

Christ'S Female Ancestors

Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, & Bathsheba

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It has become quite popular in America, especially in the last ten or fifteen years, to search out one's roots—genealogy—and to take it back as far as one can, with the information that is still available. This has been facilitated, to a great extent, by the computer. The computer puts a lot of statistical and public data at a person's fingertips. As a matter of fact, there is a site out there on the Internet that the Mormons keep. They allow you to go on there, and if they have baptized any of your dead relatives, then you just might get your genealogy done by them—as far back as they might have gone.

Computer programs do make it very easy to store, arrange, and rearrange the data—as well as print it out, so that you can give it to all your relatives and let them know that they came off the nutty branch of the tree. The Internet, of course, helps in gathering and sharing information with others. It does not take much to go into one of the search engines and type in a name and come up, often times, with branches of one's family tree already done by somebody else.

Now, we are not the first people to do this. Obviously some monarchies that go back thousands of years have to keep genealogies because they have to satisfy the requirements of succession. If you are not the son of such-and-such, who is also the son of such-and-such, who was king—then you do not have any claim to the throne.

In times past, many peoples committed important genealogies to songs, to chants, or to tales so that they could be transmitted easier, rather than by paper. They would be passed down to the next generation over a campfire, or something like that.

But of all nations, the most prominent of genealogy-keepers are probably the Jews. That includes the tribes of Judah and Levi. I do not want to leave Levi out. They had good reason to. Of course, Levi was the priestly branch of the tribes of Israel. They had to make sure that they sorted everyone out for the service of the Tabernacle, or the Temple, as well as who had the priestly duties (because that had to be, specifically, an heir of Aaron).

We can find several lists of priests in the Bible. There is even, in one place, a list of the different families of Levi (specifically the Aaronic families) who are set in their courses to do their priestly duties. By just a few years, they had grown to the point where they had many courses of priests who could fill that office, and so a priest would only have to

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serve a few weeks out of the year rather than continually. Of course, the high priest served all the time—until he died. But, at least, the priests (the ones who were not directly in the Aaronic line, but firstborn to firstborn) were able to serve there too.

Of course, the Jews were given the scepter promise in Genesis 49, so they had to keep track of the kingly line. More importantly than just the kingly line was the line of the Messiah—for it says that Shiloh should come out of Judah. And so it was very important for the Jews to keep track of who was really a Jew, so that they could (as much as they could) pinpoint who Messiah was.

We could say that no genealogy is as important as Christ's is. That is the premiere genealogy of all mankind. But would you not know that God gave us two genealogies of Christ; and they *appear* contradictory—one in Matthew, one in Luke. You know that if God gives something once, then it is important. When He gives something twice, it steps it up a level. It is like "good, better, and best." In this case, He gave us two. Not one genealogy is good enough, because we had to have two—to make it even better.

There must be something to this—if God gave us two genealogies. So for our admonition, for our instruction, I am going to be speaking about Christ's family tree today. Solving the seeming contradiction between the two genealogies is fairly simple. Matthew's list records Joseph's line—all the way back to David and beyond, actually, all the way back to Abraham. But he goes through *Solomon*. Luke's list records Mary's line—back to David through another son, *Nathan*. Then, of course, he goes all the way back to Adam (whom he calls the son of God). This is very easy to see.

Let us go to Matthew 1. We will take a quick look at both genealogies, although we will not read them necessarily.

Matthew 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.

This is very interesting that he mentions that this is Christ's genealogy (Jesus' genealogy); and he mentions the two most important figures in that genealogy immediately. First he calls Him the Son of David, which establishes His kingly claim. And he mentions Abraham, which establishes His spiritual claim. So immediately, as soon as Matthew opens his book, he lets everybody know who this wonderful Man was—the heir of David and the heir of Abraham.

Now, down to verse 16. You go through all those people and then it says:

Matthew 1:16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

Notice that it does *not* say—"Jacob begot Joseph who begot Jesus." Matthew is very careful to say that Jacob begot Joseph, *who was Mary's husband*; and Jesus came from Mary. So what we have here is a legal genealogy. He was really Joseph's son *legally*. But Joseph was *not* Jesus' father truly—that is, by birth (by genes, let us say). Matthew is very specific about this, because he does not want anyone to say "You're trying to fool us about this." Everything is put out, in line, exactly as it should be. So Jesus has a claim to the throne through His adoptive father, Joseph.

There is one problem, though, with this genealogy. That is, that it mentions Jeconiah.

Matthew 1:11 Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

Now notice in Jeremiah 22. This is God speaking through Jeremiah to Jeconiah (also called Coniah); and He says:

Jeremiah 22:30 Thus says the LoORD: 'Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not prosper in his days. For none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah.'

Is that not interesting? No heir of Jeconiah will sit on the throne of Judah. That seems to count Jesus out, in a way; but we have to remember that this is only a legal genealogy—not a natural one. Jesus was able to claim His throne through Jeconiah in a legal manner. But this prophecy back in Jeremiah 22 does not apply to Jesus Christ—because He was *not* a descendant of Jeconiah. Do you understand the difference? He had no blood of Jeconiah in His veins. His claim to the throne in this genealogy is purely legal; and the prophecy back in Jeremiah 22 is purely genetic. So it does not matter that Jeconiah is in the legal genealogy. All it does is set up a legal basis for His claim to the throne.

This, by the way, is the line that was on the throne of Judah. That is why it had a little bit more "oomph" (let us say) than Mary's line. You see it went from David to Solomon; and then from Solomon to Rehoboam; and then to Abijah, and to Asa, and Jehoshaphat, etc. You go back into the Bible, and you find out that those were the kings of Judah.

But when you look at Mary's genealogy, you find something different.

Luke 3:23 Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli.

Then it goes on back; and if you go down to verse 31:

Luke 3:31 The son of Melea, the son of Menan, the son of Mattathah, the son of Nathan, the son of David.

You see that Mary's line came through David's son *Nathan*, rather than Solomon, so this was kind of a distaff branch of the family. They were not the ones who were on the throne; and so their claim was much weaker legally than the one who came through Solomon and down through Jeconiah. So Matthew uses this stronger line, by adoption, to be Christ's primary claim to the throne.

But Christ does, indeed, have a claim to the throne through Mary as well. Verse 23 says, "Joseph the son of Heli." (Pronounced "Eli." The Greeks put an "H" on it.) If you compare this with Matthew 1:16, it said that Joseph was the son of Jacob. So these are two different people. Jacob and Heli are not the same person. The way that you can figure this out is to go back and see who the father of [this] Jacob was, in Matthew 1. It is different than who the father of Heli was, in Luke 3. These two men had different fathers.

If you go back, you find out that the next person who is a common ancestor is *Zerubbabel*. So evidently what happened was that David had the two sons: Solomon and Nathan. They had separate lines that went down; but by the time that they got to "Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel" they came back together. Then, once Zerubbabel had sons, they split off again. They came down two separate lines, until you had (on one side) Joseph, who was the son of Jacob—and (on the other side) you have Mary, who was the daughter of Heli. And Mary had Christ.

Thus you have two separate lines—actually, one corroborating the other, not contradicting it. God always proves things beyond a shadow of a doubt. So even if we cross out one of the genealogies as being not worthy or something, there is still the other one to take its place, and that is absolutely sterling in its quality.

This natural line, which Mary has through Heli, is unblemished. This distaff line, of the line of David, is probably the better of the two—spiritually. We do not know many of these people. Nathan is never mentioned in the Bible outside of his name; that is, what kind of a person he was. Zerubbabel was, obviously, a righteous man. He was the one God chose to lead Judah back to Palestine after the exile. Everyone else that we do know in this line has pretty good character.

On the other hand, there is quite a bit written about the kings of Judah, and many of them did evil in the sight of the Lord. As we see in my dad's sermon (back in 1992) on "Why Three Kings Are Missing" from the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1—that there was good reason why Matthew left some of them off. As a matter of fact, he left off three kings. Like my dad said in that sermon, they were Joash, Amaziah, and Azariah.

There are a few other differences in the genealogies. The ones that I have mentioned so far are the best known. The first other difference is that Matthew divides his list into three sets of fourteen. If you go back to Matthew 1, it says in verse 16:

Matthew 1:16 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

Well, that is not really true—because there are people missing. Obviously, those three kings are missing. That is three generations that are missing. But what he did was that he is evidently a very smart writer. He took a little poetic license here, so that they would be more easily memorized. Many people, of course, did not have a Bible so if they were going to memorize this portion of Scripture, it was much easier to remember three groups of fourteen. That is not saying that any of the names are wrong. It is just saying that he skips a few generations to make sure that it all fits into this very neat, three times fourteen organization.

Luke does his straight up. As far as we know, there are no skips in his genealogy and it has many more names. The genealogy in Matthew has 42 generations (3×14 , obviously). But the one in Luke has 56. That is 14 more. Now maybe you ask, "Why didn't Matthew just add another set of fourteen?" Well, that is because it did not divide up very neatly; and three is a better number than four. At least, that is the only thing that I could think of. Maybe the line down through Solomon did not quite have the 56 generations that the line through Nathan did. So it, therefore, did not divide exactly into 4×14 . Obviously, Matthew leaves out some links in the chain in order to keep his form

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of organization going.

Another difference is that Matthew's genealogy is done in the Jewish (or what you would call Old Testament) type of method. "X" begot "Y" and "Y" begot "Z"—and down through the list. If you go back to Chronicles, you find the same thing. If you go back to Genesis, you will find that they used the same—"X" begot "Y" and "Y" begot "Z."

But Luke was a Gentile. He did his a little bit different. He was not quite as grounded in the Hebrew way of doing things as Matthew was. Luke uses "Y" the son of "X." He turns it around. Luke goes backward. Matthew's goes forward—from Abraham to Jesus. Luke's goes backwards—from Jesus back to Adam and then to God.

There are reasons for this. Matthew really wanted to show Jesus as king and so he tried to emphasize His kingly background. On the other hand, Luke (being a Gentile) was more interested in showing Jesus as a man for all men—a God for all men. He wanted to include the Gentiles, feeling that they would be more receptive to a Messiah who went all the way back to Adam—and thus, includes all of mankind. And so Luke does do that. He takes it back beyond Abraham to Noah (from whom all men came),, and then he goes even further back to Adam (through whom, obviously, all man came as well). So there were different reasons for doing the genealogies in different ways.

Now, there are still more differences; and the one that I am going to talk about next will take the remainder of the sermon. Luke records a very plain genealogy. There are no breaks (no parenthetical statements) from the time he speaks of Heli all the way back to Adam, the son of God. It is just straight right through, with no deviations. Matthew, on the other hand, adds a few details of historical significance.

Matthew's most significant deviation from the normal genealogy of the time, is that he includes *four women*. At that time, among the Jews all inheritance was based upon the father. They do not do this today, but back then it went from father to firstborn son, all the way down. And so the genealogies were recordings of men. When it said, "X" begot "Y" and "Y" begot "Z"—they were all men.

You will find this in Luke's genealogy too. They are all men. He does not even mention Mary. He just says "Jesus. . . (as was supposed) the son of Joseph." And then he skips over to Heli, who was Mary's father.

The four women who are named in Matthew 1 are *Tamar* (in verse 3), *Rahab* and *Ruth* (in verse 5) and "her who had been the wife of Uriah" (in verse 6). That Matthew chooses to include these four particular four women is very curious. You probably

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noticed that there are a few women who are not on the list. Why in the world would you pick Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, when you could have such sterling examples of faith as Sarah (in that list), or Mrs. Noah? (She sure went through a lot, whatever her name was.)

There were others that could have been mentioned. As a matter of fact, if you go back through the books of Kings and Chronicles, they mention several women as being the mother of such-and-such a king. It gives them credit, in a way, for preparing a good king (usually) for the people. But Matthew decides to list these four particular women. That is very strange.

Now, there are four curiosities here. One woman he does not even name. He calls her by her husband's name—"the wife of Uriah." He does not even say *Bathsheba*. Is this a kind of backhanded slap at David's favorite wife? Or it is maybe, on the other hand, trying to point us to the character of Uriah? I do not know. But it does not even mention her name—even though she is the one, obviously, that he means.

The second curiosity is that two of these women "sneaked into" the Messiah's line through levirate marriage, *Tamar* and *Ruth*. Now, "levirate marriage" (if you do not know what that is) was a custom that God put into His law. It was around, in the Middle East, before then. But that was the custom that, if a man died married, and he had not had any children (to carry on his name, or to inherit his property) then the wife was given to the next oldest son or the next oldest male relative and he was to have a son, or a child, by the widowed woman in order to pass on the inheritance.

We will see more about this a little bit later, but both Tamar and Ruth (as I used the word) "sneaked" into this line through levirate marriage. Otherwise, it would not have happened that they would ever be mentioned.

The third one is that three had serious sexual sins. One posed as a harlot. One was a harlot. And one was an adulteress. Now if you want your claim as king to be taken seriously, do you throw your "skeletons" in? I guess Matthew thought, "Well, it doesn't matter. I might as well throw a few more of them in. There's guys like David in there, and Judah, and Solomon, and Manasseh, and several others. So I might as well throw in a few women, who'll make the genealogy that more colorful."

The fourth one is that three of these four ladies are Gentiles. The first is a Canaanite. The second is an Amorite; and the third is a Moabite. And he forgot Sarah, who was a true-blooded Shemite—Hebrew!

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Why did Matthew include these four in his list, and leave out such others? What is so special about these four women? Why did he include them, and leave out those three kings? Would it not have been better to have just put Joash, Amaziah, and Azariah in there—and leave these four women out? It is very curious, if you ask me. But maybe, if we study these women's lives a little bit, we might be able to understand why he might have decided to leave them in.

Let us go back to Genesis 38. Tamar—and her story—is found there. Where this is placed is very interesting. If you look in Genesis 37, you will find that is the chapter in which Joseph's brothers captured him and sold him off to the Midianites. Chapter 39 picks up the story again of Joseph, in Egypt as a slave in Potiphar's house.

Why did Moses stick the story of Judah and Tamar right in the middle of this, seemingly, what should have been 'seamless' story of Joseph? Well, I think there might be two reasons for this. The first, if you think about it, is that it probably happened around the same time. Or, at least, it ended about the same time as when the story picks up with Joseph in Egypt.

The second, I think, is probably more likely. That is that it is dramatically similar. There is something about the story of Judah and Tamar that fits right here—that needed to be said, before we get into what happened to Joseph in Egypt. That there is something God is building here—some part of the story, some part of God's plan that needs to go forward before we can go into the next part about Joseph.

With that in mind, we are going to read all the way through this chapter, because we need to see the whole story. We will not go to the part about Judah marrying this other woman first. But, by the way (just as a sidelight here), the woman's name—whom Judah married first—was Bathshua. Now do not confuse this with David's wife Bathsheba, or "Bathshua." Just remember that, because it will come up later in the Bathsheba story. But it says here that Judah's first wife's name was "a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua." Well, "Bathshua" means "daughter of Shua." So that is her name. She's Bathshua, the daughter of Shua.

Genesis 38:6-7 Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. [Tamar means "palm" (like a palm tree), if you would like to know.] But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LoORD, and the LoORD killed him.

We have no idea what he did. He was just a bad guy; and so God got rid of him. He did

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not want the Messiah to come through Er.

Genesis 38:8 And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother."

This was the command from Judah, who was the patriarch of his particular family, to perform the levirate duties.

Genesis 38:9-10 But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the LoORD; therefore He killed him also.

Onan was not good enough for God. There was something about Onan's character that Onan would not live up to his part of the covenant.

Genesis 38:11 Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die like his brothers."

He said, "This woman has a curse on her, or something. Every son I give her is dead by morning, it seems." So you wonder if Judah ever meant to give his son Shelah to his daughter-in-law, Tamar. It seems like he was lying through his teeth here; and that he was just trying to get rid of her. He thought, "In the intervening time (between now and the time when Shelah is able to have a wife) maybe somebody else will come along and take Tamar. Then, that will be a problem off my hands." Well, it did not work out that way.

Genesis 38:11-12 . . . And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house. Now in the process of time [meaning, several years] the daughter of Shua [remember "Bathshua"], Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

This begins to tell you a few things about Judah. When it says that Judah was "comforted," it is probably a way of saying that he went and had a real good time with

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his friend Hirah the Adullamite. They were probably out carousing and drinking.

Just as a sidelight here: if you go back and put together the people's ages, it looks like when Judah first married this Bathshua he was only about 15 years old. He went and did it without consulting his father. He was doing the same sort of thing that, a generation ago, Esau had done.

And putting these things together, it seems like he let Er marry Tamar when he was only about 15 years old. Then he probably waited just a few more years until Onan was about that age, and then he gave Tamar to him. Who knows how many years younger Shelah was? So this all took place in a very short time. By the time that Judah was only about 30 years old, this is taking place.

We do not usually think in these terms. We think of all these patriarchs as being old. But here is a case where Judah was probably a young man, very much in his prime. So, what happens here should not be surprising to us. He was still carousing and doing all kinds of stuff that he should not be doing.

Genesis 38:13-14 And it was told Tamar, saying "Look your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife.

Now you come to her motives for what she was doing here. She saw that Judah was tricking her, or keeping her from what was rightfully hers. Whether she was thinking that she would be barren (because, remember, she was probably by this time in her early twenties and beginning to feel like she was an old maid) and that Judah had a responsibility to her and he was not fulfilling it. Like Sarah and Rachel, and others, she was going to somehow take matters into her own hands and work this out. So she decides to pose as a harlot.

Genesis 38:15-17 When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face. Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law [and he would be committing incest with her]. So she said, "What will you give me that you may come in to me?" And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock."

Evidently, this "young goat from the flock" was considered a delicacy. So it was a fairly high price.

Genesis 38:17 . . . So she said, "Will you give me a pledge till you send it?"

That is, "something as an earnest, so that I'll know that you will actually give it to me."

Genesis 38:18 Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" . . .

She says, "Ah, ha." Part two, in her scheme.

Genesis 38:18 . . . So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that is in your hand."

Let me explain this. Why did she ask for all three things? The signet—which is like a ring, or some sort of piece of pottery or stone that had an impression on it so that, when you stuck it into a seal, it stuck. It was like your signature. You could be identified by that certain seal. The chain, or bracelet, or cord (it is said in different ways in various translations) was a piece of string, or cord, or leather, or whatever it happened to be, that they tied the signet to.

Why did she ask for the walking stick? Well, usually, the staff was where you placed your signet and your cord. You hung the signet from the cord that you placed on your staff. So, all three kind of go together. All three of them, then, would identify Judah. Not just any one, but all three of them would really say, "You're the man."

Genesis 38:18-21 . . . Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood. And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend [Hirah] the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her [That is because she was not there]. Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who was openly by the roadside? And they said, "There was no harlot in this place." ["What are you talking about? We are an upstanding community. We don't have people like that here."]

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I do need to explain something. It says there, in verse 15, that Judah thought that she was a harlot. That word is the normal word for prostitute, for harlot. But when you get down to verse 21, the word that Hirah the Adullamite uses is not "harlot." It's "ritual prostitute"—a different word. (*Qedeshah.*) It means "holy prostitute" or "set apart prostitute."

She did not pose as a mere prostitute. She posed as a priestess of Ashtoreth and part of the ritual of that religion was that a woman could become a ritual prostitute in Ashtoreth's temple, as part of her service to the goddess.

More "skeletons" in Christ's closest. Not only was she posing as a prostitute, but also she was posing as an idolatrous prostitute—posing as an idolatrous priestess. And Judah had no compunction about doing this—worshipping Ashtoreth. That makes Judah's actions all the much worse. I just wanted to mention that so that you will get a little bit fuller understanding of what was going on.

I do not know; but maybe, in this certain place, they were not worshippers of Ashtoreth. Thus the man, who responds to Hirah the Adullamite says, "We don't have anybody like that here." Maybe they were worshippers of Baal, or some other one; and they said, "No, no, no. We don't have people like that here."

Genesis 38:22-23 So he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this place." ["Are you sure you have the right place, Judah?"] Then Judah said, "Let her take them for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her."

Basically, he said, "Okay. If she's going to play games with me, she can come get the goat from me herself."

Genesis 38:24 And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore she is with child by harlotry." So Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"

Oh, easy for him to say. Here he was so easy to condemn somebody of something of which he, himself, was guilty. He was very willing to use his power—as the patriarch of his little clan—to get rid of his problem, Tamar (the cursed woman).

Genesis 38:25 When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law. . .

"Judah, you might want to come over here a second. I've got something very important to tell you. Maybe you wouldn't want all these fine people to hear." So she said:

Genesis 38:25-26 . . . By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." And she said, "Please determine whose these are—the signet and cord, and the staff." [And Judah swallowed hard.] So Judah acknowledged them and said, "She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he never knew her again.

This is very interesting, first of all, that he said this. He was really put on the spot, and he had to acknowledge that even though she went about it in a very bad way, there was no other way (maybe) to get him to repent of his *breach of covenant*. So he makes a judgment that what she did was "less bad" than what he did.

It is also very interesting that he determined, right then and there, that he would never have intercourse with her again—even though, by the act of what he did, she was now his wife. I do not know if he remained celibate from that time forward. But at least, I guess, to him it was committing incest. So he never repeated that mistake again—which is "growth" for the kind of man that we know Judah to be. That is, willing to sell his brother into slavery; willing to go in to a priestess of Ashtoreth; carousing there while they were shearing their sheep up in Timnah. He did not really have a very good character.

But I think that God wanted this part in there, because when Judah shows up at Joseph's house in Egypt, he is a changed man, a very changed man. Then he is willing to take the place of Benjamin so that his father, Jacob, would not be bereaved again (or grieved) for the loss of another son. And he admits to all the chicanery that they had done to Joseph; and "go ahead and take my life, if you'd like." So, in a way, there is a kind of change or repentance (I do not know that you would call it "a conversion") in Judah. At least, the line that produced Jesus is beginning to turn somewhat. God put these circumstances together—or let them happen—so that it would affect Judah and his rearing of these **two sons** that came from this union.

Genesis 38:27-30 Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins were in her womb. And so it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took a scarlet thread and

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bound it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, "How did you break through? This breach be upon you!" Therefore his name was called Perez. Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.

Zerah means "rising," like the sun rising. But Perez means, "breach," which is what he did. It is very interesting that this particular child (Perez)—who Christ came through—is called "breach." That breach was not healed until Christ Himself came and healed the breach. There was a physical healing of the breach when Tea-Tephi, the daughter of Zedekiah, was married to the Irish King [Herremon] when Jeremiah took her, after the fall of Jerusalem. There was a healing of the breach there, but the real line did not go that way. The real line of Messiah stayed there in Babylon, later came back to Judah, and from it Christ was born about 450-500 years later.

Tamar has two things in her favor, despite the means that she employed. The first is that she was the one God chose. No matter what happened, she was the one that God wanted to bear the seed of Judah at that point. And second, she was more faithful than Judah was to that covenant of levirate marriage. That is what he specifies that made her more righteous than he was. She was more willing to stick by the covenant, even though she was the one who was going through all these husbands. She had a lot more changing to do in getting used to new men, than he would ever have had. She was the one who had to sacrifice, but she was also the one who was more faithful to the covenant.

So it may be from her that the Jews get their dogged loyalty to the covenant. I do not know; but she was evidently, by this mean, worthy of mention as an ancestor of Christ.

Now, on to Rahab. She comes into the Bible in Joshua 2. Israel is about to enter the land and conquer the territory of Palestine.

Joshua 2:1 Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove [or Shittim, as it is in the King James] to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there.

A lot of people have tried to say that Rahab was an innkeeper, or that she was a cloth dyer or something; but the Bible plainly says that she was a prostitute. And what can

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you say? That is what she did.

Joshua 2:2-3 And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country." So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country."

There is one thing that you can get from that; and that is that (1) either they had a spy watching Rahab's house or (2) just about everybody who came to Jericho ended up at Rahab's house. And so the king knew where to go—that, if these foreigners were going to come into the city, where they would stay.

Joshua 2:4-9 Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them." [She lied.] (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate. Now [back to the men] before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, and said to the men, "I know that the LoORD has given you the land. . . .

What an incredible thing to say! All she had done was hear what had happened in Egypt, and hear what had happened across Jordan—from the many people who came through her place of business. But it was enough to convict her that God was going to give the land to these Israelites, who were knocking on the door. That is a very incredible thing to say. She says:

Joshua 2:9-14 . . . that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For we have heard how the LoORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LoORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. Now therefore, I beg you, swear

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to me by the LoORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LoORD has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

I do want to mention one thing before we go any further here. These words "kindness" and "dealing kindly with one another" is a special word. Basically, it is *covenant loyalty*. That is, that "We have a deal, and we will deal kindly with you on this. We will remember our part of the bargain." Just keep that in mind.

In verse 18, she let them down by a rope through the window—for she dwelt on the wall. She said to them, "Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterwards, you may go your way." And so they do.

They also tell her that, if she in any way reneges on her part of the bargain, they were free to renege on theirs. In verse 21, she says:

Joshua 2:21 "According to your words, so be it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

That is very interesting. Was there not a scarlet cord in the other story?

Joshua 2:22-24 They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers returned. The pursuers sought them all along the way, but did not find them. So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them. And they said to Joshua, "Truly the LoORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."

If you will go over to Joshua 6—this is after Jericho has fallen.

Joshua 6:25 And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the

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messengers whom Joshua sent to spy our Jericho.

We find out that Rahab married a Jew named Salmon. Salmon was from the line of Perez; and from the two of them came Boaz.

Let us go to John 20. I want to show you something of why Rahab is considered with such high esteem. This is after Christ has risen from the dead; and this is the story of Thomas.

John 20:24-28 Now Thomas, called [Didymus] the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" [Remember that word "peace," also.] Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Now listen to what Christ says to him, and apply this to Rahab.

John 20:24-29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

What did we say about Rahab? She had *not seen* any of the great wonders and miracles that God had done. She had merely *heard* of them. But she, to the spies, made a very significant statement of *belief*—in God's sovereignty, in God's plan, in her willingness to cooperate and to do her part in bringing that about. "Blessed are those who believe and yet have not seen."

Let us go to Hebrews 11. This is interesting too. Of all the women that Paul could have picked out as "heroes of faith," who did he pick out? Sarah and Rahab. He could have picked out Jael, the one who put a spike in Sisera's temple. Or he could have picked out Deborah, the judge—or others. But he chose Rahab.

Hebrews 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

Here we see that she had *faith*; and her faith resulted in *action*—to hide the spies. And her character is one of *peace*. Remember that I said that Jesus came in saying, "Peace to you," and He talked about belief. This shows you what kind of character this woman had, even though she was a prostitute. Jesus said, "The prostitutes go before you into the Kingdom of God."

James 2, also—James could have chosen any number of people to prove his point about being justified by works along with one's faith. But whom did he choose? Abraham and Rahab. She is in pretty good company, if you ask me.

James 2:25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?

She is held in very high esteem, in the Bible—for her faith, for her works, for her belief. And all this she did without having "seen" anything. So here is another example—a woman in Christ's genealogy, who was *faithful to the covenant*. She is a great example, because she never even "saw" any of those mighty works. She simply believed and acted in accordance to that belief.

Also, I mentioned the scarlet cord again. This is kind of interesting.

Ruth is next. Of course, that is found in the book that bears her name—Ruth. Now I do not want to go into this very deeply, because I have got another sermon (on Ruth) that you can get from Diane. But there are several similarities to the other women who are mentioned in His genealogy.

First of all, she is a Gentile (like the other two that we have already mentioned). She is of Moab; and Moab is one of the nations that God told Israel not to intermarry with—even to the tenth generation (Deuteronomy 23:3-6). God seems to have made an exception in her case; but this also may just be that God was just referring to males, in that case. Remember when the Israelites went and conquered another nation, they were allowed to take the virgin women back with them. Then they became a part of Israel. This may be an adjunct to that—that no male of Moab was to come into the congregation.

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Like Tamar, Ruth's story revolves around a levirate marriage again. Her husband had died. The closest male relative should have redeemed her; but he did not. He gives Boaz his sandal instead, so Boaz decides to go ahead and redeem her. On this occasion, Ruth is held up as a *paragon of virtue*. She does not have to stoop to any sort of subterfuge or sin, in any way, to make things work out. She simply follows the advice that Naomi gives her, and everything works out according to plan. In a way, you could say that Ruth is the flip side of Tamar. Similar situations—Tamar does it the wrong way, and Ruth does it the right way.

Even their children's names are significant. Remember that I mentioned that Perez was named "breach." Well, Obed's name means "servant." So what happened with Tamar caused a breach in relationships; but what happened with Ruth produces a servant. That says a lot for her character.

And again, third point, Ruth's dedication or *loyalty to a promise* is her primary character trait.

Let us go to the book of Ruth. (Joshua, Judges, Ruth—"Poor Ruth, she's always being judged by Joshua.") The most famous part of the book of Ruth is her reply to Naomi; and this kind of encapsulates her character, in one or two verses.

Ruth 1:16-17 But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LoORD do so to me, and more also if anything but death parts you and me."

That is the character of Ruth. She was *loyal* to the family. She was *loyal* to Israel. She was *loyal* to the covenant. And so she is mentioned in the genealogy as being one of the good lights in that time.

Now, one of the themes in this tiny book of Ruth is *hesed*. It is a Hebrew word that is very difficult to translate into English. It is most often translated "lovingkindness," "kindness," "mercy," and even "grace" at times. But it has a nuance of loyalty, or faithfulness. In many cases, the person acts out of love; but also with obligation—that they feel a duty to act this way, as well as doing it out of love. So it is a *combination of love and obligation to a promise*.

This word is mentioned time and time again in this book. This is how Ruth behaves—out

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of *love* and out of *obligation* to the covenant. She lives her life by *hesed*. That is just her dominant trait. And she really shows the Israelites up. Here a Gentile comes in and lives as they were supposed to live—and really puts them to shame. (This is the word, I believe, that you would find back there in the story of Rahab as well.)

So, as a sidelight too, there is not scarlet string or cord in the book of Ruth; but there is Boaz. Boaz stands for that scarlet thread, because he redeemed her. That is what that scarlet is representative of—blood, of redemption. And one of the things that you can pull out of the book of Ruth is that Boaz is a type of Christ. He redeems Ruth, not by blood but by money—by buying something. But it is foreshadowing what Christ does for the church.

Bathsheba is the fourth one. Here is "the wife of Uriah."—Bathsheba. She comes into the story in II Samuel 11. She is the only Israelite of the four women in Christ's genealogy. She was probably a Jewess. She was the daughter of Eliam, who was one of David's thirty mighty men.

Eliam, himself, was the son of Ahithophel—David's counselor. He was the one who was very wise. The one who hanged himself after he went over to Absalom's side and David's other counselor, Hushai, gave some advice that Absalom took. It ended up ruining the whole coup; and Ahithophel thought that his life was forfeited. Ahithophel was from Giloh, and Giloh was in the mountains of Judah. So, obviously, Bathsheba was a Jewess.

She may have been from Judah's son Shelah. This is where I told you to remember that Judah's first wife's name was Bath-shua. There is enough link there to think that maybe Bathsheba was named after a particular woman in her line. And so she was "Bath-shua" the same that the other one was Bath-shua. As a matter of fact, Bathsheba is called "Bath-shua" in I Chronicles 3.

We know the story of David and Bathsheba. I just want to make a few comments there. If she had been a chaste, modest woman, I do not think she would have been bathing on her roof, for anyone to see. It is my own personal opinion that she was trying to catch David's eye, because she wanted to be queen. Uriah was away. She felt that she could probably get away with it—and did. So I think that she was complicit in the whole affair. She certainly did not resist David's summons, or his invitation to his bed. What can you say? The proof seems to be there that she was working things—to become queen.

We know the situation—that the baby died; and then Bathsheba had another son, named Solomon. (Actually, she ended up having 4 sons—including one named Nathan,

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who is mentioned in the genealogy of Luke 3). But I want to go to I Kings 1. This is when Adonijah was trying to take over the throne.

I Kings 1:11-12 So Nathan [the prophet, not her son] spoke to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, "Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king, and David our lord does not know it?" Come, please, let me now give you counsel. . . .

And he tells her what to do—so that her son, Solomon, could ascend to the throne.

I Kings 1:15-21 So Bathsheba went into the chamber to the king. (Now the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was serving the king.) And Bathsheba bowed and did homage to the king. Then the king said, "What is your wish?" Then she said to him, "My lord, you swore by the LoORD your God to your maidservant, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne.' So now, look! Adonijah has become king; and now, my lord the king, you do not know about it. He has sacrificed oxen and fattened cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the sons of the king, Abiathar the priest, and Joab the commander of the army; but Solomon your servant he has not invited. And as for you, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, that you should tell them who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. Otherwise it will happen, when my lord the king rests with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon will be counted as offenders."

And they would get their heads chopped off, and all that. So, just at that time, Nathan the prophet comes in and verifies all that Bathsheba has just said.

I Kings 1:28-31 Then King David answered and said, "Call Bathsheba to me." So she came into the king's presence and stood before the king. And the king took an oath and said, "As the LoORD lives, who has redeemed my life [Aha. Redemption comes back into the picture; but we will just pass over it and leave it.] from every distress, just as I swore to you by the LoORD God of Israel, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,' so I certainly will do this day." Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and paid homage to the king, and said, "Let my lord King David live forever!"

I wanted you to see this, just as an example of the way a person can change. Here, she remained loyal to King David for the rest of her life—and to the promise that God had given to David, and that David had given to her: that her son Solomon would sit on the throne of Judah and of Israel.

Now, this is interesting. Another covenant is thrown in here. This is the Davidic Covenant that sat David and his line on the throne of Judah forever. And here we see Bathsheba alerting David to the fact that covenant was about to be broken, if something did not happen. Obviously, God was in control; but she was able to show her *loyalty to a covenant*—just like the other three women had shown loyalty to other covenants. I just wanted to bring this out, because it is very interesting that this was a common denominator in all four of these women. They all showed extreme loyalty, in many cases, to a covenant—a promise, something that God had set up.

In the next chapter, Adonijah comes to her and wants her to get Solomon to give him Abishag. Bathsheba says, "Okay, I'll go before Solomon and ask him this." Now, she must not be the sharpest knife in the drawer, or she did this for a reason. I think it is the latter—that she had a purpose for doing this. It makes her seem dumb, that she would ask for Abishag for her son's most hated rival to the throne.

She does that, I think, once again acting as the relayer of information to the king—her son, Solomon. "Look, Adonijah still has plans to take your throne." Taking the old king's wife was a way, in the Middle East, that you showed who was the new king. So Adonijah was saying, "Well, if I get Solomon—by trickery—to give me Abishag, I can parade her before all of Israel and say, 'Look, I have the old king's wife. I'm really the king.'" So I think that what Bathsheba really was doing was letting Solomon know that Adonijah was still working behind the scenes to become king. And what did Solomon do?

I Kings 2:25 So King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he struck him down, and he died.

I think what Bathsheba did was once again to preserve the line of David, by telling information at the right time so that the problem could be solved. (Not the way we, as Christians, would go about it; but this was quite a different time.)

So here we have four women whose actions prove very pivotal in the lineage of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The one thing that they seem to have in common is a kind of *loyalty* to what they understood of God's plan. I do not know if they knew that the sceptre would

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not depart from Judah, or where they fit in the progress of God's plan to bring the Savior out of Judah and then David's line. I do not know how much they knew. But they acted very much in accordance with God's will in these matters.

But that really does not matter—what they knew. The record that we have from God is that they had a part to play in the march of history and they were very *faithful* to that part. Let us close then in Deuteronomy 7, because I want to bring this back to us. We too have an obligation to keep our covenant with God. These four ladies have shown us an example—especially Ruth. The other ladies were not quite as sterling an example as Ruth was. But these ladies have been left in Christ's genealogy as an example of their faithfulness.

Deuteronomy 7:6-8 "For you are a holy people to the LoORD your God; the LoORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LoORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LoORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LoORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

The theme of *redemption* continues. God has redeemed us, chosen us, and wants to keep the oath (the covenant, what He swore would happen)—the promises that He would give us.

Deuteronomy 7:9-14 "Therefore know that the LoORD your God, He is God [Sounds like what Rahab said.], the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face. Therefore you shall keep the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them. Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LoORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you. You shall be blessed above all peoples. . . .

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We have been "brought near" by the redeeming blood of Christ. We are no longer strangers and aliens from the promises. So, as we leave the day of Pentecost, let us renew our pledge to *keep covenant with God* steadfastly to the end.