

WOMEN IN CHRIST'S ANCESTRY (PART 2)

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We continue to study about the five women mentioned in the genealogy of Christ recorded in Matthew 1:1-16. We previously examined what the scriptures record about the first two women mentioned in the Lord's paternal ancestry, Tamar (Matt 1:3), and Rahab (Matt 1:5). We saw that four people's sins (Er, Onan, Judah, and Tamar) resulted in Tamar's place in Christ's ancestry. In contrast, Ruth's faith and obedience to God is what caused the former harlot to become a child of God and an ancestor of Christ. Now we see the lessons of the other three women: Ruth (Matt 1:5), Bathsheba (Matt 1:6), and Mary (Matt 1:16).

Ruth

Ruth's place in the ancestry of Christ is entirely due to her faith and obedience to God. She is very similar to Rahab in this regard, especially as she too was not even an Israelite by birth. Ruth was a woman of Moab (Ruth 1:4). She married Mahlon (Ruth 4:10), who was the son of Elimelech, an Israelite of the tribe of Ephraim from the city of Bethlehem (Ruth 1:1-2). Mahlon's mother was Naomi (Ruth 1:2). Elimelech was a relative of Boaz (Ruth 2:1), a man of the tribe of Judah, and descendant of Rahab (Ruth 4:18-21; Matt 1:4-5). Elimelech had taken his family to sojourn in Moab due to severe famine in Israel (Ruth 1:1). Mahlon married Ruth the Moabitess, and the other son of Elimelech and Naomi, Chilion, married a Moabitess named Orpah (Ruth 1:2-4). Naomi's husband and both her sons died while they were in Moab (Ruth 1:3,5). Naomi told her two daughters-in-law to return to their families as she was set to return home to Bethlehem, having heard that the famine there had ended (Ruth 1:6-13). Orpah returned to her home (Ruth 1:14), and Naomi said, to Ruth, "And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law" (Ruth 1:15). Ruth understood that to remain in the land of Moab would be to remain in a land that worshiped idols, not the true and living God. Therefore, she replied to Naomi, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: *thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God*: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me" (Ruth 1:16-17). She left the only land she ever knew, and departed for a land she had never been to, leaving behind all her family, in order to be able to serve God. Boaz met Ruth and married her, and they became the great-grandparents of King David by their son Obed. The Book of Ruth closes with the lineage from Pharez, the son of Judah and Tamar (the first of the five women mentioned in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1:1-16), through David the son of Jesse (Ruth 4:18-22). This is the same lineage found in Matthew 1:3-6. If Ruth had not believed in God, and been willing to forsake everything in order to serve Him, she would have never been an ancestor of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Bathsheba

Bathsheba was the daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam 11:3).

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(continued)

While her husband was away fighting battles with the army of Israel, King David remained in Jerusalem, and from his rooftop saw Bathsheba bathing (2 Sam 11:1-2). Bathsheba was a very beautiful woman (2 Sam 11:2). David desired her, and, even after being informed that she was married to Uriah, he had her brought to him and committed adultery (2 Sam 11:3-4). Bathsheba became pregnant with David's child (2 Sam 11:5).

To conceal the matter, David had Uriah sent home from battle, but he would not go to his house while his fellow soldiers were camping in open fields (2 Sam 11:6-11). David got Uriah drunk the next day, but he still refused to go home (2 Sam 11:12-13). David then had Uriah sent to the very front of the hottest battle, and Uriah was killed (2 Sam 11:14-25). Bathsheba mourned her dead husband, and then David married her, and she bore him a son (2 Sam 11:26-27). "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord" (2 Sam 11:27). God sent Nathan the prophet to David and made him consider what he had done (2 Sam 12:1-12). David repented of all the sins he had committed in this matter (2 Sam 12:13; Psa 32:1-5; Psa 51). In fact, 1 Kings 15:5 summarizes the remarkable life of this man after God's own heart: "*David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.*" The first son that Bathsheba bore to David died, as part of God's punishment of David for his sins (2 Sam 12:14-23). After that, Bathsheba conceived and bore David another son, Solomon (2 Sam 12:24). Solomon became king of Israel after David, and Jesus Christ descended through that royal line as the rightful heir of the throne of David. As with Tamar, it was a circumstance involving sin that resulted in Bathsheba becoming part of Christ's ancestry. And her mention in Matthew 1:6 includes the fact that she had first been Uriah's wife: "*And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Uriah.*"

Mary

The last of the five women included in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1:1-16 is Mary, the mother of the Lord. Matthew 1:16 says, "*And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ*" (Matt 1:16). Mary was specifically chosen by God to be Christ's mother, because of her righteousness. God sent the angel Gabriel "unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, *Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women*" (Luke 1:26-28). The fact that Mary was highly favored of the Lord and blessed among women does not authorize or justify exalting her to divine status, worshiping her, praying to her, or seeking her as an intercessor or mediator. She was a righteous woman who was chosen to be Christ's mother on this earth (Matt 1:16-25; Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20). She herself became one of Christ's faithful disciples (Acts 1:13-15).