

# THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS

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## MATTHEW 1

This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:  
Abraham was the father of Isaac,  
Isaac the father of Jacob,  
Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,  
Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,  
Perez the father of Hezron,  
Hezron the father of Ram,  
Ram the father of Amminadab,  
Amminadab the father of Nahshon,  
Nahshon the father of Salmon,  
Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,  
Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,  
Obed the father of Jesse,  
and Jesse the father of King David.  
David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been *Uriah's wife*,  
Elihud the father of Eleazar,  
Eleazar the father of Matthan,  
Matthan the father of Jacob,  
and Jacob, the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother  
of Jesus, who is called the Messiah.

- 1. WHAT is a genealogy?** *It is a record of the ancestry of an individual, family or group of people. Everyone has a genealogy.*

"Genealogies were important in the ancient world and played an especially significant role for the Jews. God's people kept extensive genealogies, which served as a record of a family's descendants but were also used for practical and legal purposes to establish a person's heritage, inheritance, legitimacy, and rights."

- 2. WHY is a genealogy important in Jewish culture?**

- \* It is a continuation of family name and legacy.
- \* If Jewish, it meant that you were a chosen & blessed people. And, if you were a descendent of Aaron, you could be a part of the Levitical priesthood.
- \* If Jewish, you would inherit land based on your tribe.
- \* Genealogy may show an affiliation with people of significance.

Jewish genealogies were also important in tracing the line of Jesus. The Old Testament made it clear that the Messiah would be the "Son of David." Therefore, records of family history were vital.

Biblical genealogies did not include every family member, but rather, they **highlighted critical characters**.

**We ALL have a desire** to know, to be known, and to belong. We all long to know our **IDENTITY**.

What can we learn from the genealogy of Jesus?

Jesus too had some unhealthy family members, who made some MAJOR mistakes. BUT, **despite their sin**, God was still faithful and committed to His covenant with His people. AND the same can still be said today!

Regardless of our natural genealogies, IF Jesus is our Lord and Savior, then we NOW belong to a NEW family and we now have a spiritual genealogy.

**Ephesians 2:19** - "Now you are no longer strangers to God and foreigners to heaven, but you are members of God's very own family, citizens of God's country, and you belong in God's household with every other Christian."

### **Some facts about Matthew's genealogy:**

- Descending order - Father Abraham - Jesus
- More common form of **Jewish Genealogy** (Important to the Jewish audience)
- Special emphasis on covenant with Israel as a chosen people
- Follows the kingly lineage - shows the Messiah's legal claim to the throne of David.
- Jesus' line through Joseph

Besides Mary (the mother of Jesus), Matthew's genealogy also includes the names of four women.

### **Why Are Americans Obsessed with Genealogy?**

We look, because we want to see if there is precedent for our proclivities and talents, or an explanation for this nose or that auburn hair. Is there a story behind a family's idiosyncrasies or those unusual holiday customs? What about that missing grandfather or this inter-generational habit of secrecy? ***We look for patterns and explanations, and we hope the past can make sense of the present.***

“Look at the unique appearance of four women in the genealogy of Matthew: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. All four are either non-Israelites or connected to non-Israelite families. Not only is it unconventional for Matthew to list these female names in an all-male genealogy, but these women are all associated with potential sex scandals. Matthew could have highlighted Jesus’ connection to Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel, the matriarchs of Israel. But instead, he mentions Canaanites, prostitutes, and Moabite women, ALL of whom would be associated with Israel’s sin and covenant failure.”

### **A brief look at these four women:**

**TAMAR** - (Genesis 38) Tamar was the daughter-in-law of Judah - one of Joseph’s brothers who was responsible for selling Joseph into slavery - and he had 3 sons. Tamar married into the family & became a widow - **NOT once, but twice** (2/3 sons are killed). Their deaths left her with no social status, no children, no inheritance, no home and no one to take care of her. According to the **Levirate Law, (Deuteronomy 25:5-6)**, Judah was supposed to have his 3rd son marry her, so that her family name/line would continue.

**\*But Judah does not follow this law!** He lied and told Tamar to go back to her father’s house to wait for his 3rd son **“as he gets older.”** Tamar finds out that Judah has NO INTENTION of keeping his promise.

Tamar took matters into her own hands. She disguised herself as a prostitute and sleeps with Judah. As a result, Tamar becomes pregnant with twins.

### **BUT that is not the end of her story!**

When the truth comes out, Judah not only confesses his guilt, but acknowledges that his actions were worse than those of Tamar.

**Genesis 38:26** *“She is more righteous than I am.”*

The Hebrew word “righteous” means proved right or justified in action.

Twice a widow, vulnerable and denied what was rightfully hers - AND yet years later, she will become the great, great, great, grandmother of Jesus, the Messiah.

**“The Lion of the tribe of Judah”** (Revelation 5:5) is a direct result of the union of Judah & Tamar and their twin son, Perez!

**Despite our humanity, our failures and our sin, God is a covenant-keeping GOD. HE is FAITHFUL and HIS purposes will be accomplished!**

*-What part of Tamar’s story can you relate to?*

*-What promises has God made to you that you are still believing for?*

**RAHAB** - (Joshua 2) A Canaanite woman who was living in Jericho, a city that was about to be conquered by Israel. The Canaanites were a pagan people, enemies of Israel, and known for their worship of false gods, sexual immorality, and child sacrifices. In addition to being a Canaanite, Rahab was also a prostitute. She had several things going against her.

**BUT that is not the end of her story!**

Rahab courageously hides these two Jewish spies sent by Joshua in her home (essentially, she hides two enemies) and tells them:

**Joshua 2:9-11** "I know the Lord has given you this land," she told them. "We are all afraid of you. Everyone in the land is living in terror. For we have heard how the Lord made a dry path for you through the Red Sea when you left Egypt. And we know what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan River, whose people you completely destroyed. No wonder our hearts have melted in fear! No one has the courage to fight after hearing such things. **For the Lord your God is the Supreme God of the heavens above and the earth below.**"

Rahab- the Canaanite, the prostitute- displays such great faith not just by hiding the two spies, BUT by acknowledging the Supremacy of the God of Israel. **This ONE act saved Rahab's life and her lineage.** She marries a man named, Salmon (**Sah-man**) and gives birth to a son named, Boaz.

**James 2:25** "In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute **considered righteous** (made justified) when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?"

*-What can you learn from the courage of Rahab?*

*-Is there anything that God is asking you to do that would cost you something? Like Rahab, are you choosing God's way despite what might happen to you?*

**RUTH** - (Ruth) The Moabite woman named Ruth is not known for any sexual misconduct, but the odds of her marrying into the Messiah's lineage were very slim. Like Tamar, she was a widow, as well as a Moabite who, like the Canaanites, were a pagan people group who were excluded from the commonwealth of God.

**BUT that is not the end of her story!**

When she loses her husband, instead of staying with her people, Ruth leaves everything - her friends, family - **her entire identity** - in order to follow her Jewish, mother-in-law, Naomi.

**Ruth 1:16** "Where you go, I'll go, where you stay, I'll stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God."

Ruth moves to Bethlehem, and it is there that she will meet her (future) husband Boaz (**Rahab's son**). Ruth and Boaz give birth to Obed - Obed then becomes the grandfather of King David.

*-What is God asking you to leave behind in order for His kingdom to advance?*

**BATHSHEBA** - (2 Samuel) While bathing, Bathsheba was seen by King David. He summoned her to his quarters and as a result, she becomes pregnant. All of this occurs while Bathsheba is still married to Uriah.

**Labeled: "Adulteress"**

King David then organizes (and covers up) the murder of her husband, Uriah.

**Labeled: "Widow"**

After her husband's death, she marries King David and gives birth to a son who only lives for 7 days.

**BUT that is not the end of her story!**

At some point, Bathsheba gives birth to more sons, one of them being Solomon. Because of her intervention and wisdom, she crafts a plan to make Solomon Israel's next King.

*-Have you experienced similar grief to that of Bathsheba? How were you able to continue moving forward towards God and His plan for you?*

Four women.

Four foreigners.

Four "enemies of God" and His people.

All of them had experienced some sort of grief and loss leaving them damaged, broken, messy and marginalized. **By the law**, they were all disqualified, **BUT BY GRACE, they all became qualified**. They FOUGHT for their legacy and we too, must fight for ours.

**Matthew knew exactly TO WHOM and WHAT he was writing**. He knew that the Son of man's natural genealogy (through both parents) would be tainted and marred by sin - proving mankind's desperate need for a Savior.

**Some of us need permission to grieve** our "natural genealogies."

We need to grieve **what we had, what didn't have or what we lost**.

**Some of us need to forgive** our parents (they did the best they could) or perhaps other family members (spouses or children).

**Some of us need to forgive ourselves** because WE ALL MAKE mistakes.

**Because some of us didn't come from "a healthy home,"** perhaps we have not parented in a healthy way.

**Some of us have idolized our children** and our identity is more about being their mom or dad, rather than living as a son or daughter of Jesus.

**Some of us need to LEAVE. We need to unlearn.** And, in doing, we need to relearn what healthy & biblical family & community looks like.

**Some of us need to stop procrastinating or making excuses** and make the commitment to growing as a disciple of Christ.

We are fighting for legacy. We are fighting for the future. We are fighting for God's kingdom to advance. It is worth the fight.

*-Where do you find yourself on this list?*

*-Who of the four women do you identify with most? Why?*

*-What are you fighting for?*