

# THE NATURE OF HIS KINGDOM

*“Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar... Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth... David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah’s wife...” —MATTHEW 1:3,5,6*

In Biblical times, the genealogy of a Jewish person was documented through the bloodline of the father. Scripture gives us the genealogy of Christ, both in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, but Matthew’s record is unique in that in addition to Mary, it includes four mothers in the ancestry of Christ. We can only speculate as to why Matthew includes these mothers, but for a better understanding of the nature of Christ’s kingdom, it is helpful to know a little of their histories.

Tamar was a Canaanite woman who had been widowed twice by the two eldest sons of Judah. Fearing she’d remain a widow and bear no children, she disguised herself as a prostitute, waited on the side of the road for her father-in-law, and deceived him into availing himself of her service. They conceived a child, and Tamar stepped into the bloodline of the Messiah. Rahab, also a Canaanite woman, lived in Jericho and earned her living as a prostitute. At risk to her life, she provided refuge for two Jewish spies. In return, when Jericho fell, Rahab and her family were brought safely into Israel where she married a Jewish man named Salmon, and she stepped into the line of the Messiah.

Ruth was a Moabite and the Moabites were banned from entering the assembly of the Lord because of previous harsh treatment of the Israelites. A severe famine in Bethlehem had brought Naomi, her husband and two sons to Moab. Ruth married one of her sons. Naomi’s

husband died and about ten years later, both her sons died. Naomi wanted to return to her homeland and Ruth was insistent on accompanying her. They left Moab and returned to Bethlehem where Ruth met and married Boaz. They became the great grandparents of King David. Bathsheba, Uriah's wife, committed adultery with King David, and she conceived a child. To cover up who the father was, King David had Uriah placed on the frontlines of battle where he was killed. He then married Bathsheba and she stepped into the Messianic line.

The mothers Matthew lists may appear as a simple sidebar to the genealogy of Christ, but through this pedigree of sin and brokenness, we come to realize the true nature of Christ's kingdom. Jesus was not born into a pristine, sterilized world, but into a broken, sinful world; not to stand apart from it, but to become part of it. The Kingdom of God is not built on human virtues, accreditation, ability or accomplishment, but on level ground of all people, both Jew and Gentile, recognizing their need for salvation.

***PRAYER: Thank You, Lord Jesus, for coming into this world to be a part of it, and for paying the price for my sin.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Does knowing the sin and brokenness of the mothers in the ancestry of Jesus give me a better understanding of the nature of His kingdom?***