

The Women of Jesus' Genealogy part 1
Tamar

Introduction: As God uses the unbelieving kings named Abimelech to protect Abraham and Isaac's line (cf. Gen. 20, 26), so God uses the childless widow Tamar to preserve the seed of the house of Judah. This account spans 20-25 years.

1) The first female in Jesus' genealogy—Matt. 1:3; Luke 3:33; Gen. 38

- a) Her personal background:
 - i) Her name: Tamar (“palm tree”)
 - ii) Her ethnic group: probably a Canaanite Gentile
 - iii) Her 3 husband(s):
 - (1) Married to Er, Judah's firstborn:
 - (2) Married (levirate) to Onan, Judah's second born:
 - (3) Betrothed (levirate) to Shelah, Judah's youngest:
 - iv) Her father-in-law: Judah
 - (1) He is the 4th son of Leah, Jacob's wife
 - (2) He is married to the daughter of Shua, a Canaanite Gentile
 - (a) What a contrast to Abraham (Gen. 24) and Isaac's (Gen. 28) efforts to marry appropriately.
 - (3) He is a friend of Hirah, a Canaanite Gentile
 - (4) He lives at Chezib when his youngest son, Shelah, is born
 - v) Her twin sons by her father-in-law:
 - (1) Perez and Zerah
- b) Her sovereignly directed story:
 - i) **The complication of faithlessness, callousness, and childlessness:**
Gen. 38:1-11
 - (1) Judah went down into the lower hills (i.e. the Shephelah) @ 15 miles away from his remaining brothers while Joseph was in slavery—38:1
 - (2) Judah saw and took a Canaanite wife—38:2
 - (a) cf. Gen. 3:6; 6:2; 34:2
 - (3) Judah and his Canaanite wife had 3 sons—38:3-5
 - (4) Judah arranged marriages for his 3 sons—38:6-11
 - (a) Wicked Er—38:7
 - (b) Selfish and short-sighted, wicked Onan—38:8-10
 - (i) Ongoing gratification but no responsibility—“when” is better translated as “whenever”
 - (ii) Onan cares not for his family or Tamar, only his own pleasure.
 - (c) Young Shelah—38:11
 - (i) Betrothed but not consummated
 - (ii) Judah's motive is rooted in the fear that the godless character of his youngest son would be exposed. Their culture would assume Tamar was possibly cursed, but in reality, it was the brothers who were wicked.

- ii) **The complication of sexual immorality:** Gen. 38:12-23
 - (1) Judah does not keep his promise—38:12-14
 - (a) With his wife dead, there appears to be no hope of an heir.
 - (2) Tamar takes a risk to deceive her father-in-law—38:15-19
 - This seems to take place during the first year of the 7-year famine.
 - (a) She apparently knew his weakness, especially after his wife died.
 - (b) Securing an heir from her father-in-law was part of the Hittite culture.
 - (c) She dressed like a prostitute, possibly a temple prostitute (cf. 38:21)
 - (d) She asks for distinctive identification from Judah.
 - (e) She commits 2 sins: adultery and incest
 - (3) Judah's attempt to pay his debt—38:20-23 (fears man more than God)
 - (a) Judah sends his friend to make the payment
 - (i) Hirah looks for a temple prostitute but cannot find one.
 - (b) Judah seeks to avoid public shame/ridicule/contempt
- iii) **The complication of hypocrisy and relative guilt:** Gen. 38:24-26
 - (1) Judah's merciless display of hypocritical holiness—38:24
 - (a) She was immoral, and, more than that, she is pregnant as a result.
 - (b) Judah's harsh response is often found among those who wrestle with their own guilty conscience.
 - (2) Tamar's shrewd display of boldness—38:25
 - (3) Judah's acknowledges a sense of right and wrong—38:26
 - (a) Judah was irresponsible and unfaithful to maintain the family line
 - (b) Tamar's "righteousness" is shown by her fighting for her right to have a child by the nearest of kin to her deceased husband Er.
 - (c) This seems to be a turning point in Judah's life.
- iv) **God's resolution to the complications:** Gen. 38:27-30
 - (1) Perez emerges first, then Zerah
 - (a) This completes Tamar's struggle for an heir.
 - (b) The line of the Messiah comes through Perez.
 - (i) See pertinent passages in Gen. 46; Num. 26; Ruth 4; 1 Chron. 2, 4, 9; and Neh. 11.
 - (2) Technically this frees Shelah from having to produce an heir for his brother Er, since the line has been preserved.

2) What does this have to do with Christmas?

- a) God alone will bring about the fulfillment of His promises. In spite of the complications of our sin and our selfishness, God accomplishes His purposes for His glory and our good.
- b) Your sin is not the end of your story. This same God is willing and able to overrule your self-made complications and use you for His glory and your good.
- c) As someone said, how amazing that God can weave such a beautiful pattern from such a tangled skein of yarn.

The Women of Jesus' Genealogy part 2
Rahab

Introduction: Last time we looked at Tamar who pretended to be a prostitute. Today we look at a woman in Jesus' genealogy who does not need to pretend. She actually is a prostitute, and a Gentile one at that! What can this possibly have to do with Christmas?

We need to remember that just because the Bible reports something that happened does not mean that it recommends that we do the same. She is not commended for her lies, she is commended for her faith in the living God. Here is a woman who seems to be a willing participant in her society's wickedness, but we don't know why she is a participant. Did something happen in her past that motivates her to use this as an escape? Is she a sex-slave? Either way, she is part of the Amorite culture than has reached its peak of sinfulness. (Gen. 15:16)

1) The historical setting: Joshua 2:1-24; 6:15-25

- a) The book of Joshua:
 - i) 1st theme: God faithfulness to His covenantal relationship with His people.
 - ii) 2nd theme: God's presence with His people, despite their unfaithfulness.
- b) Joshua 2
 - i) The spies of Yahweh sent out by Joshua: 2:1
 - ii) The protection of the spies by Yahweh—2:2-7
 - (1) Complications arise—2:2-3
 - (2) Rahab's deception—2:4-6
 - (3) Complications continue—2:7
 - iii) **Central theme: Rahab's confession of faith in Yahweh: 2:8-14**
 - This is the focal point. Don't be distracted by the dust on top of the refrigerator when you can look at the excellent food in the fridge that your wife has prepared. (Davis)
 - (1) The **awesome sovereignty** of Yahweh—2:8-9
 - (a) She recognized Yahweh's gift to Israel as certain.
 - (b) She admitted the fearful lack of courage by the people.
 - (2) The **mighty works** of Yahweh—2:10
 - (a) The destruction of Egypt's forces at the Red Sea
 - (i) 40 years after the Exodus!
 - (ii) Remember Ex. 8:10, 22; 9:14, 29; 10:2; 11:7; 14:4; 15:15-16
 - (b) The destruction of the Amorites across the Jordan River
 - (3) The **unique majesty** of Yahweh—2:11
 - (a) The Canaanite's lack of courage is directly related to their understanding of Yahweh's majesty.
 - (b) Standing within a culture that trusted in a plurality of gods, she clings to the one True God.
 - (4) The **beautiful loyal love** of Yahweh—2:12-14

- (a) Rahab showed loyal love to Yahweh's people by rescuing them from almost certain destruction by the king's men.
- (b) Rahab seeks loyal love to be shown to her family by rescuing them from the certain coming destruction of her city.
 - (i) Genuine faith never rests content with being convinced of the reality of God but presses on to take refuge in God. (Davis)
- iv) The protection of Rahab and family by Yahweh: 2:15-21
- v) The spies return to Joshua: 2:22-24
 - (1) Rahab's faith seems to have encouraged the faith of the spies.
- c) Joshua 6:15-25

2) The practical lesson, part 1: Hebrews 11:30-31

- a) Rahab's faith was an active faith.

3) The practical lesson, part 2: James 2:25

- a) Rahab's faith was like that of Abraham

4) What does this have to do with Christmas?

- a) Rahab not only trembles before the terror of the Lord but also senses that there might be mercy in the fearful God. What but the touch of Yahweh's hand could have created such faith in the heart of this pagan harlot? (Davis)
- b) The church is not a club but a refuge for sinners who have been touched by the grace of God, and who stand as trophies of that grace, despite their sin. The only thing Rahab has to bring to this equation is her sin and its shame. Because of Christ alone there is forgiveness and acceptance.

The Women of Jesus' Genealogy part 3
Ruth

Introduction: Now we encounter a Moabite widow. What can we learn about God's providence through her story? This outline is based in part on Robert Chisolm's helpful observations

- 1) Prologue to the book: 1:1-5 (from Bethlehem to Moab)
- 2) Act One: 1:6-22 (the ABSOLUTE sovereignty of God)**
 - a) Scene One: *returning to Bethlehem*—1:6-19a
 - b) Scene Two: *a self-centered perspective on suffering*—1:19b-21
 - c) Epilogue to Act One: 1:22
- 3) Act Two: 2:1-23 (the SUBTLE sovereignty of God)**
 - a) Prologue: *the subtle nature of God's sovereignty*—2:1-3c
 - b) Scene One: *God graciously provides through hard work*—2:3d-17
 - c) Scene Two: *God's loyal-love is acknowledged*—2:18-22
 - d) Epilogue to Act Two: 2:23
- 4) Act Three: 3:1-18 (the TENDER sovereignty of God)**
 - a) Scene One: *God graciously provides through wise choices*—3:1-5
 - b) Scene Two: *God's loyal-love is reflected*—3:6-15e
 - c) Scene Three: *waiting for God to act through others*—3:15f-18
- 5) Act Four: 4:1-17 (the ETERNAL sovereignty of God)**
 - a) Scene One: *when your imagination could run wild*—4:1-12
 - b) Scene Two: *God's eternal plan is partially fulfilled*—4:13-17
- 6) Epilogue to the book: 4:18-22 (from Judah to King David)**
 - a)
- 7) Things we need to remember:**
 - a) God is compassionate toward the needy. (cf. Ps. 146:9)
 - b) God providentially works compassion through faithful people. (cf. Ruth 2:12; 3:9)
 - c) God, in loyal-love, rewards those who demonstrate loyal-love in their God-given relationships. (cf. Ps. 18:25; Ruth 1:8; 2:20; 3:10; 4:15)
 - d) God links the God-anointed King David to God's covenant with Abraham through a Gentile woman.
 - e) God welcomes non-Israelites into His covenant relationship with His people Israel.

The Women of Jesus' Genealogy part 4
Bathsheba (aka Bathshua)

Introduction: You are not a prisoner of your past.

1) From 2 Sam. 11-12; 1 Kings 1-2; 1 Chron. 3:

- a) Her **names**:
 - i) Bathsheba: “seventh daughter” or “daughter of an oath”
 - ii) Bathshua: “daughter of opulence/abundance”
- b) Her **father**: Eliam (the people of God, or God is a kinsman)
- c) Her **husbands**:
 - i) Uriah (“Yahweh is my light”)
 - (1) A Gentile (a Canaanite Hittite), a believer (based on his name)
 - (2) One of David’s “mighty men” (2 Sam. 23:8-39)
 - ii) David
 - (1) The king of Israel
- d) Her **children**: (cf. 1 Chron. 3:5)
 - i) Shimea (hears), Shobab (apostate), Nathan (gift), Solomon (peaceable)
- e) Her **life, character, and wisdom**:
 - i) As Uriah’s wife
 - (1) She is sexually abused by someone in political power over her (2 Sam. 11:1-13)
 - (a) The child born from this adulterous abuse dies (2 Sam. 12:15-23)
 - (2) Her husband is murdered by her sexual abuser (2 Sam. 11:14-25)
 - (3) She mourns her murdered husband (2 Sam. 11:26)
 - (4) She marries her abuser (2 Sam. 11:27)
 - ii) As David the king’s wife
 - (1) She gives birth to David’s successor, Solomon, and helps him become king by stopping Adonijah’s first attempt to become king—1 Kings 1:11-2:10
 - iii) As Solomon the king’s mother
 - (1) She is confused in Adonijah’s deceptive second attempt to become king—1 Kings 2:11-19
 - (2) A Jewish tradition says Solomon wrote Prov. 31 about Bathsheba

2) This we need to remember:

- a) Your loss is not the end of our story. God is the God of new beginnings.
 - i) Having been abused or taken advantage of is not the end of your story.
 - ii) The loss of your husband is not the end of your story.
 - iii) The loss of your child is not the end of your story.
- b) Your occasional lack of wisdom is not the end of your story. God alone is wise.
- c) Your past does not hinder God from accomplishing His purpose in the future.

The Women of Jesus' Genealogy part 5
Mary Luke 1:39-56

Introduction: This is the last part of our Christmas series on *Women in the Genealogy of Jesus*. Today's focus is upon a pregnant teenage girl as she meets with an older woman who is also pregnant. This passage contains what some people call the Magnificat (from the Latin of 1:46).

1) Mary's immediate response to God's revelation through Gabriel—1:39-40

- a) ³⁹ *Now Mary, having arisen in those days,*
 - i) *went with eagerness into the hill country, to a city of Judah,*
 - (1) About a 3-4 day journey from Nazareth to the southern region
 - ii) ⁴⁰ *and entered into the house of Zachariah,*
 - iii) *and greeted Elizabeth.*
 - (1) Perhaps to assist the older woman; perhaps to compare notes
- b) Given the immense social pressures and stigma that Mary was about to endure as an unwed mother, she likely sought solace in Elizabeth, who would believe the divine nature of her conception. (Faithlife Study Bible)

2) Elizabeth's encouraging response to Mary—1:41-45 ⁴¹ *And it happened ...*

- a) Elizabeth's initial response to John's movement in her womb—1:41-42a
 - i) John's activity—1:41a *the baby moved quickly in her womb* (cf. Gen. 25:22), *as Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary,* (cf. 1:15)
 - ii) The Spirit's activity—1:41b *and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,*
 - iii) Elizabeth's activity—1:42 ⁴² *and (she) called out with a loud voice and said,*
- b) She gives a blessing—1:42b-45 (she doesn't see Mary as a rival)
 - i) Blessing regarding uniqueness—1:42b
 - (1) A privilege—*"You are (the most) blessed [euvloge,w] (by God) among (all) women,*
 - (2) A Child—*and blessed [euvloge,w] (by God) is the fruit of your womb!*
 - ii) Humility and surprise—1:43-44
 - (1) A rhetorical question—1:43 ⁴³ *And how has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord (the Messiah) should come to me?*
 - (2) Interpretation—1:44 ⁴⁴ *For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb moved quickly in joy.* (cf. 1:14, 47)
 - (3) Correction—Mary is never called "the Mother of God" in the Bible
 - iii) Reassurance—1:45 ⁴⁵ *And blessed/happy [maka,rioj] is she who trusted that (the content of Mary's faith) what was spoken to her by the Lord (through the angel Gabriel cf. 1:31-35) will be accomplished."*
 - (1) In contrast with Zechariah in 1:20. Theophilus is being reminded he needs to trust God's Word. Mary heard, trusted, and obeyed what God said.

- 3) **Mary's confident declaration about God—1:46-55** ⁴⁶ *And Mary said,*
- NB her acquaintance with Scripture, her humility, her gratitude, her understanding of God's works, and her grasp of God's promises (Ryle)
 - She sounds similar to Hannah in 1 Sam. 2
- a) Praise regarding **God's concern for her individually**—1:46-50
- i) God's greatness and tender concern are highlighted—1:46-49a
 - (1) She emphasizes His sovereignty
 - (a) *"My soul declares the greatness of the Lord,*
 - (b) ⁴⁷ *and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,*
 - (2) Why?—1:48-49a
 - (a) Why? # 1—1:48 ⁴⁸ *because He has paid careful attention to the humble (social) state of His bonds slave; (cf. 1:38; she viewed herself as one of the little people)*
 - (i) *for behold, from now on all generations will consider me favored,*
 - 1. Things will be different in her life because of God's gracious work. Cf. 1:42
 - (b) Why? # 2—1:49a ⁴⁹ *because He who is magnificently impressive has done great things for me,*
 - ii) God's uniqueness and mercy are highlighted—1:49b-50
 - (1) God's uniqueness—1:49b *and holy is His name. (cf. Ps. 111:9)*
 - (2) God's loyal mercy—1:50 ⁵⁰ *And His mercy is from generation to generation on those who are living in awe of Him.*
 - b) Praise regarding **God's great works universally**—1:51-55
 - i) To all people generally—1:51-53
 - (1) He is all-powerful—⁵¹ *He has done a mighty deed with His arm;*
 - (2) He rejects the proud—*He has dispersed/scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart.*
 - (3) He levels the social playing field—⁵² *He has pulled down the mighty from their thrones, and has elevated the humble.*
 - (4) He levels the possessions playing field—⁵³ *He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. (cf. Ps. 107:9)*
 - ii) To Israel specifically—1:54-55
 - (1) He is faithful to His covenant with Abraham—⁵⁴ *He has helped His servant Israel,*
 - (2) On what basis? *because He remembered His mercy, ⁵⁵ just as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to His descendants unto the Age."*
 - (a) Cf. Gen. 12:1-3; 17:1-27
 - (b) God promised Abraham: a seed/descendants, a definite land with definite boundaries, and a blessing.
 - (3) God's actions are motivated by His loyal kindness, which in turn is rooted in His covenant with Abraham. We eagerly await the complete fulfillment of this covenant in the future.

4) **Mary's extended time with Elizabeth—1:56** ⁵⁶ *And Mary ...*

- a) *remained with her about three months,*

- i) She apparently stayed until John was born, perhaps to assist Elizabeth.
- ii) This assures that she will have no sexual contact with Joseph during the time she conceives the Messiah.
- b) *and returned to her home* (to Nazareth).
 - i) She does not go to Joseph's home. They may be betrothed, but they are not living together.

5) Things we need to remember:

- a) Young women CAN have their focus on God and not themselves.
- b) Young women CAN immerse themselves in the Word of God.
- c) Whether a God-fearer from Israel or any other nation, we know that God will vindicate His promise to His chosen nation and to those who live in awe of Him. His promises will be fulfilled.
 - i) Christmas is a time to celebrate the fulfillment of His promise to send His Chosen One who would fulfill the Father's purpose in providing Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world.
 - ii) If God fulfills this greater promise, He will certainly fulfill His promises pertaining to His children as well.