

Could Israelite Men Marry Female Moabites?

Israelite men could marry **female Moabites**, as seen with Boaz and Ruth. Traditional and Talmudic law interpreted the Deuteronomy 23:3 prohibition against Moabites entering the "assembly of the Lord" as applying strictly to **males**, while sincere female converts like Ruth were permitted.

Biblical Law and the Gender Distinction

- **The Restriction:** Deuteronomy 23:3 states that no Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord, a rule created because they did not greet the Israelites with food and water during the Exodus and hired Balaam to curse them.
- **The Gender Rule:** Rabbinic tradition teaches that the Hebrew phrasing of the law uses the masculine grammatical form, meaning it barred only Moabite and Ammonite *men*, not women (*Moabitesses*).

Famous Examples and Acceptance

- **Ruth and Boaz:** The [Book of Ruth](#) centers on Ruth, a Moabite widow who converts to the God of Israel and marries the Israelite leader Boaz.
- **The Royal Lineage:** This marriage was fully accepted, making Ruth the great-grandmother of King David and an ancestor in the lineage of Jesus.