

Freddy Fritz / General

Bloodlines: The Genealogy of Jesus / Genealogy; Genealogy of Jesus Christ; Family; Sin; Redemption / Matthew 1:1-17

In Matthew 1:1-17, we learn that the genealogy of Jesus Christ included women.

Introduction

One of the subjects I studied in high school was woodwork. During the first three years, we learned basic carpentry skills. In my fourth year, we could choose between lathe work or carving. I tried my hand at carving.

In our final year, we had to produce a piece of furniture. I made a sideboard cabinet that my Dad used in his home for several decades.

During my fourth year, I discovered that I enjoyed carving. I learned some rudimentary basics of carving and made a few small pieces. Sadly, they were all stolen during the exhibit at the end of the year.

Not long after that time, my parents traveled back to my Dad's homeland of Austria. I had read and seen pictures of well-known people and nobility that had family crests. I thought that it would be wonderful to carve our family crest. So, I asked my Dad to bring back a picture or a photo or an image of our Fritz family crest.

About a month later, my parents returned from their trip. Excitedly, I asked my Dad, "So, do you have a picture of our family crest?"

"No, Freddy," said my Dad, "I am sorry to tell you that our family does not have a crest. We do not come from a line of nobility but from a family of peasants."

You can imagine my disappointment that our family tree does not have a line of nobles but rather a line of peasants.

Matthew began his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Most people just skim over the list of names. But it is a fascinating list of names. The first two

names on the list—David and Abraham—are revered men in the genealogy of Jesus.

But some other names in the genealogy of Jesus are shocking.

Today, we are going to notice some of those shocking names in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

Scripture

Let's read [Matthew 1:1-17](#):

¹ The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

² Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³ and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴ and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵ and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, ⁷ and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, ⁸ and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, ⁹ and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, ¹⁰ and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, ¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

¹² And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³ and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, ¹⁴ and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, ¹⁵ and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

Lesson

In [Matthew 1:1-17](#), we learn that the genealogy of Jesus Christ included women.

Let's use the following outline:

1. The Gospel Turns Things Upside Down
2. The Gospel Is Not Good Advice But Good News

I. The Gospel Turns Things Upside Down

First, notice that the gospel turns things upside down.

Matthew began his Gospel with these words in [Matthew 1:1](#), "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

In verse 17, Matthew concluded the genealogy of Jesus Christ with this summary, "So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations."

There are 42 generations of names listed in this genealogy. However, sometimes names are skipped over and omitted.

Nevertheless, there are all kinds of people listed in this genealogy, some righteous and others not so righteous.

What I do want you to notice, however, is that there are four women listed in the genealogy before we get to Mary, the mother of Jesus, who is listed in verse 16.

Let's briefly look at each of the four women.

The first woman in the genealogy of Jesus is Tamar. We read in verse 3, "... and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar." We learn about Tamar in [Genesis 38](#). One of Jacob's sons was Judah. Judah had a son that he named Er. When Er

was a man his father Judah found him a wife from the Canaanites named Tamar. But because of Er's wickedness, the Lord put Er to death. Judah told his second son Onan to have a child by Tamar, which was the custom in those days. Onan wouldn't and because of his wickedness, the Lord put Onan to death as well. Judah told Tamar to wait until his other son Shelah grew up to become her husband. But Judah did not give her to Tamar. Eventually, Tamar tricked her father-in-law into an intimate encounter. She got pregnant with twin boys named Perez and Zerah. And Perez was enfolded in the genealogy of Jesus.

The second woman in the genealogy of Jesus is Rahab. We read in verse 5a, "... and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab." We learn about Rahab in [Joshua 2](#) and [Joshua 6](#) when the people of God entered the promised land. Rahab was a Canaanite prostitute who lived in the city of Jericho. She hid two of Joshua's spies and prevented their capture. She did so because she had come to believe that the Lord was the true and living God. In exchange for her protection, Rahab and her family were spared from death and destruction when the city of Jericho fell. She became part of the people of God and married Salmon and had a child named Boaz, who became the husband of Ruth.

The third woman in the genealogy of Jesus is Ruth. We read in verse 5b, "... and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth." We learn about Ruth in the book of Ruth. There we read about a man named Elimelech and his wife Naomi who left Israel and went to Moab when there was a famine in Israel. Elimelech and Naomi had two sons named Mahlon and Chilion. The sons each married a Moabite girl. Their names were Orpah and Ruth. Eventually, all the men died. Naomi decided to go back to Israel because there was food in Israel. Orpah remained in Moab but Ruth went to Israel with Naomi. That is where Ruth met Boaz. They married and had a son named Obed. Their grandson was Jesse. And their great-grandson was David the king.

And the fourth woman in the genealogy of Jesus is Bathsheba. We read in verse 6, "... and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah." We learn about Bathsheba in [2 Samuel 11](#). David was king in Jerusalem at this time. He had sent his army to battle against the Ammonites. Late one afternoon, when David was walking on the roof of his house, he saw a very beautiful woman bathing. Her name was Bathsheba and she was the wife of Uriah the Hittite. She was likely a Hittite as well. In any event, David called for her and seduced her. She became pregnant. When David

learned of her pregnancy, he tried to cover up his sin by recalling Uriah from the frontline of battle. But Uriah was a righteous man and would not go home to his wife while his fellow soldiers were still on the battlefield. So, David arranged for him to be killed in action, which did happen. Then David took Bathsheba as his wife. The child from that union died at birth. Another child was given to David and Bathsheba that was named Solomon. And it was Solomon that was enfolded in the genealogy of Jesus.

Now, several points help us understand how the gospel turns things upside down.

A. There Are No Credentials in the Genealogy of Jesus Christ.

First, there are no credentials in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

In almost every setting in almost every culture, your credentials are extremely important. We call this a resume. It tells where you studied and what degrees or licenses you have. It tells about your work experience. It tells about the people under whom you have studied or apprenticed. It tells what you have done. And it also lists references.

If you want a position, a job, or an interview, you hand your resume to a person. They look at it and, if it is impressive, they will say that they want to interview you further. That is how you get along in the world today.

However, in ancient times, your resume did not count for much. It was your genealogy that was all-important. That is why such meticulous records were kept about one's genealogy.

In ancient times, if you wanted a position, you would point to your genealogy that would tell of your ancestors, who they were, who your family was, their place in society, and their character. So, your genealogy was vitally important.

That is why Matthew started his Gospel with a genealogy. He wanted people to know who Jesus' ancestors were.

And that brings us to our second point, and this is where the shock comes in.

B. There Are Women in The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

Second, there are women in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

It was not common to put women in a genealogy. Normally, one listed one's fathers rather than one's mothers. That was a patriarchal society and men rather than women were normally listed in the family tree.

The other Gospel author that listed a genealogy was Luke. Luke's genealogy works from Jesus to "Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God" ([Luke 3:38](#)). Interestingly, there are no women listed in Luke's genealogy of Jesus.

So, why did Matthew include women in the genealogy of Jesus? Matthew deliberately included four women—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba in the genealogy of Jesus. There was an important reason for their inclusion.

C. There Are Outsiders in the Genealogy of Jesus Christ

And third, there are outsiders in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

There are several ways in which there are outsiders in the genealogy of Jesus. I want to focus my comments here just on the women in the genealogy of Jesus.

First, there were gender outsiders. Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba are each mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus. Genealogies in those days almost always consisted of men only. So, it was highly unusual to have women listed in the genealogy.

Second, there were ethnic outsiders. Tamar and Rahab were Canaanites. Ruth was a Moabite. And Bathsheba was likely a Hittite. None of these women were descended from one of the ancient twelve sons of Jacob. So, it should be very clear that Jesus himself was not ethnically "pure." There were all kinds of Gentile blood mixed into the blood of his ancestors.

And third, there were moral outsiders. Tamar tricked her father-in-law into a sexual relationship with her. Rahab was a professional prostitute. There is no record that Ruth was immoral. And Bathsheba was involved in a sexual

relationship with David. It could be argued that she was overpowered by David's position and that she had no voice in the matter.

Now, here is where the moral outsider gets interesting. You noticed that I keep calling the fourth woman by her name, Bathsheba. However, that is not how she is listed in Matthew's Gospel. This is how Matthew recorded her in the genealogy of Jesus in verse 6b, "And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah." Matthew called her "the wife of Uriah" and not "Bathsheba." At least three times in the Bible, Bathsheba is not called "Bathsheba" but rather "the wife of Uriah." Why?

This was not a slam against Bathsheba but a slam against King David. You noticed that David's name was at the head of the list of the genealogy of Jesus. If you wanted one name on your genealogy, it was David, a man after God's own heart (see [Acts 13:22](#)).

David was the ultimate insider. He was a male. He was descended from Judah. He was chosen by God himself to become king over his people. He was the greatest king in the history of the people of God. David was definitely the first person you would like to have on your family tree.

But Matthew masterfully did not write "Bathsheba" but "the wife of Uriah." He did that because he wanted his readers to remember the story that brought Bathsheba into the family tree. She was seduced by David. David then had her husband murdered.

David was no better than any of these outsiders. His sins were undoubtedly greater than any of these women in the genealogy.

Pastor Tim Keller makes an astute observation when he says, "Matthew is saying David the king had no more of a right to go into the presence of a holy God than a prostitute. Yes, immoral, irreligious people don't deserve fullness, God's blessing, or life with God forever, but neither do religious, moral people" (Timothy J. Keller, "The Mothers of Jesus," in *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive, 2014–2015* [New York: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2014], [Mt 1:1–17](#)).

Matthew wanted his readers to understand that the gospel turns things upside down. And one way he indicated that was by including these four women in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

II. The Gospel Is Not Good Advice But Good News

And second, the gospel is not good advice but good news.

Advice is something that is offered and you can take or leave.

When I was diagnosed with prostate cancer several years ago, I was offered a lot of advice. It was all well-meaning. Don't eat this food. Don't drink this beverage. Do take this medicine. Get surgery. Don't get surgery but get radiation instead. It was all a bit overwhelming. In the end, it was still up to me to choose what I wanted to do based on all of the advice I had received.

On the other hand, good news is about something that has already happened.

In 1939, Germany invaded Poland. There were rumors that Hitler wanted to conquer Europe. At first, it was unbelievable. Soon, people realized that they had better prepare for war. And prepare they did, and a good thing too. Because war did come. A very bloody war. At that point, all kinds of advice was given about how to prepare for war, how to fight the war, and so on.

But, eventually, in 1945, the war ended. And the news—the good news—was announced all over the world. There was nothing that people had to do to prepare for the news. They simply had to receive it and believe.

And that is the difference between advice and the gospel.

Every religion in the world is advice. They tell their adherents, "This is what you must do to get right with God." And they give their advice: pray so many times a day; or, go to worship so you can appease God; or follow these laws; and so on. All the advice tells people what they must do to please God and earn their way to heaven.

Christianity is completely different. It is good news. It is the good news that the battle against sin and Satan has been won. Jesus came to earth from heaven. He lived a perfect and righteous life. He went to the cross and died there to pay the penalty for all our sins. He defeated sin on the cross. He defeated Satan on the cross. He won the victory by his life and death. And we know that to be true because three days after his crucifixion, death, and burial, God the Father raised him back to life again.

And that, dear friends, is good news.

So, the gospel is not good advice but good news.

Conclusion

Since the genealogy of Jesus Christ included all kinds of people, let us reach out to all kinds of people with the good news of the gospel.

Can you see that the family tree of Jesus contained all kinds of people who were considered outsiders? The family tree shows us that the only way to relate to God is by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus alone. So many people in Jesus' family tree had significant issues that would make one consider them outsiders. They were all equally lost. But God brought them all into Jesus' family tree.

So, first, let me address you who may feel that you may not belong in God's family. Women and men are both in the family tree of Jesus. Black and white are both in the family tree of Jesus. The prostitute and the king are both in the family tree of Jesus. It doesn't matter who you are or what you have done. You can belong to the family of God. Ask God right now to give you faith in Jesus. And ask him to enable you to turn from your sin.

And second, most of you know that you already belong to Jesus. Let me encourage you to reach out to family and friends and neighbors and colleagues and strangers with the good news that Jesus has won the victory over sin and Satan. Tell them that Jesus wants them to be in his family too. Amen.