

# SoulManna

## Women of Grace in Christ's Genealogy

"Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; <sup>3</sup> And Judas begat Phares and Zara of **Thamar**; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; <sup>4</sup> And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; <sup>5</sup> And Salmon begat Booz of **Rachab**; and Booz begat Obed of **Ruth**; and Obed begat Jesse; <sup>6</sup> And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat *Solomon* of her *that had been the wife of Urias* . . . <sup>16</sup> And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of **Mary**, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." **Matthew 1:2-6, 16**

### Looking at the Word:

Out of mankind's flawed and stony clay, God molds a masterpiece. Tamar (1:3) is the first of five women mentioned in the genealogy of Christ. The other three women, listed by name, are Rahab (1:5), Ruth (1:5), and Mary (1:16). The fifth woman, Bathsheba is not mentioned by name but rather as the wife of Uriah (1:6). The inclusion of these women in the genealogy of Christ is remarkable for the following reasons:

- ❖ **Lineage to a King's Throne:** The lineage to the throne was traced from father to son. In a patriarchal culture which practiced polygamy, a man's mother was not considered relevant when discussing his claim to the throne, yet five times in Matthew's genealogy a woman is given prominence. The inclusion of women in the genealogy may have been intended by the Holy Spirit to remind the reader of the first messianic promise (called the *protoevangelium*) found in Genesis 3:15 which speaks of the woman's seed (her offspring) crushing the head of the serpent. Today, both men and women alike enjoy salvation blessings won by Christ at the cross (Galatians 3:28).
- ❖ **Lineage to a Jewish Throne:** At the time of Christ the house of Herod, which ruled over Palestine, was not Jewish but of Idumaeen ancestry. The sons of Herod ruled their respective territories under the approval of Caesar and backed by the threat of Roman legions. Because of this, Herod and his sons were hated by the Jewish people. It was the hope of many that a true son of David could once more sit enthroned in Jerusalem rekindling the past glories of the kingdom. It seems strange that of the women listed in Christ's genealogy; at least three were gentiles (Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth). In addition, Bathsheba, if not also a gentile herself, was married to a gentile (Uriah the Hittite). God's injunction in Deuteronomy 23:3 against the offspring of a Moabite ever being allowed to join the assembly of the Lord would have special significance to Ruth (a Moabitess). While it may seem strange to include gentiles in the genealogy of a Jewish king, the prophets of Israel had reminded the nation that her coming Messiah would not only fulfill covenantal promise to the Jewish people but would also bring the blessings of God to all the nations of the world (Isaiah 11:10; 42:6; 49:6; Jeremiah 16:19; Malachi 1:11).
- ❖ **Lineage to a Messianic Throne:** Jesus' claim was not just that he was **a son** of David but that he was **the son** of David, the long-awaited Messiah and fulfillment of prophetic promise. The Messiah (from the Hebrew *meshiach*) and Christ (from the Greek *christos*) both mean "the anointed one." The Messiah was thought to be God's unique representative among men. The Messiah was anointed of God and set apart for His service. All the women chosen to grace Matthew's genealogical record were marked by two common traits. First, each of these women was stained by a public perception of gross sexual immorality. Second, each of these women put her faith into action, and thus secured for herself and her children inclusion within God's covenant blessing. a) Tamar: She enticed Judah into an incestuous relationship in order to fulfill her right of levirate marriage (Genesis 38:1-30). b) Rahab: She was a prostitute in Jericho but risked her life to save the spies, choosing to identify herself with the children of Israel (Joshua 2:5; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25-26). c) Ruth: She was virtuous but her Moabite roots came out of an incestuous relationship of Lot with his daughters. She followed Naomi, her mother-in-law, back into Judah choosing the people of God rather than staying with her own family (Ruth 1:16-17). d) Bathsheba: She committed adultery with David and later pressed David to fulfill his promise to Solomon, making him heir to the throne (2 Samuel 11:1-26; 1 Kings 1:5-31). e) Mary: Joseph's difficulty in believing the pregnant Mary's claims of virginity nearly caused him to divorce his intended wife-to-be (Matthew 1:18-25). This cloud of perceived immorality would resurface in Jesus' later ministry. In spite of the prospects of public disparagement, Mary humbly accepted this by faith that God's will be fulfilled.

### Meditation and Application:

The inclusion of these women in the line of Christ is a reminder to us that our Messiah was set apart to fulfill God's mission of saving lost mankind and not just the Jew (Matthew 1:21; Mark 10:45; Luke 19:10). The inclusion of these women also reminds us that human perfection is not needed before God can be glorified in the life and ministry of a believer. From the clay of sinners God brought forth a Savior. Each of these women was born into sin and knew the failure and heartache which accompanies it—but each was also a trophy of God's grace and honored by the Lord for her faith. Human weakness has ever been the backdrop for showcasing the transformational power of God's grace. It is not in our strength but in our weakness that we discover the sufficiency of God's grace (2 Corinthians 12:9). The Lord's commendation and crown of victory is never won without difficulty. It is not to him who walks without obstacles, weaknesses, or failures—but to him who overcomes is the promise given. © 2009, SoulManna – All rights reserved