulness of Boaz. Amen.



SCRIPTURE

Luke 3:23, 31-32; Ruth 4:9-17

3:23 Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his work. He was the son (as was thought) of Joseph son of Heli . . .

^{31b}son of Nathan, son of David, ³²son of Jesse, son of Obed, son of Boaz, son of Sala, son of Nahshon.

4:9 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I have acquired from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. ¹⁰I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, to be my wife, to maintain the dead man's name on his inheritance, in order that the name of the dead may not be cut off from his kindred and from the gate of his native place; today you are witnesses." ¹¹Then all the people who were at the gate, along with the elders, said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you produce children in Ephrathah and bestow a name in Bethlehem; ¹²and, through the children that the LORD will give you by this young woman, may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah."

¹³So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. When they came together, the LORD made her conceive, and she bore a son. ¹⁴Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin, and may his name be renowned in Israel! ¹⁵He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him." ¹⁶Then

Note: Find Scripture Notes for this reading on the final page of the lesson.

Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom and became his nurse. ¹⁷The women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

A HERITAGE GROUNDED IN CHARACTER

The book of Ruth is often quoted at weddings. Ruth’s words to Naomi, her mother-in-law, after the death of both of Naomi’s sons in Moab, provide challenge and encouragement to newly married couples: “Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God” (Ruth 1:15). The backdrop to Ruth’s words is a famine in Bethlehem, causing Naomi, her husband Elimelech, and her sons Chilion and Mahlon to move to Moab in search of food. Moab is just east of the Dead Sea, and Naomi and her family live there long enough for Chilion and Mahlon to marry local Moabite women, one of whom is Ruth. When all three men die, Ruth expresses her willingness to leave her home in Moab and return with Naomi to Bethlehem. In a culture where a widow without sons and past the age of bearing children faced a bleak future, Ruth becomes a “restorer of life” for Naomi. Without standing in the community, legal representation, or a respectable source of income, Naomi is utterly dependent on the kindness of others for her survival. Ruth desires to work hard to support Naomi, and Naomi strategically directs Ruth to glean in Boaz’s field.

The nearest relative to Naomi’s deceased husband, Elimelech, had the right to purchase the property that would have descended to Elimelech and his sons (Num. 27:1–11). Boaz asks Elimelech’s nearest relative for that right of redemption (Ruth 4:1–8), with the intention of marrying Ruth and providing for Naomi as she ages.

Boaz’s generosity is striking. Many Israelites would have rejected Ruth the Moabite because of Moab’s origins (Gen. 19:30–38) and frequent hostility against Israel (Num. 21–22; Judg. 3:12–30). Ruth’s character is revealed by her self-sacrificial love for Naomi and her loyalty to the God of Israel (Ruth 1:16–17). Ruth 4:15 records praise for a specific woman unlike any other found in the Old Testament. Proverbs 31 describes a virtuous and energetic woman, but she is not named. This description is even more striking given Ruth’s ethnic heritage. Boaz’s generosity and Ruth’s faithfulness are beautiful character models.

The child born to Ruth and Boaz will become the grandfather of King David. Jesus's family tree (Luke 3:23–38) establishes that he was a descendant of David (Luke 1:27, 32, 69) through Joseph. Luke traces Jesus's line to Adam to demonstrate that Jesus was a member of the human race. Thus, Jesus's story is humanity's story, fully inclusive of Gentiles like Ruth (Matt. 1:5–6).

? In what ways do you see David, and later Jesus, reflecting the faithfulness, wisdom, and loyalty of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz?

FAITHFUL CHARACTER REFLECTS GOD'S NATURE

The three central characters in the book of Ruth reveal characteristics of God that will later be revealed in Jesus. As Ruth leaves Moab with Naomi, Ruth declares her faithful love for Naomi and her desire to worship Naomi's God. In Bethlehem, Ruth shows sacrificial love for Naomi through her willingness to serve. Ruth's actions reflect God's sacrificial, loyal love for God's people.


Naomi reveals wisdom and perception, reflecting the strong wisdom tradition in the Old Testament that is fulfilled in Jesus through his insightful teaching and his insightful perception of people's true needs.

God instituted laws to protect Israelites from losing their family's inheritance, and many men used those laws to consolidate their land holdings without regard for the people involved. Boaz fulfills God's intention and demonstrates his respect for God's laws by showing compassion (Ruth 4:10), giving Naomi's family a future. Boaz's actions reflect God's saving love for the marginalized and vulnerable, which will be further revealed in Jesus.

After Boaz and Ruth's son Obed is born, the women of Bethlehem say a blessing about the baby to his grandmother, Naomi. The blessing summarizes many of the themes of the book of Ruth (4:14–15). Despite the death of her husband and sons, God gives Naomi protection and provision through Boaz's kindness and Ruth's diligence and love. The women's blessing affirms Ruth's love for Naomi. Through Ruth, Naomi gains a next-of-kin through Boaz and becomes Obed's grandmother. God uses Ruth and Boaz to protect Naomi, and because of their faithfulness, Naomi experiences God as a "restorer of life." The themes of faithfulness, service, kindness, and sacrificial love so visible in Ruth are echoed generations later in Jesus, who

becomes a “restorer of life” for all his followers. Jesus’ kingdom will be characterized by love and justice for all.

Ruth is identified in the Book of Ruth as a Moabitess who will become the great-grandmother of King David. Little is said about the significance of her birth place and her presence in Israel as a foreigner. Only later, in the genealogy of Jesus, can we see the pattern in Jesus’ heritage through his earthly father, Joseph. Four women—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba—are mentioned in Jesus’ genealogy (Matt. 1:1–17), a very unusual phenomenon in ancient literature. All four women are unique in some way. Ruth was born in a country that had long been viewed as an enemy to Israel. Early in Matthew’s Gospel, the mention of Ruth alerts the reader that something new is happening. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus astonishes his followers with his care for Gentiles and outsiders, revealing God’s love for all people.

 Name some ways you have experienced God to be the “restorer of life.”

STEPPING INTO THE WORLD

Characters like Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz may motivate us to try to be kinder and faith-filled. Their example is helpful and challenging, and the frequent use in weddings of Ruth’s words from Ruth 1:16 shows how inspiring this story can be. The central themes in these admirable characters’ lives reflect the character and provision of God. Therefore the central message of Ruth points forward to the way the love of God will be revealed in King David and then much more fully in Jesus.

Sometimes the book of Ruth makes me think about my relationships with extended family members, and I can see ways I fall short of Ruth’s example of love, loyalty, and commitment to serve. When we read about exemplary characters in the Bible, we might compare ourselves to them and notice how our love and faith just don’t measure up. For many of us, wallowing in shortcomings feels familiar and habitual. Dwelling on our failures is immensely counter-productive, however. God desires that we confess our sins and determinedly accept God’s forgiveness, along the lines of Psalm 51 and 130.

David’s lineage as king includes three people who demonstrated the kind of faithfulness and love that reflects God’s character. In his life, David reveals profound love for God—showing

the influence of his heritage—but he also acts in deep selfishness and disobedience to God’s laws. Yet David is called a man after God’s own heart (1 Sam. 13:13–14; Acts 13:22). When he sins, David repents, confesses his sins, and receives God’s forgiveness.

Boaz acted as “redeemer” for Naomi and “restorer of life” for Naomi and Ruth. Boaz prefigures Jesus, who will be the redeemer for all humankind and all creatures on earth. All are included: Ruth the foreigner, Naomi the forsaken, you, and me.

Jesus expressed the kind of acceptance and call to holiness that David perceived in the God he worshipped. Jesus wants us to be our best selves, showing love, loyalty, and faithfulness. He calls us to grow these characteristics from a foundation of love. We are profoundly loved; therefore, we can grow in showing love. We are profoundly loved; therefore, when we fall short, we can receive God’s forgiveness as one more sign of how deeply we are accepted in Christ.

Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz fulfilled their purpose in God’s plan, trusting in God’s provision and laying a foundation for the lineage of King David.

 **In what ways does the story of Ruth encourage you and speak to you of God’s provision and grace?**

SCRIPTURE NOTES

The following notes from the Uniform Series provide additional information about today’s Scripture.

1. In Canaanite culture, the death of all males in a household was an opportunity for a wealthy man to increase his property and legacy by acquiring that family’s land.
2. The reference to Perez (Ruth 4:12, 18) brings the story of Judah and Tamar as a lens through which to read Ruth: both were stories of women abandoned by their husbands’ families, who were given a lasting legacy in Israel through a levirate conception (Gen. 38:8; Deut. 25:5–10). Even given this connection, the familial relationship between Judah and Tamar is not the main focus here; God’s grace is the key. God provided these women children to carry on a legacy, a critical cultural role for women in the ancient Near East.