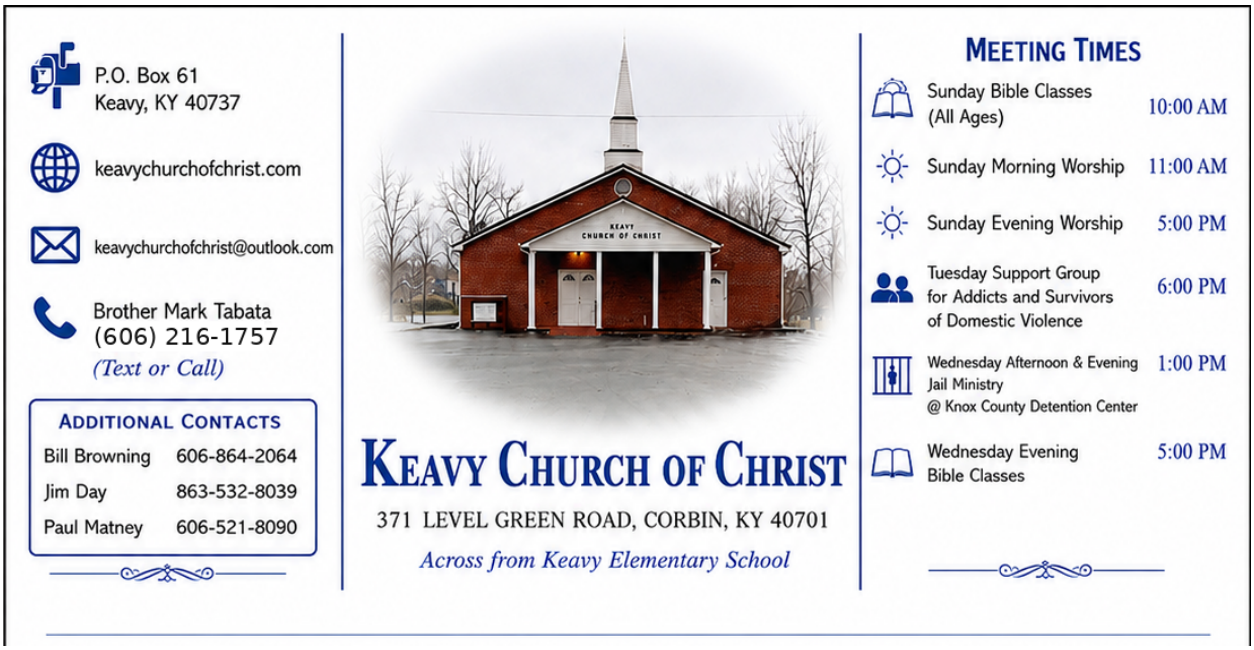

The Mothers Of Jesus

Mark Tabata (Evangelist)

(More Bible Studies Available @ marktabata.com)

There are four women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus' life (besides His mother, Mary): Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba.

Matthew 1:3-Judah begot Perez and Zerah by TAMAR, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.

Matthew 1:5-Salmon begot Boaz by RAHAB, Boaz begot Obed by RUTH, Obed begot Jesse,

Matthew 1:6-and Jesse begot David the king. David the king

begot Solomon by HER WHO HAD BEEN THE WIFE OF URIAH.

Let's consider each of these women and see what we can learn from them.

The Women And Their Stories

Tamar (Genesis 38)

Tamar was the wife of Er, the son of Judah. Sadly, Er was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and so the Lord killed him before he and Tamar conceived a son (Genesis

38:7). After this, Onan (the brother of Er) was supposed to have a child with Tamar in the name of his brother (so his brother's lineage would not die out in the land of Israel). However, he abused Tamar and refused to have a child with her.

Judah then told Tamar to leave because he had only one son left and he didn't want her marrying him (Shelah).[1] Later, Tamar pretended to be a prostitute and had sexual relations with Judah (Genesis 38:11-16). However, she had proof of what she had

done and it would likely have gotten Judah punished as well![2]. So she was not put to death (the penalty for such an incestuous relationship at that time and place). From her union with Judah, she had Perez and Zerah (Genesis 38:29-30). Perez was one of the ancestors of king David and of Jesus.

Rahab (Joshua 2, 6)

The people of Israel had been delivered from Egyptian slavery forty years earlier (the Exodus). However, after being ordered by

God to take the land of Canaan, they were terrified because of the giants that roamed the land.[3]. Refusing to enter the land of Canaan, and decided to kill Moses and Aaron, the Hebrews were stopped by God and sentenced to wander in the wilderness for forty years (Numbers 14:33-34).

When Joshua led them into the land of Canaan after the forty years, the city of Jericho was one of the largest military outposts among the peoples of Canaan. So he sent spies to check out the

land, and would have been killed- if not for Rahab. She was a prostitute and likely the "madam" of the facility.[4]

Rahab hid the spies and lied to the soldiers, sending them out another way. The Bible praises her for her faithful obedience to the Lord and she stands as an example of God's mercy on all those who repent.[5]

Hebrews 11:31-By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe,

when she had received the spies with peace.

James 2:25-Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?

Ruth (Book Of Ruth)

Ruth was the daughter in law of a woman named Naomi, who (along with her husband and sons) fled to the land of Moab during a time of great national emergency. While there, her sons intermarried

with the Gentile Moabites. Sadly, Naomi's husband and sons all died in Moab, and Naomi decided to return to the land of Israel. She encouraged her daughters in law to go back to the homes of their families, and all did-except for Ruth!

Ruth 1:16-17-But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. **17** Where

you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me."

Ruth lovingly cared for Naomi (whose faith had taken quite a hit from all the suffering that she had endured). Eventually, she married a man named Boaz.

Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11)

Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah the Hittite (who was a soldier deployed in the war with the

Philistines). King David had sexual relations with her (probably rape).[6]

2 Samuel 11:1-4-It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. **2** Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman

bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. **3** So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" **4** Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house.

Bathsheba became pregnant, and David tried to cover up the mess by making it look as if the baby was Uriah's (2 Samuel 11:6-13).

When Uriah did not go along with things as David hoped, David had him murdered (2 Samuel 11:14-27). Later, king David was rebuked by Nathan the Prophet (likely his own son), and he repented before the Lord.

Important Lessons Learned

Women Are Honored By Jesus (Even If Dishonored By People) [7] [8]

The Gospel Has Always Been About Saving Jews And Gentiles[9]

Jesus Loves Those Who Are Survivors Of Abuse

Your Past Sins Are Not Your Identity [10]

Spiritual Warfare Is Real [11]

[1] Genesis 38:11-Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die like his brothers." And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

[2] Genesis 38:18 (ERV)-Judah asked, "What do you want me to give you as proof that I will send you the goat?" Tamar answered, "Give me your seal and its string and your walking stick." Judah gave these things to her. Then Judah and Tamar had sexual relations, and she became pregnant.

Genesis 38:26-So Judah acknowledged them and said, "She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he never knew her again.

[3] Numbers 13:33-There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

4 Instead, the first thing we are told is that they go to the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stay there. Although there is a long tradition, reaching back to at least Josephus, of treating Rahab7 as an ‘innkeeper’, 8 the text is clear that she is a prostitute. Prostitution and taverns have long gone together, so it is not impossible that she is both; but the text here seems to delight in using verbs that were also employed as euphemisms for sexual activity. Thus we are told that the spies stayed at her house, but the verb used is also often translated ‘laid with’. Other verbs which can be euphemisms are also employed throughout, and since some are redundant for the purposes of the narrative it seems likely that this is done deliberately as a device to sustain interest. However, when these verbs are used as euphemisms they normally require a preposition to indicate this and these are absent. This seems to be a careful way of drawing readers into what is clearly a risky moment for the spies, while showing that nothing inappropriate actually happened. Nevertheless, the narrator is having fun in telling us that nothing happened. (David G. Firth, The Message of Joshua, 27 (Kindle Edition): IVP Academic)

[5]What are we to make of the command in Deuteronomy 7: 1–2 and 20: 16 to destroy everything that breathes? First, we need to remember that other ancient Near Eastern nations practiced hērem. "Texts from other nations at the time show that such total destruction in war was practiced, or at any rate proudly claimed, elsewhere. But we must also recognize that the language of warfare had a conventional rhetoric that liked to make absolute and universal claims about total victory and completely wiping out the enemy … which often exceeded reality on the ground." 22 Accordingly, this ancient Near Eastern rhetorical generalization allows for exaggerated language and "enables us to allow for the fact that descriptions of destruction of 'everything that lives and breathes' were not intended literally." 23…Notice the tension. This passage speaks of total destruction and showing no mercy, but then proceeds to instruct the Israelites regarding treaties and intermarriage. But if no Canaanites are going to be around anymore, then why even bother including this? Or think of Rahab the Canaanite. If strict obedience meant showing no mercy to anyone or anything, then why is the first Canaanite person we encounter allowed to convert to Yahweh, 25 spared from destruction, and shown mercy? It is no accident that her story shows up at the beginning of the conquest narrative in Joshua. Or notice this summary passage in Joshua 10…As we saw above, the "all" in this passage can't mean everyone because we know at least Rahab and her family survived. Wright observes, "the key military centres—the small fortified cities of the petty Canaanite kingdoms—were wiped out. But clearly not all the people, or anything like all the people, had in actual fact been destroyed by Joshua." 27 The conquest narratives are filled with tensions like this. 28 This rhetorical generalization is even applied to the people of Israel if they forsook Yahweh. 29 Furthermore, Old Testament scholar Gordon Wenham points out that even in the context of legitimate judgment for the Canaanites' wickedness, "it is evident that destruction of Canaanite religion is much more important than destroying the people." 30 This observation helps us transition to putting the issue of the Canaanites in its ultimate biblical context. (Sean McDowell, Jonathan Morrow, Is God Just a Human Invention? 216-217 (Kindle Edition): Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Digital Editions)

[6] Bathsheba never verbally consents;11 indeed, in the initial incident, she never speaks at all. 2 Samuel 11 has been read in a range of ways by critics: Some suggest that Bathsheba invited David's attentions or even sought to seduce him by bathing on the roof;12 others read the story as one of coercion or rape. Richard M. Davidson offers a full seventeen arguments for reading the incident as an example of "power rape"; the bulk of evidence he compiles is largely convincing.…"There are also specific linguistic clues in the text that point to rape. Jennifer Andruska analyzes the syntax of the crucial verse, 2 Samuel 11: 14, and finds key resemblances to other biblical accounts of rape, including the rape laws in Deuteronomy (Deut 22: 25, 28) and the rape of Dinah (Gen 34: 2). 27 She buttresses her reading with reference to the Bible's earliest interpreters, noting that while they fault David for his acts, they never spread the blame to Bathsheba. (Rhiannon Graybill, Texts after Terror: Rape, Sexual Violence, and the Hebrew Bible, 61-64 (Kindle Edition): New York, NY: Oxford University Press)

[7] Here are some indicators of how Jewish people in Jesus' day looked upon women .

Sooner let the words of the Law be burnt than delivered to women." (Talmud, Sotah 19a)

The world cannot exist without males and without females-happy is he whose children are males, and woe to him whose children are females. (Talmud, Kiddushin 82b)

But let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex, nor let servants be admitted to give testimony on account of the ignobility of their soul; since it is probable that they may not speak truth, either out of hope of gain, or fear of punishment. (Josephus, Antiquities 4.8.15)

Any evidence which a woman [gives] is not valid (to offer), also they are not valid to offer. This is equivalent to saying that one who is Rabbinically accounted a robber is qualified to give the same evidence as a woman. (Talmud, Rosh Hashannah 1.8)

On a side note, this also teaches us something regarding the credibility of the Apostles report regarding the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

4. The naming of specific women as the first witnesses to the empty tomb was highly embarrassing for the first-century Jews. A woman's testimony was considered as practically worthless in a court of law and was hardly ever allowed. No invented account would have named any women as the first witnesses if it wanted to gain credibility. Moreland notes, "This probably explains why the women are not mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15 and the speeches of Acts, since these speeches were evangelistic." (MoJP.S 168) Further, that Mary Magdalene (one previously possessed by demons) is named would have further eroded confidence in the report. The only possible reason for a writer including this information is that he was compelled to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." (Josh McDowell & Bill Wilson, Evidence For The Historical Jesus: A Compelling Case For His Life And His Claims, 6774-6778 (Kindle Edition); Eugene, Oregon; Harvest House Publishers)

[8] A respectable Athenian woman was not permitted to leave her house unless she was accompanied by a trustworthy male escort, commonly a slave appointed by her husband. 4 When the husband's male guests were present in his home, she was not permitted to eat or interact with them. She had to retire to her woman's quarters (gynaeceum). 5 The only woman who had some freedom was the hetaera, or mistress, who often accompanied a married man when he attended events outside his home. The hetaera was the man's companion and sexual partner. 6 The Greek wife had virtually no freedom. Even in Sparta, where women had more freedom than in Athens, men kept their wives "under lock and key," according to Plutarch, the second-century Greek biographer and essayist (Lycurgus 15.8). The poet Aristophanes has Calonice say in one of his plays, "We women can't go out just when we like. We have to wait upon our men" (Lysistrata 16–19). The average Athenian woman had the social status of a slave. 7 And according to Euripides' tragedy Medea, the wife could not divorce her husband, whereas he could divorce her anytime. Small wonder that Medea in Euripides' play lamented, "Surely, of all creatures that have life and wit, we women are of all unhappiest" (Medea 231–32). Greek discrimination against women began early in a woman's life cycle. Nonslave boys in Athens were sent to school, "taught to read and write, and educated in poetry, music and gymnastics; girls did not go to school at all," says one Greek scholar. 8 Throughout a woman's entire life she was not permitted to speak in public. Sophocles wrote, "O woman, silence is an adornment to woman" (Ajax 293); Euripides asserted, "Silence and discretion are most beautiful in woman, and remaining quiet within the house" (Heraclitus 476); and the philosopher Aristotle said, "Silence gives grace to woman" (Politics 1.1260a). But long before the days of Euripides, Sophocles, and Aristophanes, the writer Homer portrayed Telemachus rebuking his mother Penelope for speaking in the presence of men. Dogmatically, he tells her that "speech shall be for men" (Odyssey 1.359). The Athenian woman was also deemed inferior to man. Given this cultural perception, the Greek poets were fond of equating her with evil. Euripides (480–406 B.C.) has Hippolytus ask, "Why hast thou given a home beneath the sun, Zeus, unto woman, specious curse to man?" (Hippolytus 616–17). Aeschylus (525?–456 B.C.) has a chorus declare, "Evil of mind are they [women], and guileful of purpose, with impure hearts" (Suppliant Maidens 748–49). Another Greek poet, Aristophanes, has the chorus in his play Lysistrata say, "For women are a shameless set, the vilest of creatures going" (368–69). The great epic writer Homer has Agamemnon declare, "One cannot trust women" (Odyssey 11). And, of course, it was the Greek myth of Pandora's jar that blamed woman for introducing evil into the world. (Alvin J. Schmidt, How Christianity Changed the World, 98-99 (Kindle Edition, emphasis added, M.T.); Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan)

[9] This promise of a universal blessing to the "peoples" or "families" on earth is repeated in Genesis 18: 18; 22: 18; 26: 4; and 28: 14. In Genesis 12: 3 and 28: 14, the Hebrew phrase used for "all the peoples/ families" is kôl mišpĕḥôt, a phrase that is rendered in the Greek translation of the Old Testament as pasai hai phulai, meaning "all the tribes" in most contexts, but it could also stand for households, as in Joshua 7: 14.[6] Therefore, the blessing of God given to Abraham was intended to reach smaller people groups as well as the larger political groupings of nations. The latter point is made clear in the fact that in Genesis 18: 18; 22: 18; and 26: 4, the Hebrew phrase in this identical expression is kôl gôyê, "all the nations," which the Greek translated as panta ta ethnē, "all the nations." Acts 3: 25 used the Greek phrase pasai hai patriai, "all the families." A patria is a people group, which is a subgroup of a tribe or a clan. (It can also be congruent with the tribe or clan in its entirety.) But the sweep of all the evidence makes it abundantly clear that God's gift of a blessing through the instrumentality of Abraham was to be experienced by nations, clans, tribes, people groups, and individuals. It would be for every size of group, from the smallest people group to the greatest nation group. (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations, 334-340 (Kindle Edition); Grand Rapids, Michigan; Baker Academic)

10 There is another surprising dimension to it. By naming these particular women Matthew deliberately recalls for readers some of the most sordid, nasty, and immoral incidents in the Bible. For example, he says that Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar (verse 3). Recall what happened. Tamar tricked her father-in-law, Judah, into sleeping with her (even though in the full story it is also clear that Judah had been unjust to her). This was an act of incest, everywhere in the Bible against the law of God. Even though Jesus was descended from Perez not Zerah, Matthew includes both Perez and Zerah, both Judah and Tamar, to make sure we bring the whole story to mind. It was out of that dysfunctional family that the Messiah came. Remember too who Rahab was (verse 5). She was not just a Canaanite but also a prostitute. Perhaps the most interesting character and background story in the whole genealogy, however, is in verse 6. There it says that in Jesus' line is King David. You think, Now there is somebody you want in your genealogy—royalty! However, Matthew adds, in one of the great, ironic understatements of the Bible, that David was the father of Solomon, "whose mother had been Uriah's wife." If you knew nothing about the biblical history, you would find that strange. Why not just give her name? Her name was Bathsheba, but Matthew is summoning us to recall a tragic and terrible chapter of Israel's history. When David was a fugitive, running for his life from King Saul, a group of men went out into the wilderness with him, came around him, and put their lives on the line to protect him. They were called his Mighty Men. They risked everything for him, and Uriah was one of them, a friend to whom he owed his life (2 Samuel 23: 39). Yet years later, after David became king, he looked upon Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, and he wanted her. He slept with her. Then he arranged to have Uriah killed in order to marry her. He did, and one of their children was Solomon, from whom Jesus is descended. Do you know why Matthew leaves off the name "Bathsheba"? It is not a slight of Bathsheba—it is a slam of David. It was out of that dysfunctional family, and out of that deeply flawed man, that the Messiah came. Here, then, you have moral outsiders—adulterers, adulteresses, incestuous relationships, prostitutes. Indeed, we are reminded that even the prominent male ancestors—Judah and David—were moral failures. You also have cultural outsiders, racial outsiders, and gender outsiders. The Law of Moses excluded these people from the presence of God, and yet they are all publicly acknowledged as the ancestors of Jesus. (Timothy Keller, Hidden Christmas: The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ, 30-31 (Kindle Edition): Penguin Books)

[11] Tamar is the first of the four women in Matthew's genealogy (Matthew 1: 3)….Even more telling is the name of Judah's first son: Er (Hebrew: ער; ʿr). Scholars have noted that the name derives from the same Semitic root (עור, "to be awake") as "Watcher" (עיר; ʿîr).[143]...Richter draws attention to the connection: "Er's name thus derives from the same root as the name of the rebel angel watchers of 1 Enoch."[144] It is also interesting that Judah gives the disguised Tamar his signet ring as part of his pledge. Metallurgy for jewelry was one of the illicit arts taught by the Watchers....Unlike Tamar, who took the guise of a prostitute to deceive Judah, Rahab was a working prostitute (Joshua 2: 1). She is one of two (cf. Ruth) unambiguous Gentiles among the four women, as she is a native Canaanite living in Jericho (Joshua 2: 1–2)....The Enochic template element of sexual transgression is therefore quite transparent. But, as with the Tamar episode, there is a lot more to Rahab and her story than that. While it may sound odd to our ear, Rahab is also connected to the Enochic template by means of warfare, giants, and angels....But Rahab's connection to giants seems to have entered the Jewish consciousness in another way. Matthew refers to Rahab as the mother of Boaz by a man named Salmon (Matthew 1: 5). On the surface, nothing seems unusual. But Ruth 2: 1 refers to Boaz as a gibbor, one of the terms used to describe the Nephilim offspring of the sons of God in Genesis 6: 4. On its own, gibbor (plural: gibborim) does not refer to giants.[150] However, Jews in the Second Temple Period often interpreted the term that way….Orpah, Ruth's sister, was believed to be the mother of Goliath and his brothers. Some rabbis presumed Orpah had giant (Emim) blood as a Moabitess. The Babylonian Talmud (b. Sotah) reads: It is written: "And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law but Ruth clave unto her." Let the sons of the kiss (the one who kissed) fall into the hands of the one who clave unto, as it is written; "These four were born to the giant (ha-ra-fah) in Gath, and fell by the hand of David." Rabba taught, because of the four tears Orpah shed on her mother-in-law she was worthy that four mighty men would come forth out of her as her offspring....Uriah was one of David's gibborim (" mighty men"; 2 Samuel 23: 39). As we saw with Ruth, being married to a gibbor may have made certain Jewish readers suspicious of a connection to the giants. Bathsheba would therefore be another ancestor of Jesus associated with a gibbor. (Michael Heiser, Reversing Hermon: Enoch, The Watchers & The Forgotten Mission Of Jesus Christ, 1225-1496 (Kindle Edition): Crane, MO: Defender Publishing)