

“Selected Studies in the Gospels”
The Genealogy of Yeshua, Part 1
Matthew 1:1-17/Luke 3:23-38

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A. Matthew’s genealogy—Luke’s genealogy

B. The purpose of Matthew’s genealogy.¹

1. Prove that Yeshua is the legitimate Messiah, a descendant of the royal Davidic family.
2. Trace Yeshua's descent back to the patriarch Abraham, with whom God made a covenant which culminated with Yeshua.
3. Refute the slanderous accusations, apparently widespread, that Yeshua’s birth was illegitimate due to his mother’s improper behavior.

C. The genealogy includes four women, in addition to Miriam (Mary).

1. Tamar (v.3)
 - a. Genesis 38:24-30
 - b. Genesis Rabba 85:14 (cf., Ruth Rabba 4:6)
 - c. Exodus Rabba 30:3
תַּלְדָּת , תַּלְדוֹת , תוֹלְדוֹת , תוֹלְדוֹת 1)
2. Rahab (v.5)
 - a. Numbers Rabbah 3:2
 - b. Song of Songs Rabbah 6:2 § 3
 - c. Hebrews 11:30-31
 - d. James 2:25
3. Ruth (v.5)
 - a. The rabbinic solution to the problem of Ruth’s legitimacy.
 - b. Ruth Rabba 4:6
 - c. Ruth Rabba 6:1
 - d. Ruth 1:1ff
4. “Uriah’s wife” i.e., Bathsheba (v.6)
 - a. Ecclesiastes Rabba 4.1
 - b. 1Kings 1:1ff
5. Observations
 - a. The four women
 - 1) Tamar (1:3)
—The daughter-in-law of Judah, who played the harlot and bore twins to her father-in-law (Gen. 38:1ff).

2) Rahab (1:5)

—A prostitute by profession, she became the mother of Boaz, ancestor of King David (Josh. 2:1ff., Ruth 4:21-22).

3) Ruth (1:5)

—A Moabite, whose background disqualified her from membership in the Jewish community (according to Deut. 23:4), was an ancestress of King David (Ruth 4:21-22).

4) “Uriah’s wife” i.e., Bathsheba (v.6)

—Even though she committed adultery with David (2Sam. 11), she bore him the legitimate heir to the throne, Solomon.

b. The reason that they are included

- 1) The women “are cited presumably as a protest against the vilification of (Miriam) and the cloud over the birth of (Yeshua).”²
- 2) Three of the four were Gentiles (i.e., Tamar, Rahab and Ruth), and perhaps Bath-sheba was as well.
 - a) This demonstrates God’s heart for the Gentile as well as the Jew.
 - b) Genesis 18:18
Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, *and all nations on earth will be blessed through him.*
- 3) Three of the four were involved in gross sexual sin.
 - a) Yeshua is introduced (in 1:21) as the one who “will save his people from their sins.”
- 4) All four reveal something of the strange and unexpected workings of the Lord in preparation for the Messiah and that as such they point to Mary’s unexpected but providential conception of Yeshua.
- 5) Each one was committed to the promises of God, and to the role that God called them to play in the larger “scheme of things.”

¹ Samuel Tobias Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament* (KTAV Publishing House/Anti-Defamation League of B’nai Brith, 1987), p. 2

² *Ibid.*, p. 2.