

God With Us

The Miracle of Christmas

J. MacArthur, Jr.

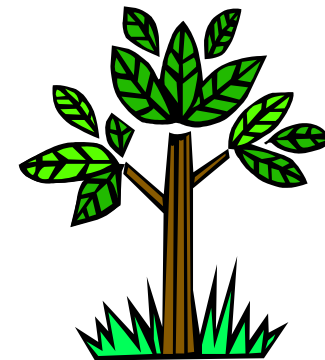
Introduction



- Influence of the world has eaten away at the true reason and meaning of Christmas
- “God With Us” is about the birth of Christ, its about Immanuel, God with us to save us, to redeem us, to enliven us, to bless us
- The First Tree Lighting – Pg. 37

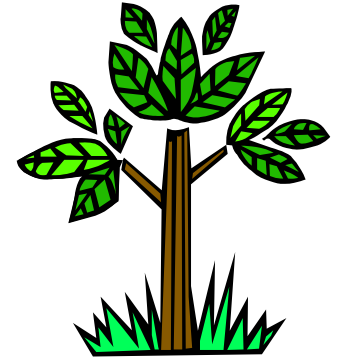
- Objectives the next 2 weeks:
 - Not to focus on what’s wrong
 - Experience the true meaning of Christmas
 - Experience God with us
 - Discuss meaningful ways to celebrate Christmas
 - “Next Time It Will Be Different – Pg. 134

Knots on the Family Tree



- Does anyone skip the genealogy when you read the Christmas story / gospels? Why?
- Jesus genealogy contains some interesting names which we will be investigating
- Are there interesting names, naming traditions or stories in your family genealogy or family history?

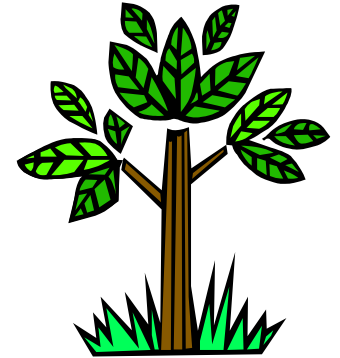
Knots on the Family Tree



A Chronicle of God's Grace

- Reasons to include a genealogy in Scripture
- Trace the royal line of Israel
- Lineage of Judah's Kings
 - God's promise was David's offspring would bring forth the savior/deliverer of Israel and reign as King 2Sam 7:16
 - Claimants to the throne had to show they were a genealogical descendent from King David
- Outline God's dealing with His people – His ordering of events
- Show man's sin, rebellion fail to thwart God's grace

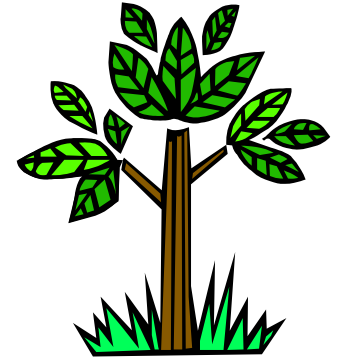
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A Chronicle of God's Grace

- Essential for conducting business:
- Laws governing buying/selling property kept boundaries intact
- Land couldn't be sold across tribal lines
- A person's genealogy required to validate sale of property

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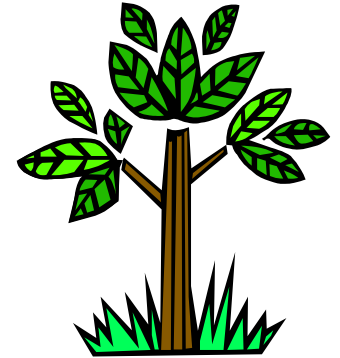
A Chronicle of God's Grace (cont'd)

- Reasons to include a genealogy in Scripture (cont'd)
 - The priesthood depended on genealogies
 - Priests had to be descendants of Levi
 - After Babylonian captivity genealogies used to determine priests that had legitimate claim to office

- Genealogies were carefully recorded and guarded
 - Important ones preserved in scripture.
 - Practiced for centuries through the time of Christ.

- We'll be looking at Gospel of Matthew but Gospel of Luke starts with Joseph and Mary going down to register according to their ancestral heritage in their ancestral home, Bethlehem (Luke 2:3-4)

Knots on the Family Tree

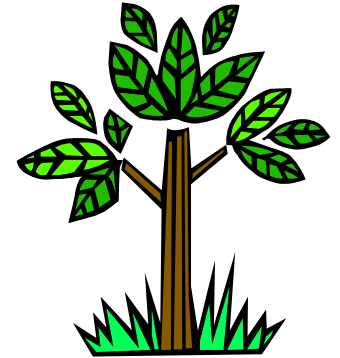


A Look at Apparent Contradiction

- Some see Matthew 1:1-17* and Luke 3:23-38 as contradictory:
- Matthew starts with Abraham, follows through David to Jesus via Joseph's family. (Jesus fully God)
- Luke starts with Jesus and outlines genealogy of Mary's family back through David to Adam. (Jesus fully man)
- Matthew refers to Joseph as "husband of Mary", not father of Jesus (Matthew 1:16) to emphasize Jesus real father is God
- Jesus a descendant of David through Mary but legal right to rule was through the father but still true in Jesus case because he was legally Joseph's oldest son.
- Thus two necessary genealogies: Through Mary – Jesus a blood descendant of David. Through adopted father Matthew – legally in the royal line.

*Matthew's genealogy not intended to be comprehensive. He shows line of descent, not naming each generation, in some cases whole generations of names omitted.

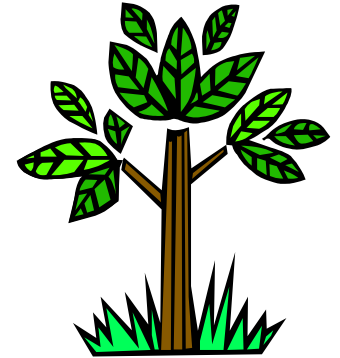
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A Tale of Four Outcast Women

- Remarkably, Matthew Records a Striking Anomaly, 4 women named in the genealogy
- Typical Hebrew genealogy excluded women
- None of the 4 women in the genealogy epitomize the kind of person we'd expect to find in the royal heritage of the King.
- All 4 women were outcasts

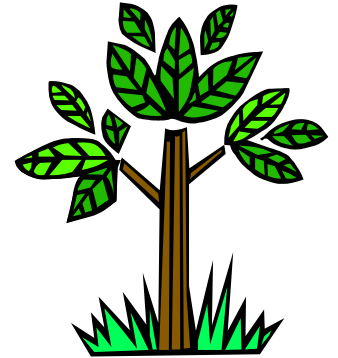
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A Tale of Four Outcast Women

- **Tamar (Mathew 1:1-3) – Genesis 38:6-19, 27-30**
- 38:7 Judah chose Tamar as wife for his firstborn son, Er who was/did evil so God struck him dead
- 38:8 Onan, Er's brother, became Tamar's husband by law
- 38:9-10 Onan refuses to father Tamar's child, he's struck dead
- 38:14-19 Tamar *disguises* self as a *prostitute* to become impregnated by her father-in-law, Judah, Judah doesn't realize its Tamar
- 38:27-30 Twin sons born: Perez (first born, carried on Messianic line), and Zerah (born second after sticking out hand)
- Nothing else said about Tamar in OT

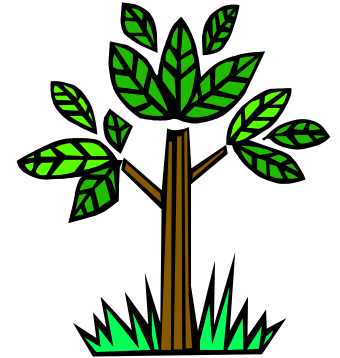
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A Tale of Four Outcast Women

- **Reasons Tamar mentioned prominently in the genealogy?**
- Demonstrates God is a God of grace
- Man's sinful behavior (incest, prostitution, etc.) cannot prevent God's sovereign will/plan from unfolding.
- **Reason Tamar's Story is Relevant to Me/Us:**
- God's grace has been manifested in the same way in my life (I was dead in my sin, God's grace has invaded my life). He's the same yesterday, today and forever.
- I can see God's sovereign hand preserving me from my sinful life style until I became a Christian according to God's sovereign plan and timing. All things are working together for good to those who are in Christ Jesus.

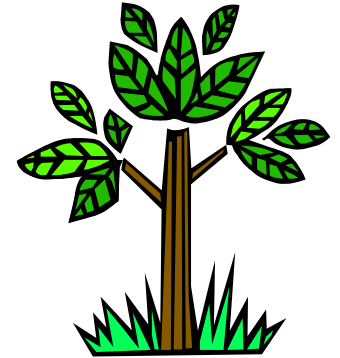
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A Tale of Four Outcast Women

- **Rahab (Mathew 1:4-5) – Joshua 2, 6:16-17, 22:25**
- 1:1 Rahab a harlot and worshipper of god of the Canaanites
- 1:1 Willing to hide Israelite spies, she lied to protect them
- 1:11 Had heard of the God of Israel (parting of Red Sea, etc.), “heart had melted away” and acknowledged/believed “Lord your God is God in heaven above and on earth beneath” – came to faith/trust in God of Israel
- 1:12-13 Therefore bargains with spies to save family and join with people of Israel
- 1:14 Agreed to spare her if she hung cord of scarlet thread from window to let attacking Israelites know which house was hers
- 6:17 They did and Rahab abandoned god of Canaanites for Jehovah
- 6:24-25 She became not only a convert to the true God but part of the Messianic line.
- Math. 1:4-5 Became great, great grandmother of King David.

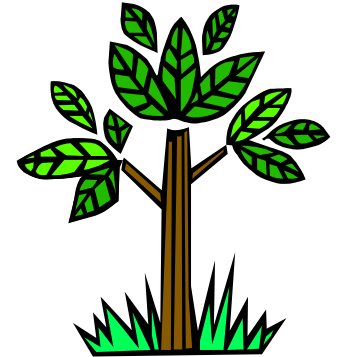
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A Tale of Four Outcast Women

- **Reasons Rahab Mentioned prominently in the genealogy?**
- Gentiles included in God's plan of salvation, everything is under/subject to God's sovereignty
- We are saved by grace through faith, not by our heritage or our traditions or our works
- **Reason Rahab's Story is Relevant to Me/Us:**
- People I pray for that may be in a situation like Rahab, can be reached and redeemed by God's saving work of grace – true hope found in trusting in God/Christ
- God can even use evil (Rahab's lies) for his purposes to bring about good. Example: Genesis 50:19-21, Joseph's brother's meant what they did in throwing him into the pit and leaving him for dead as evil but God used it for his good purposes and plans.

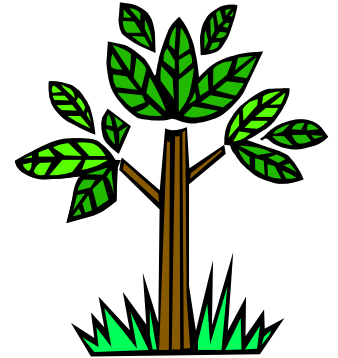
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A Tale of Four Outcast Women

- **Ruth (Mathew 1:5) – Genesis 19:30-38 (her tribe), Book of Ruth (her story)**
- A Moabite
 - Lot's daughter's get him drunk and have incestuous fornication
 - Oldest daughter gives birth to Moab, father of Moabites
 - Ruth from tribe of people who were product of incest which was repugnant to the Jewish people (Deut. 23:3)
- Gentile woman but not a prostitute or fornicator
- Married and widowed (1:1-5)
- Ruth converted (like Rahab), "Your (Namomi – her mother-in-law) people shall be my people and your God my God" - 1:16
- Ruth became wife of Boaz and great grandmother of King David, (her son was Obed father of Jesse father of David)

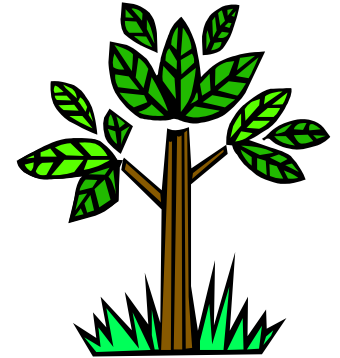
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A Tale of Four Outcast Women

- **Reasons Ruth mentioned prominently in the genealogy?**
- Embraced the faith of her mother-in-law who was a loving witness to the God of Israel. The faithful witness of God's servants is one of the ways he draws people to himself.
- Another gentile convert who found grace in the eyes of God and who became instrumental in lineage of the kingdom and the Messiah
- **Reason Ruth's Story is Relevant to Me/Us:**
- Who are the non-Christians in my life that I am witnessing to (overtly, covertly or even unknowingly)? Am I a faithful, loving witness to the world around me?
- What is my legacy to my family, lineage? Am I being a faithful witness to my family? Am I leading my children to the savior by my behavior/actions so they can lead their families to the savior?

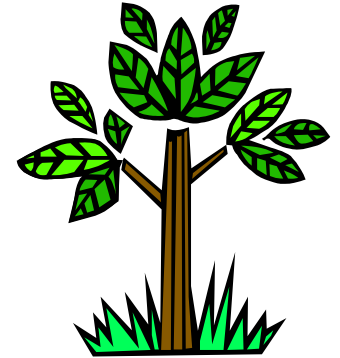
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A Tale of Four Outcast Women

- **Bathsheba (Mathew 1:6) – 2 Samuel 11**
- On rooftop bathing, observed by King David
- Brought to David by his servants and secret relationship ensues
- Not secret for long because union results in a child
- David brings back Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, from front lines to have relations with Bathsheba and cover up his sin
- Uriah a man of integrity does not lie with Bathsheba while his men are on the battle front
- When David realizes his plot won't work he sends Uriah back to front and has him ordered to front line and has men fall back so that Uriah is killed – David has murdered Uriah
- Bathsheba then taken as David's wife and child dies shortly after birth
- David confronted with his sin and repents
- Bathsheba conceives a second son, Solomon, next in messianic line

Knots on the Family Tree



A Tale of Four Outcast Women

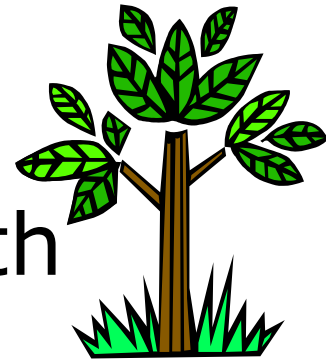
- **Reasons Bathsheba mentioned prominently in the genealogy?**
- Bathsheba and David is guilty of adultery but still part of line culminating in Jesus birth. Man's sin cannot thwart God's plans.
- Repentance is the mark of those who born of the spirit of Christ. David as "a man after God's own heart".
- **Reason Bathsheba's Story is Relevant to Me/Us:**
- Is my life marked by a repentant spirit?
- Am I acting in a presumptuous way in any area of my life and clinging to a sin that I know doesn't belong in my life as one belonging to Christ and born from above?

Knots on the Family Tree



Conclusions Surrounding Women in the Genealogy

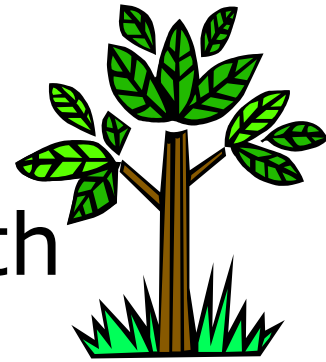
- This “Hall of Shame” is reflective of real life, Jesus genealogy is full of sinners just as life/we are full of sinners/sin
- Deliberately including these 4 women would fly in the face of the self-righteous, arrogant, pharisaic Jewish traditions.
- Bible consistently refuses to obscure what is truly important, God’s grace on display.
- Bathsheba and Rahab are memorable because of God’s mercy in forgiving them. Jesus is the friend of sinners (Luke 7:34). Came not to call the righteous but sinners (Matthew 9:13).
- Seeing genealogy as God intended strikes a blow in face of legalism, self-righteousness and human religion.
- Don’t skip over the message of grace when you read the Christmas story. God does for sinners what they can’t do for themselves (Hebrews 7:25).



Essential Nature of the Virgin Birth

Guarding What We Consider Precious (A Good New Year's Resolution)

- Any valuable(s) ever stolen due to carelessness or forgetfulness?
 - Satan tries to steal, call into question scriptural truth
 - Doubt or deny any biblical truths and you undermine the whole bible, the Virgin Birth is one such truth
- ⇒ Inerrancy of Scripture is an essential truth, belief
- "Uniqueness of Virgin Birth", Pg. 44-45

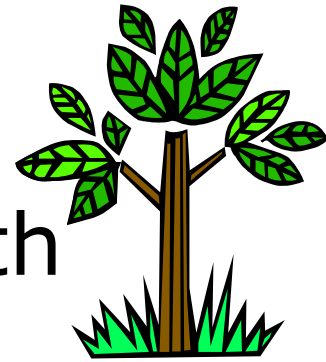


Essential Nature of the Virgin Birth

Attacks on Virgin Birth

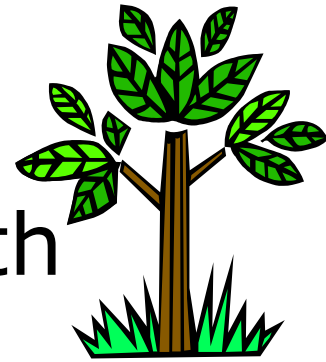
- What forms do attacks on the Virgin Birth take?
 - *Mockery*
 - *Denial*
- Jesus enemies *questioned* his parentage (John 6:42, 8:41)
- “Passover Plot” – Jesus was natural son of Mary & Joseph, therefore he wasn’t God incarnate, *a fabrication*
- *Subtle Attacks* (more dangerous):
 - Theologians who conclude it doesn’t matter one way or another
 - Counterfeits (e.g. Dionysius from Greek mythology, Tammuz from Assyrian mythology, Baal in Phoenicia, even Buddha)
 - Immaculate Conception – Mary conceived as sinless being (contradicted by Luke 11:27-28 and Mary’s need for a savior)

Essential Nature of the Virgin Birth



The OT and the Virgin Birth

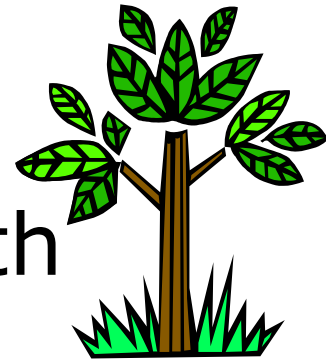
- Genesis 3:15 OT prophesied of virgin-born redeemer
 - “Her Seed” – only scriptural reference to seed of a woman
 - Every other reference “seed” is someone’s offspring, male seed, sperm
 - “Bruise on head” – Christ’s death blow to head of Satan on the cross
- Isaiah 7:14 / Math 1:23 “... a sign, virgin will be with child and bear a son”
 - Sign – meant to draw attention
 - Sign - is/was specific and unique
 - Sign – pointing to something extraordinary
- Jeremiah 31:22 Messiah will have no earthy father, birth of messiah will be like no other man



Essential Nature of the Virgin Birth

Jesus and the NT on the Virgin Birth

- **John** 1:1, 14 Jesus is/was God in human flesh, God incarnate - biblical truth hinges on this Christmas message
- John 8:41-42 Pharisees implication and **Jesus declaration about Himself** - preceded and come from God, His Father
- Matthew 22:41-46 **Jesus spoke forcefully** on being God's Son
- Matthew 16:13-17 **Apostle's/Peter's position** on Jesus son-ship, answers of masses were human responses, Peter's was a Holy Spirit based response, a supernatural response
- 1John 4:1-3 Denying Jesus is God is from the **spirit of antichrist**, denial of Virgin Birth is denial of Christ's deity
- **Science, philosophy, human religion** can't explain who Jesus is (great teacher, good moral person, etc.) -> Son of the living God



Essential Nature of the Virgin Birth

Some Conclusions on the Virgin Birth

- Virgin birth is an essential, foundational truth -> Jesus was God's own Son
- Virgin birth altered the course of all human history
- Virgin birth is a historical fact, not myth, but human explanations aren't able to reach the right conclusion
- Importance of Virgin Birth, Pg. 38