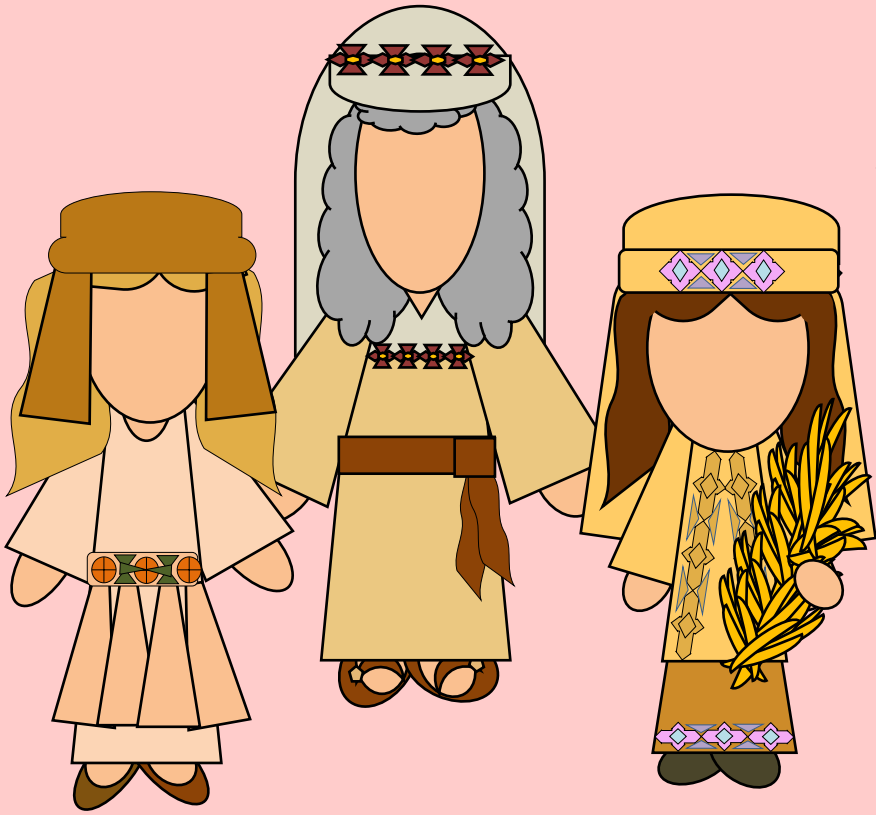


A Devoted Woman

Ruth 1-2

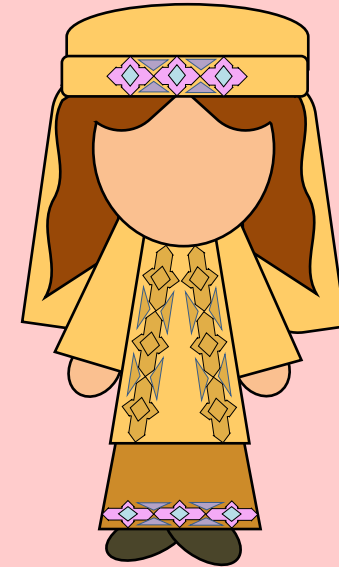
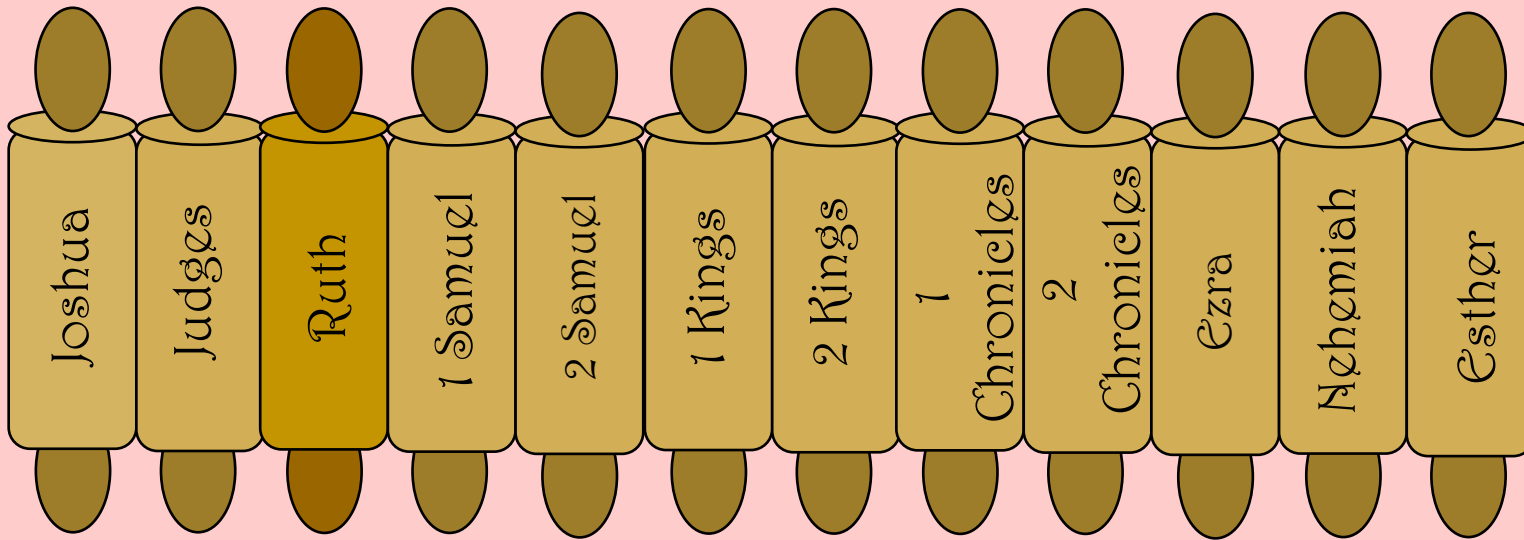


'Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.'

Ruth 1:16

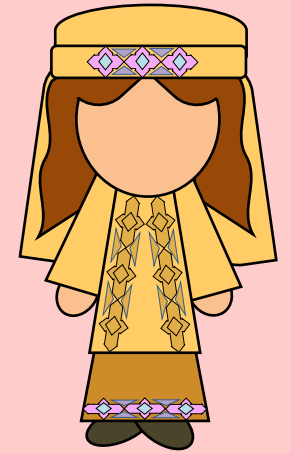
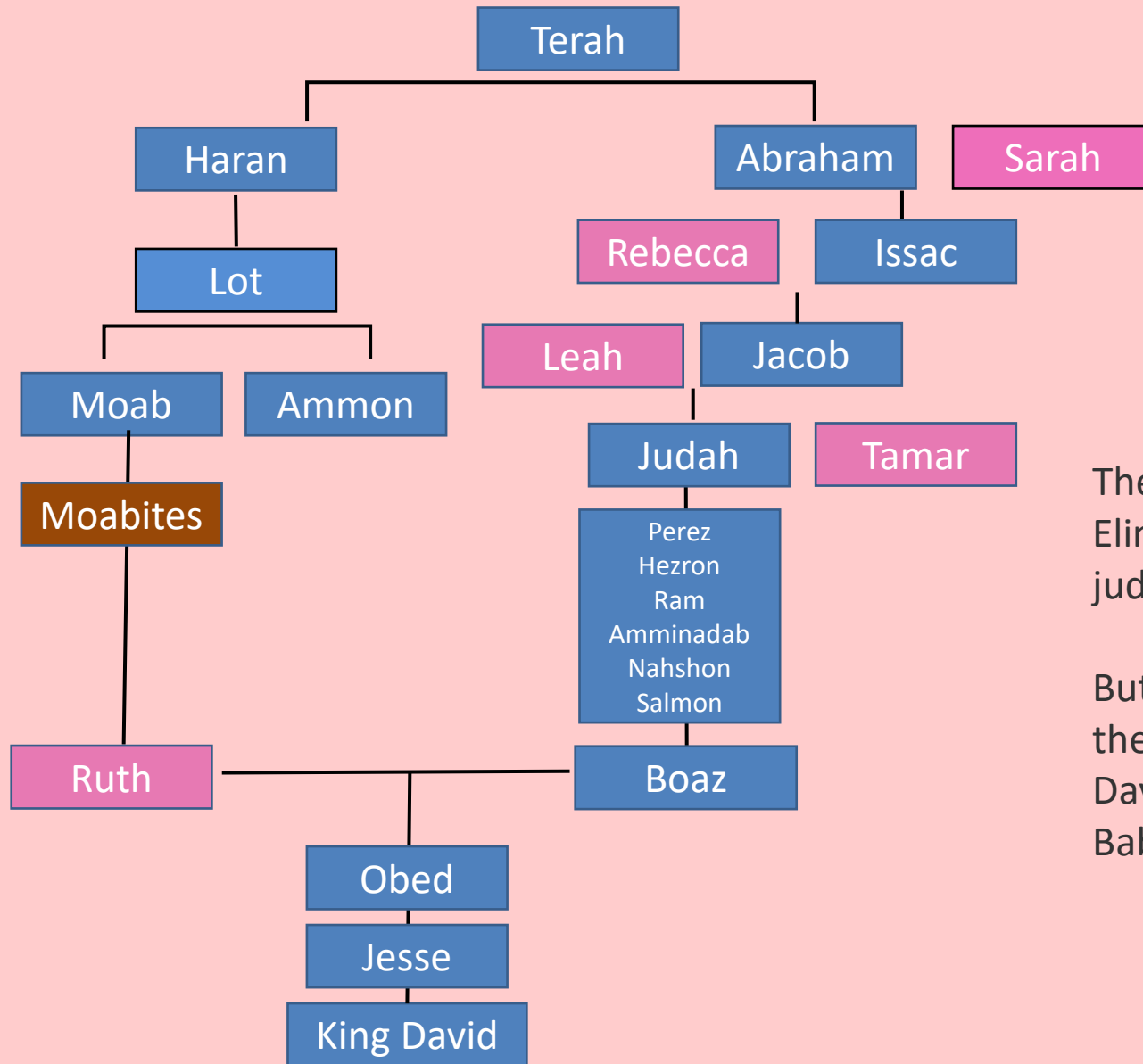
The Book of Ruth

The author of the book is unknown and it is difficult to determine when and where it was written



The book of Ruth is one of only two books in the Old Testament named after a woman and presents an example of a woman of faith, strength, and kindness.

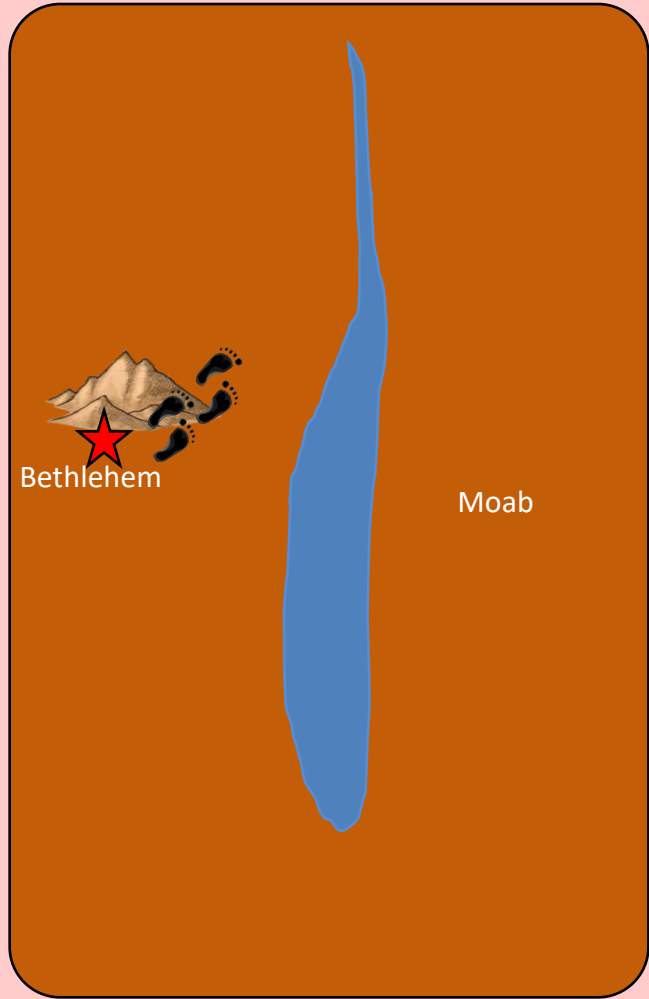
The Book of Ruth



The book of Ruth tells the history of the family of Elimelech, who lived during the time of the judges.

But because the genealogy of David is included, the book of Ruth may have been written after David's or Solomon's time, likely following the Babylonian exile.

Famine in the Land



Famine in the land caused Elimelech and his family to the land of Moab

Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah

Elimelech

Naomi

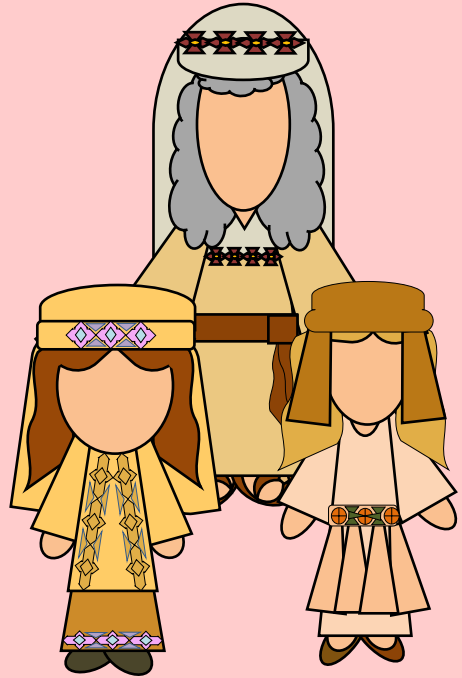
Mahon

Ruth

Chilion

Mahlon

Moabite Women

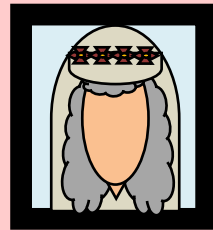
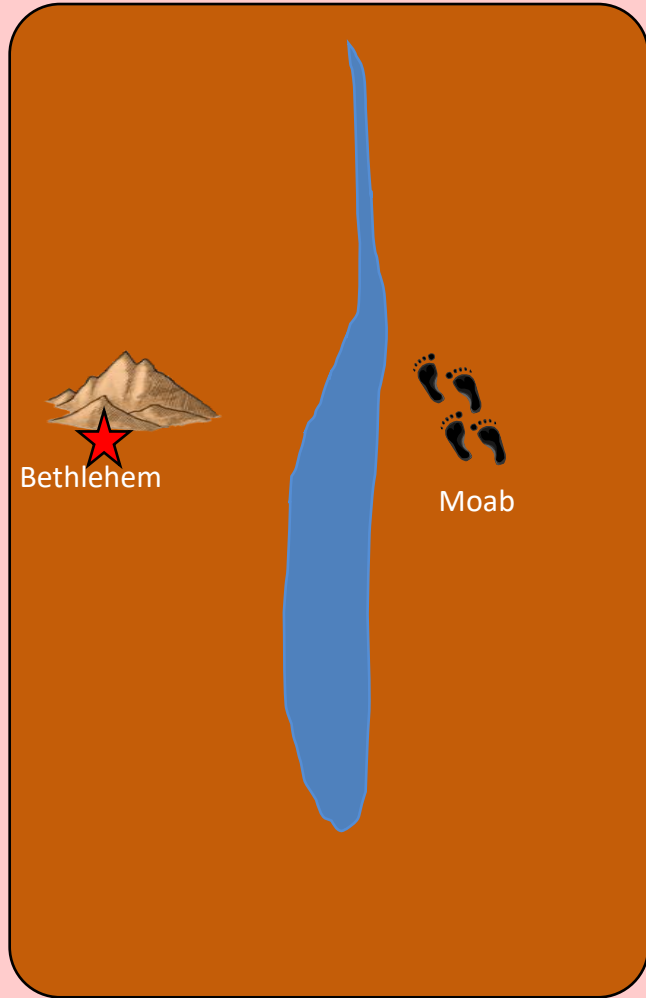


Elimelech died shortly after, leaving Naomi a widow and the two sons married Moabite women

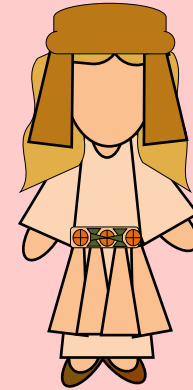
Both sons died leaving the women childless

Decision to Return Home

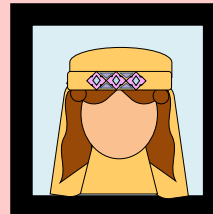
Naomi decided that she should return to her home knowing that she should leave the girls behind with their own families



Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.



Orpha returned to her family



Entreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God:

The two women returned to Bethlehem

Advantages VS Disadvantages

Stay in Moab

Advantages

Returning to live with their families and marrying new husbands who would provide for them.

Disadvantages

They would not be with Naomi, whom they loved, and they may not be able to worship the Lord with others who shared their faith.



Go to Bethlehem

Caring for Naomi and worshipping the Lord with others who believed in Him.

The Moabites worshipped idols, but it appears that they had forsaken the worship of idols and instead worshipped the Lord with their husbands and Naomi

Needing to provide for themselves and being strangers in a land distant from their homes and families

**If we choose to
trust in the Lord,
then He will reward
us for our faith**

Mara

In Hebrew *Naomi* means “sweet or pleasant” and *Mara* means “bitter.”

When, after many years’ absence, the people greeted her in surprise by asking, “Is this Naomi?”, she responded by saying, “Call me not Naomi [pleasant], call me Mara [bitter]: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me”.

This reply was not an accusation, only Naomi’s way of saying that she had endured much tragedy while in Moab. (2)



Gleaning

“Harvesting was difficult work and demanded long hours. Young men moved through the fields grasping handfuls of the grain and cutting through the stalks with sickles.

These small bunches of grain were then bound into bundles called sheaves. As the men worked rapidly, a number of stalks fell to the ground. If the men were careful and took the time, these too could be gathered up.



However, any stalks that dropped were allowed to remain where they fell. Poor people, following the reapers, were permitted to ‘glean,’ or gather, the random stalks—possibly all that stood between them and starvation. In addition, the edges of the field, where the sickle was not as easily wielded, were left unharvested. The poor were welcome to that portion, as well.

Ruth and Boaz



Because Naomi and Ruth were widows and without a livelihood they were eligible to glean in the fields, however Naomi was aged so Ruth volunteered to go out alone.

Naomi wanted to help her faithful daughter-in-law secure a husband and family. To do this, Naomi considered the levirate marriage, a practice that had prevailed for many years in Israel.

The word *levirate* has nothing to do with the tribe of Levi. Rather, it is taken from the Latin word *levir*, meaning “husband’s brother.” (2)



Boaz was a prosperous farmer in Bethlehem and a relative of the Elimelech family. He admired Ruth’s noble character and was generous and protective of her.

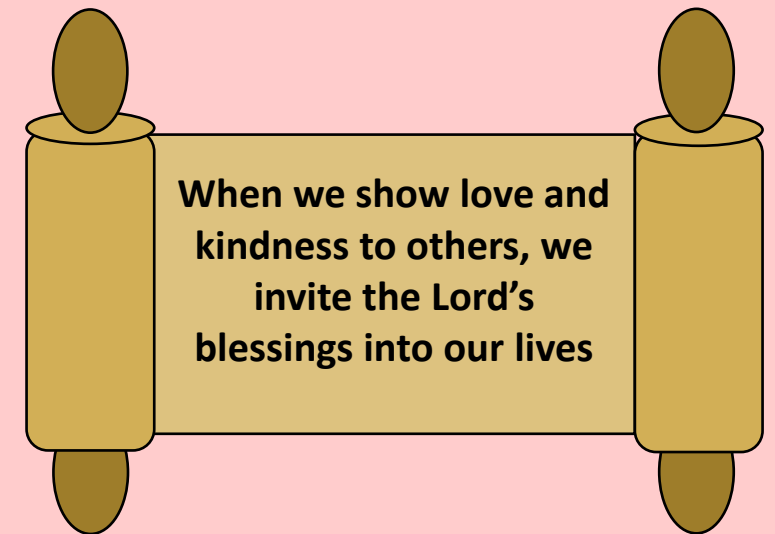
Choosing a Righteous Life

Ruth asks why Boaz is being so kind to her

And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.



Boaz showed additional kindness to Ruth by inviting her to eat with him and the reapers, the people he hired to harvest his fields. Boaz also told the reapers to leave extra portions of grain for Ruth to harvest.

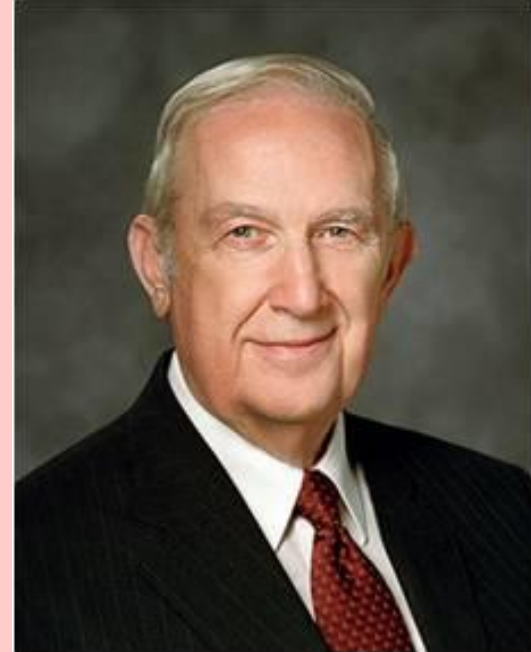


How can we trust in the Lord in times of difficulty?

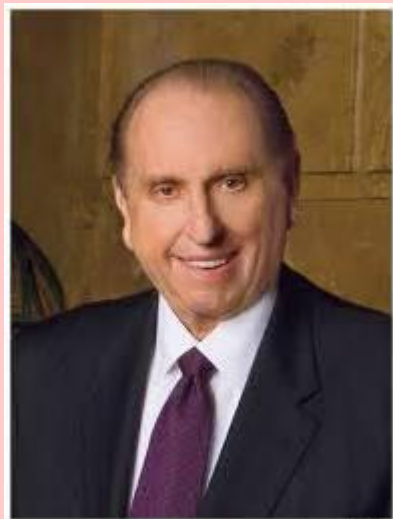
“At times you may feel lonely and misunderstood ... because you don’t fit in with the crowd.

Be grateful that your righteous life molds you so that you don’t fit where you don’t belong.

This is a temporary period of personal testing and growth. It will be replaced in time with true friends and greater happiness.”



“A model of ideal womanhood is Ruth. Sensing the grief-stricken heart of her mother-in-law Naomi—who suffered the loss of each of her two fine sons—feeling perhaps the pangs of despair and loneliness that plagued the very soul of Naomi, Ruth uttered what has become that classic statement of loyalty: ‘Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.’ [Ruth 1:16.] Ruth’s actions demonstrated the sincerity of her words.



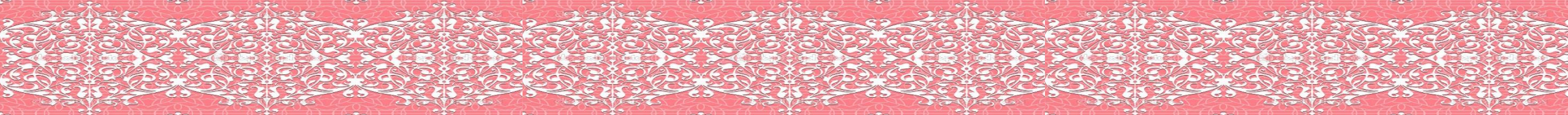
“Through Ruth’s undeviating loyalty to Naomi, she was to marry Boaz, by which she—the foreigner and Moabite convert—became a great-grandmother of David and, therefore, an ancestor of our Savior Jesus Christ.”

Next Time...



If a married man died without any children to carry on his name and inheritance, it was his unmarried brother's responsibility to marry the widow so that:

“The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel” (Deuteronomy 25:6). This is known as a levirate marriage from the Latin word for brother-in-law, levir.



Sources:

Suggested Hymn: #101 *Guide Me to Thee*

1. President Thomas S. Monson (“Models to Follow,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 61).
2. Old Testament Institute Manual
3. Elder Richard G. Scott (“The Power of Righteousness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 70).

THE LEVIRATE LAW OF MARRIAGE

The levirate law of marriage stated that when a man married and then died before having a male child, his nearest male relative (usually his brother or another near kinsman) was to marry the widow (see Bible Dictionary, “Levirate marriage”).

The first son of that union was considered to be the son and heir of the deceased husband so that the deceased man’s family line could continue. In order to provide an inheritance for the heir, this “kinsman [also] had the right to purchase (redeem) the land of [his] deceased relative” (Ellis T. Rasmussen, *A Latter-day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament* [1993], 227).

By purchasing this land, providing for the widow’s needs, and ensuring the continuance of the family line, this kinsman essentially became a redeemer or protector to the widow (see *Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis–2 Samuel* [Church Educational System manual, 2003], 230).

The levirate law is recorded in Deuteronomy 25:5–10. Genesis 38 includes an application of the levirate law that involves the three sons of Judah. Naomi also referred to this law (see Ruth 1:11).