

Coming Home - part 1 – to a seedy family story.

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BIG IDEA – Jesus was born into a sordid past.

scripture focus - Matthew 1:1 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/mat.1.1.NLT>

“This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham:”

The Christmas Story is seen as **the** bright ray of sunshine in a dark world and is celebrated worldwide as **people come home for Christmas**. We can also refer to this time as Advent, which means “the coming or arrival.” As we read about Jesus’ birth, **we may glamorize the characters of this popular story**. The Christmas Story is a **real** story about **real** people who had **real, authentic realities that may not be as dazzling as we think**. Nevertheless, this story is monumental and THE pivotal point in human history. The Christmas story is a story out of darkness, and silence, into the wonderful light and loud celebration of Jesus’ arrival!

I don’t re-tell this story for us to feel bad or cast a shadow on the celebration of decoration, lights, color, family, or giving and receiving gifts – all the biggest part of this season for believers and nonbelievers in Jesus.

I tell this story to remind us of who we were, where we came from! Not just us as individuals, but as a community, our shared human story.

The truth is the Christmas Story meant coming home to a seedy story of family and how **Jesus was actually born into a sordid past**.

WE

The Apostle Matthew, in his amazing obsession to detail does not begin his gospel, his journal of Jesus’ life like the others.

Matthew immediately wants us to know that **Jesus wasn’t some random guy who showed up to save us and the entire world**. Oh no, Jesus has quite the résumé, his CV (curriculum vitae) and Matthew is not going to start the story without letting us know where Jesus has come from!

Who is this Jesus that Matthew writes about?

He is the **rightful heir** to the throne of David! Jesus is of **kingly descent**, remarkably from both his father's and mother's line.

But the kingly line was not as prestigious or **pristine** as you would think!

In fact, it was filled with bad actors, immoral decisions, and plenty of head-scratching heritage!

Would one think that Jesus, the Son of the Living God, would come through a perfectly **holy**, even **religious**, or priestly line of relatives.

Let's just start with the "mothers of Jesus'" legacy.

Matthew includes **women** in this generational antiquity!

This was unheard of.

This genealogy is shockingly unlike other ancient genealogies. To begin with, **there are five women listed in the genealogy, all mothers of Jesus**. This will not strike modern readers as unusual, but **in ancient patriarchal societies, a woman was virtually never named in such lists, let alone five of them**. You could call women "gender outsiders" in those cultures, yet they are in Jesus' genealogy. Also, **most of the women in Jesus' résumé were Gentiles (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth). They were Canaanites and a Moabitess**. To the ancient Jews, these nations were unclean; **they weren't allowed into the tabernacle or temple to worship**. **We could call them "racial outsiders," and yet they are in Jesus' genealogy**.
[Timothy Keller](#).

And not just any women! The women are THE bloodline of Christ himself.

Let's look at these five women's lives and their story.

1. Tamar

[Matthew 1:3](#) / [Genesis 38:1-30](#)

Tamar disguised herself as a religious **prostitute** and tricked her father-in-law Judah into getting her pregnant. This raises problems regarding Judah.

First, he thought he was visiting a religious prostitute. It is technically an act of worship to a fertility god or goddess. Wasn't Judah supposed to be only worshipping [Yahweh](#)?

Second, maybe the evil of his sons really did indicate the sin in Judah's heart as well when we consider he did not attend to the matter of Tamar when he should have.

Third, **Judah shows an incredible double standard when he says that Tamar should be stoned to death for getting pregnant.** It is only when she shows evidence that Judah is the father that he realizes the difficulties he has forced the young woman to endure.

2. Rahab

[Matthew 1:5](#) / [Joshua 2:1-21](#) / [Joshua 6:22-25](#)

Rahab was a prostitute and a Gentile. Both of those issues disqualified her for what would be considered a normal life in the eyes of the Jewish people of her day. Everything about her would have been considered unclean. We don't even know if **she was a religious prostitute or a businesswoman** (there are theological implications for both), but God was able to use her.

She provided shelter to a couple of Jewish spies as they were checking out the city of Jericho for the soon-to-arrive Jewish army. Because she helped them, God provided a way for her family to escape the impending destruction of Jericho. Not only that, we see that she also ended up as a bride to someone in the ancestry of King David and Jesus of Nazareth.

3. Ruth

[Matthew 1:5](#) / [Ruth 4:1-6](#)

For Ruth, the difficulties around her sexuality are not as plain to us. They are more **based in the Jewish taboo against men marrying women that are Gentiles.** The Jewish nature of offspring is given by the mother, so a non-Jewish woman would not give birth to a Jewish child, even if the father was Jewish.

Ruth was from Moab, a Gentile nation. There is also the matter of her being previously married. **Even though she was a widow, there was still a cultural bias in place that was working against her.** Now, add to this the fact that the man she eventually married (Boaz) was himself, very wealthy. For him, **the cultural pressure would have been very strong to marry a Jewish girl from another wealthy family.**

God must have placed in Boaz a desire for a wife that had integrity and love in her heart. It was something that outweighed the societal pressures to marry within expectations. Ruth checked off all the boxes he was looking for and he found himself in love. The story of Ruth really is a rags-to-riches love story, and it is wholesome and well worth reading. She shows us that God will work quite

willingly through a heart that is full of love and willing to do the right thing, even if it is difficult. In time, Ruth eventually becomes the grandmother of King David.

4. Bathsheba

[Matthew 1:6](#) / [2 Samuel 11:1-5](#) / [2 Samuel 12:24-25](#)

Bathsheba is probably the most scandalous story on this list. It was so much so, that Matthew couldn't even bring himself to write out her name in the genealogy. He refers to her as "the wife of Uriah." **She is the woman King David took advantage of and forced an adulterous relationship with her.** It destroyed Bathsheba and nearly destroyed David.

If you read the account of how David saw her and then sent men for her, it is not clear if she had much choice in the matter of a sexual relationship with David; **she definitely did not have a choice in getting pregnant. Keep in mind, that by Mosaic Law, David and Bathsheba should have been stoned to death.** She then lost her husband (Uriah) because David had him murdered in battle after a failed attempt to cover up the pregnancy. Add to that the trauma of losing the child that David fathered soon after birth, and we have a woman who by every right could claim to be broken and cursed. Yet her story did not end there. Once David had reconciled with God, he married Bathsheba and they had another son named Solomon. King David had other sons who could claim the throne of Judah and Israel ahead of Solomon. It was God's will and shrewd political maneuvers by Bathsheba that resulted in Solomon becoming the king after David. She is inspirational in that she did not dwell in the label of adulteress and sinner. Instead, she found [forgiveness](#) and moved forward so powerfully that her son became king and is still regarded as the wisest man to have walked the earth (except for Jesus).

5. Mary

[Matthew 1:16](#) / [Matthew 1:18-21](#) / [Luke 1:26-38](#)

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is **the model of surrender to the will of God. Mary's pregnancy was no way normal and without extreme controversy.** We will focus more on Mary's life more closely next week.

That is just part of Jesus' **mom's history, but what about Jesus' earthly fathers?** All of these were Joseph's history, **but because Joseph had taken Mary to be his wife and contractually made Jesus his own son through adoption, these forefathers would be Jesus' earthly forefathers.**

And the men, Jesus' adopted father's heritage – Oh my!

Starting from King David here's the list of [good vs bad kings](#):

6 good, 8 bad

- **King Solomon** → (good for the kingdom, bad as a moral/spiritual leader.)
- **King Rehoboam** → (Split the Kingdom, Taking advice from his young buddies...1 Kings 12:11, "My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions!")
- **King Abijah** (Abijam) →
- **King Asa** →
- **King Jehoshaphat** →
- **King Jehoram** (Joram) → (His wife was Athaliah, the daughter of wicked King Ahab and Queen Jezebel.)
- **King Ahaziah** (Uzziah) →
- **King Jotham** →
- **King Ahaz** → (Not only did he lead the people to worship idols, but he also allied with the king of Assyria and paid tribute to him.)
- **King Hezekiah** →
- **King Manasseh** → (who led the people into idolatry and apostasy. He set up altars to the idols in the Temple in Jerusalem and even sacrificed his son to one of these idols.)
- **King Amon** → (He was a evil ruler who restored idolatry, and set up the images which his father had cast down. The Prophet, Zephaniah, mentions his moral depravity.)
- **King Josiah** →
- **Jeconiah** (Jechonias, Jehoiachin (killed God's prophets, and he even burnt the scroll with the words of the prophet Jeremiah. His reign was as close as Judah got to King Ahab of Israel, full of oppression and rebellion), Jekonjah, Coniah, Neri) →

Just because Jesus came from Israel's kingly line, which gave him the legal, rightful path to assume the throne over Israel – remember Pilate's plaque over the cross reading, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." And the stink the religious leaders made about it, saying "Change it from 'The King of the Jews' to 'He said, I am King of the Jews.'" John 19:19, 21 NLT

Jesus is King of the Jews; He is also King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

Why didn't Jesus' heritage come from a long and consistent line of righteousness, upstanding men, and women? People who were basically good and faithful to God?

Because that is not the reality of the world we live in. It wasn't then, it isn't now. Christ came not from just people who failed God, but were often wicked, evil men and women who were enemies of God!

This gives me hope! **If you have not come from perfection in your family story,** this should give you hope as well. If you have a seedy family story. If you have generations of a sordid past, this puts you in the best position to watch God miraculously transform a life and a legacy. Don't tell me God can't do it. Don't tell me it can't happen for you. **If God did it in Joseph's and Mary's life. If God can do it in my own life, I know he can do it in yours as well.**

So **COME HOME** and watch God do miracles in our homes and families!

"The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine." **Isaiah 9:2 NLT**

<https://bible.com/bible/116/isa.9.2.NLT>

Shine Jesus Shine!

NOTES

Scriptures

Matthew 1:1 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/mat.1.1.NLT>

"This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham:"

Matthew 1:2-6 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/mat.1.2-6.NLT>

"Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob. Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers. Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah (whose mother was Tamar). Perez was the father of Hezron. Hezron was the father of Ram. Ram was the father of Amminadab. Amminadab was the father of Nahshon. Nahshon was the father of Salmon. Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab). Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth). Obed was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon (whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah)."

Matthew 1:7-11 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/mat.1.7-11.NLT>

"Solomon was the father of Rehoboam. Rehoboam was the father of Abijah. Abijah was the father of Asa. Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat was the father of Jehoram. Jehoram was the father of Uzziah. Uzziah was the father of Jotham. Jotham was the father of Ahaz. Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah. Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh. Manasseh was the father of Amon. Amon was the father of Josiah. Josiah was the father of Jehoiachin and his brothers (born at the time of the exile to Babylon)."

Matthew 1:12-16 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/mat.1.12-16.NLT>

“After the Babylonian exile: Jehoiachin was the father of Shealtiel. Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud. Abiud was the father of Eliakim. Eliakim was the father of Azor. Azor was the father of Zadok. Zadok was the father of Akim. Akim was the father of Eliud. Eliud was the father of Eleazar. Eleazar was the father of Matthan. Matthan was the father of Jacob. Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah.”

Matthew 1:17 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/mat.1.17.NLT>

“All those listed above include fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the Babylonian exile, and fourteen from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah.”

1 Kings 12:6-11 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/1ki.12.10.NLT>

“Then King Rehoboam discussed the matter with the older men who had counseled his father, Solomon. “What is your advice?” he asked. “How should I answer these people?” The older counselors replied, “If you are willing to be a servant to these people today and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your loyal subjects.” But Rehoboam rejected the advice of the older men and instead asked the opinion of the young men who had grown up with him and were now his advisers. “What is your advice?” he asked them. “How should I answer these people who want me to lighten the burdens imposed by my father?” The young men replied, “This is what you should tell those complainers who want a lighter burden: ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist! Yes, **my father laid heavy burdens on you, but I’m going to make them even heavier! My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions!**’””

Matthew 4:15-16 NLT <https://bible.com/bible/116/mat.4.15-16.NLT>

““In the land of Zebulun and of Naphtali, beside the sea, beyond the Jordan River, in Galilee where so many Gentiles live, the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light. And for those who lived in the land where death casts its shadow, a light has shined.””

“The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.” **Isaiah 9:2 NLT** <https://bible.com/bible/116/isa.9.2.NLT>

Notes for screen

1. **King Solomon - Bad**
2. **King Rehoboam- Bad**
3. **King Abijah (Abijam) - Bad**
4. **King Asa - Good**
5. **King Jehoshaphat - Good**
6. **King Jehoram (Joram) - Bad**
7. **King Ahaziah (Uzziah) - Good**
8. **King Jotham - Good**
9. **King Ahaz- Bad**
10. **King Hezekiah - Good**

11. **King Manasseh- Bad**
12. **King Amon- Bad**
13. **King Josiah - Good**
14. **Jeconiah- Bad**

Questions

- Q: In light of Isaiah 9:2, how can you let Jesus shine in your life and be a source of hope to others?
- Q: What actions or changes can you make in your life to better reflect the hope and light that Jesus brings?
- Q: How does knowing that Jesus came from a sordid past give hope to those with imperfect families or pasts?
- Q: How does Jesus' imperfect lineage and assumed legal right to the throne impact your understanding of him as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords?
- Q: How does this information shape your perception of God's sovereignty and grace in your daily life?
- Q: What can we learn from the stories of the women mentioned in Jesus' genealogy?
- Q: Can you think of a time when you faced a difficult situation and how God played a role in your story?
- Q: Why do you think God chose to include people with immoral backgrounds and questionable circumstances in Jesus' lineage?

Diving Deeper into God's Word

Internet Links

[History of Joseph the Carpenter](#)

An account of the life and death of Joseph, **the foster-father of Jesus**, allegedly given by the Lord Himself to His disciples. **In it Joseph is described as a carpenter, a widower with six children, and quite old when he married the virgin, a girl of twelve years.** The latter part of the book describes Joseph's sickness, death, and burial, and contains a eulogy spoken over him by Jesus. His death at 111 years of age is given as a model of holy dying. His burial is according to the burial rites of the Egyp. cult of Osiris. This document, the oldest one extant intended to glorify Joseph and foster his cult, was written in Egypt no earlier than the 4th cent. and shows strong influences of Egyp. religions and Gnosticism upon it. Its original language may have been Gr., but it is extant now only in Coptic and Arabic. A 14th-cent. Lat. tr. based on the Coptic also exists. Materials from earlier apocryphal gospels are found in it. For a modern translation (German) see S. Morenz, *Die Geschichte von Joseph dem Zimmermann*, Vol. LVI: *Texte und Untersuchungen* (1951).

[Who was Joseph, the father of Jesus?](#)

Joseph was the earthly father of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Joseph was a descendant of King David, he lived in Nazareth in [Galilee](#), and he was pledged to be married to Mary ([Luke 1:27](#)), the virgin who gave birth to Jesus. The Bible tells us that [Mary](#) became pregnant through the Holy Spirit ([Matthew 1:18](#)) and not through Joseph. Therefore,

Joseph can be understood as Jesus' earthly, adoptive father but not as His biological father.

The Bible doesn't tell us much about Joseph. But, given the glimpses into his character we do have, we conclude that:

- He was a humble man who cared deeply about obeying God.
- He presents a pattern of obedience.
- He was a kind, self-sacrificing man.
- He was committed to keeping the law.

[From Joseph's side of the story.](#)

Joseph's Name

Joseph's name was a proud name, recalling the ancient Jewish name of one of the twelve patriarchs, Joseph the son of Jacob who was sold by his brothers into Egypt and who later became second to Pharaoh in power over all Egypt, saving his family from famine (Genesis 30-50). His name means "to add."

Joseph the Husband

Joseph was no doubt older than Mary. While girls were married by 13 or 14 -- old enough at that age to bear children -- husbands on the other hand needed to be established enough to support a wife before they could enter into marriage. They were legally obligated to provide with food, clothing, and shelter. But they didn't have to do it all by themselves. In the West, newly married couples get their own apartment and live independently, but not in Palestine. In first century Galilee, however, Joseph would take Mary home to the house in which he lived with his parents, and perhaps grandparents, as well as brothers and sisters who might be at home. Only as his own family grew, would Joseph and his family likely get their own house. This may sound very crowded and non-private to you, but it had its advantages. Instead of a young couple out on their own, in a large household, each member contributed to the economy of the family by their own work, making enough for the whole to subsist on. A couple cut off from the economy of the extended family would have to fend for themselves, as Mary and Joseph had to do in Bethlehem. Those were mighty lean times.

[Joseph's ancestry](#)

Joseph was in the line of King David and therefore held a legal right to the throne. However, because he descended from Jechonias (Matthew 1:11-12) (also called Jeconiah and Jehoiachin, he would have been disqualified by God from taking the throne. However, Mary's son would not (see: Mary).

[[other possibility](#)]: Another explanation for these differences is yibbum, as offered by John of Damascus: "One ought also to observe this, that the law was that when a man died without seed, this man's brother should take to wife the wife of the dead man and raise up seed to his brother." [8] From this he proposes it is possible that "when Mathan died, Melchi, who was of the tribe of Nathan and the son of Levi and brother of Panther, married the wife of Mathan. It was she who was the mother of Jacob, and from her Melchi begot Heli. Thus, Jacob and Heli were born of the same mother, but Jacob was of the tribe of Solomon, while Heli was of the tribe of Nathan. Heli, however, who was of the tribe of Nathan, died childless, and his brother Jacob, who was of the tribe of Solomon, took his wife and raised up seed for his brother and begot Joseph. So, while Joseph was by nature

a son of Jacob of the descent of Solomon, he was by law son of Heli, who was of the line of Nathan."[9]]

Lineage—Adam to King David to Joseph

Adam → Seth → Enos → Cainan → Mahalaleel → Jared → Enoch → Methuselah → Lameh → Noah → Shem → m → Cainan → Shelah → Eber → Peleg → Reu → Serug (Saruch) → Nahor → Terah → Abraham → Isaac → Jacob → Judah → Perez → Hezron → Ram → Amminadab → Nahshon → Salmon → Boaz → Obed → Jesse → KING DAVID → King Solomon → **King Rehoboam** → **King Abijah** (Abijam) → **King Asa** → **King Jehoshaphat** → **King Jehoram** (Joram) → **King Ahaziah** (Uzziah) → **King Jotham** → **King Ahaz** → **King Hezekiah** → **King Manasseh** → **King Amon** → **King Josiah** → **Jechonias** (Jechonias, Jehoiachin, Jekonjah, Coniah, Neri) → Prince Shealtiel → Prince Zerubbabel (Zorobabel) → Prince Abiud (Abihud) → Governor Eliakim → Azor → Zadok → Achim → Eliud → Eleazar → Matthan → Jacob → **JOSEPH, the adoptive, legal father of of Jesus Christ**

During the rule of King Rehoboam, Israel was split into two separate kingdoms: Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and Judah (the Southern Kingdom). At this point, **the kings of Israel became evil for the most part**. Joseph's lineage came through Judah's Kings and Princes.

Note that the **point of divergence between the royal lineage of Mary and Joseph is that they descended from two different sons of King David—Joseph from King Solomon and Mary from Prince Nathan**. Also [Nathan](#).