

# **THE JESUS GENEALOGY CONTROVERSY REVEALS THE SECRET OF THE SALVATION PLAN:**

## **The Presence of Foreign and Sinful Women in The Genealogy of Jesus Christ Based on Matthew 1:1–17**

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### **Abstract:**

This study aims to uncover the secret of the plan of salvation that lies in the genealogy of Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew 1:1–17, especially in the context of the presence of foreign and sinful women in Jesus' lineage. In this effort, the method of theological analysis was used to understand the theological significance and moral message contained in the inclusion of women such as Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Uriah's wife in the genealogy of Christ. This research delves into the historical and cultural context of Matthew's writing and analyzes how the inclusion of these women complements and illustrates the fulfillment of God's all-encompassing and gracious promise. The findings of this study will deepen understanding of the redemptive narrative woven into the genealogy of Jesus Christ, provide deep insight into the inclusiveness of God's plan of salvation, and offer an evocative testimony of His infinite love and mercy to all mankind.

**Keywords:** Genealogy, Jesus Christ, Matthew, Messiah, Salvation, Women

### **INTRODUCTION**

When God's people speak of Jesus as the Messiah, they never forget God's promise to His chosen people, the Israelites of the past. The Old Testament foretold much of the coming Messiah, who would rule over his people. The Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, is full of prophecies about the coming Messiah from among the Israelites. According to the prophecies about the Messiah in the Old Testament, Christians believe that the virgin birth of Mary Jesus in Bethlehem was the fulfillment of that prophecy. In general, for Judaism, Jesus was not the Messiah. This is a confusing question for many, including Christians. Here's the thing: The Messiah was promised to the Jews, but they did not believe that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Messiah. Jesus had been prophesied as the "Messiah or (anointed) Messiah" since Old Testament times. However, this statement is not enough to prove that Jesus is the Messiah. Referring to current problems,

this study believes that tracing the genealogy of Jesus is strong evidence that Jesus is the Messiah.<sup>1</sup>

When reading the passage of Matthew 1:1–17, it seems boring.<sup>2</sup> Why? Because from beginning to end, this passage contains only a series of names, namely genealogies from Abraham to Jesus Christ. But for someone who enjoys researching family trees, this section can be interesting and challenging and well worth learning and exploring. Matthew's Gospel is unique in its unusual introduction. It is the only work in the New Testament or early Christian literature that begins with genealogy. Certain features distinguish the list as a new presentation of the family tree. In addition, some women of various names, and even those considered dishonorable, have been previously incorporated into the male lineage through which the family tree continues.<sup>3</sup> Usually everyone wants to have a good and honorable family tree, which heightens one's ugliness in the eyes of the wider community. But Jesus' genealogy looks different because it presents the genealogy of the descendants of sinners, although it begins by stating that Jesus was a descendant of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and David, king of Israel.

To fully understand "He is the Messiah", the genealogical investigation of Jesus cannot be ignored. In Matthew 1:1–17, the author records the genealogy of Jesus, from Abraham to David to Joseph. In Jewish culture, the family tree is very important and makes it easy to know where someone is from. Even after the Jews returned from exile, genealogy played an increasingly important role in the history of the nation of Israel. Therefore, on his return from exile, Nehemiah conducted another census (Neh 7:64). This habit continued until the time of Christ. Even Matthew referred to the book he wrote as the "Genealogy of Jesus Christ". Therefore, the study argues that the genealogy of Jesus recorded in Matthew 1:1–17 confirms the belief that Jesus is the Messiah.<sup>4</sup>

When a Bible reader reads Matthew 1:1–17, the Bible asks several questions: First, why did the author of Matthew place this passage at the beginning of his writing? What was the author's specific intention to do so? Second, why are there doubtful names of

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<sup>1</sup> Fenius Gulo, "Silsilah Dalam Matius 1:1-17 Meneguhkan Yesus Sebagai Mesias," *SAINT PAUL'S REVIEW* 1, no. 1 (June 5, 2021): 46–65, accessed June 28, 2022, <https://jurnal.sttsaintpaul.ac.id/index.php/spr/article/view/5>.

<sup>2</sup> Herman C. Waetjen, "The Genealogy as the Key to the Gospel According to Matthew," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95, no. 2 (June 1976): 205, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3265237>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Janes Sinaga et al., "Silsilah Yesus Kristus, Anak Daud, Anak Abraham Berdasarkan Matius 1:1 Dari Sudut Pandang Biblical Dan Historical," *DA'AT: Jurnal Teologi Kristen* 4, no. 1 (January 31, 2023): 15–28, accessed February 26, 2023, <https://ejournal-iakn-manado.ac.id/index.php/daat/article/view/1043>.

holiness in the Savior's silification? Why are there female names among the names, which contradicts the Jewish tradition of registering genealogy? The plan of salvation revealed in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, as recorded in Matthew 1:1–17, is central to the message of Christianity. However, there is a deep nuance to explore in the context of this genealogy: the presence of foreign and sinful women in Jesus' lineage. This study aims to uncover the secrets of this plan of salvation by highlighting the role of women like Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Uriah's wife in Christ's genealogy. In the face of perhaps controversial interpretations, a theological analysis approach was chosen to open a deeper view to the theological meaning, inclusivity of the plan of salvation, and the moral message embedded in these women's stories.

This research uses qualitative methods with a theological analysis Approach through historical narrative.<sup>5</sup> The research focus analyzes the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1:1–17, with an emphasis on the role of foreign and sinful women in the lineage. The first step involves studying the theological literature to understand the theological context of the genealogy and the roles of the women mentioned. Then, textual analysis will be carried out on each narrative of the women in this genealogy to reveal the theological meaning and moral message contained. The historical and cultural context at the time of Matthew's writing will be explored to understand the reasons for these women's inclusion in the genealogy. Data from theological and contextual analysis will be integrated to produce a comprehensive interpretation of the role of foreign and sinful women in the plan of salvation reflected in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. It is hoped that this research will provide deep insight into the theological understanding and spiritual significance of this genealogy in the context of the plan of salvation.

## DISCUSSION

### **The reason for placing the genealogical list at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel**

In general, Matthew's focus conveys that Jesus did exist and became an indisputable history; the existence of Jesus atoned for the sins of all mankind and fulfilled the sins of mankind. Thus, all the prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament have been fulfilled. Matthew wanted to prove that Jesus was indeed the Jewish Messiah. So Matthew

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<sup>5</sup> Sonny Eli Zaluchu, "Metode Penelitian Di Dalam Manuskrip Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan," *Jurnal Teologi Berita Hidup* 3, no. 2 (March 25, 2021): 249–266, accessed September 5, 2021, <https://e-journal.sttberitahidup.ac.id/index.php/jbh/article/view/93>.

begins his gospel with genealogical evidence, or genealogy, of the Lord Jesus as a descendant of Abraham, David, etc. This included prophets such as Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah, who prophesied the signs of his birth and coming. About: The statement of the son of David Jesus was repeated six times by Matthew. This repetition, along with what some prophets wrote, shows that it is important and more accurate.<sup>6</sup> Matthew's Gospel answers the argument against Jesus Christ about his identity. Jesus Christ is the Messiah descended from David, and the genealogy of Jesus Christ is clearly described in the Gospel of Matthew, thus fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets. The story of Jesus as the Messiah is found in the Gospels. Matthew uses the word "Christ" 17 times.<sup>7</sup> This hints at the importance of the word.

The family tree has its own functions and interests; it is used as a means of maintaining status. This form of family tree can be used to record direct genealogy, such as from a particular ancestor. On the other hand, segmented forms are used to describe relationships between related groups or individuals.<sup>8</sup> Family trees have been important to society throughout history. Jews in New Testament times kept lists of their ancestors. Matthew 1:1-17 wants to introduce the Jewish Jesus as the Messiah who came to fulfill Old Testament prophecy. Matthew 1:1-17 is very important and meaningful with regard to Christ's earthly mission and evangelistic efforts.<sup>9</sup> There are four reasons why the author of Matthew places genealogy at the beginning of the Gospels. First, genealogy is of great interest to Jews, especially the rabbis of the time of the writer Matthew. Second, genealogy is the ideal bridge between the Old and New Testaments. Third, genealogy builds an understanding of Jesus as a real person. Fourth, theologically, the author of Matthew begins with the reality of Jesus' humanity so that we can know God through the person of Jesus.<sup>10-11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Sinaga et al., "Silsilah Yesus Kristus, Anak Daud, Anak Abraham Berdasarkan Matius 1:1 Dari Sudut Pandang Biblical Dan Historical."

<sup>7</sup> Rivhan Andry Wardhani Sabuna and Suleni Suleni, "Menjawab Pandangan Dunia Mengenai Mesias Menurut Injil Matius," *Manna Rafflesia* 8, no. 2 (2022): 358-377.

<sup>8</sup> Karin Friis Plum, "Genealogy as Theology," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 3, no. 1 (2008): 66-92, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09018328908584910>.

<sup>9</sup> Anna Mariana Poedji Christanti, "Kaitan Matius 1:1-17 Dengan Misi Kedatangan Kristus Ke Dunia Dan Upaya Penginjilan," *Jurnal Missio Cristo* 3, no. 1 (2020): 63-79, <https://ejournal.sttsgi.ac.id/index.php/jmc/article/view/10>.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Benyamin Hakh, "SILSILAH YESUS MENURUT INJIL MATIUS," *Studia Philosophica et Theologica* 9, no. 2 (2009): 214-246, accessed June 29, 2022, <https://ejournal.stftws.ac.id/index.php/spet/article/view/99>.

<sup>11</sup> Sinaga et al., "Silsilah Yesus Kristus, Anak Daud, Anak Abraham Berdasarkan Matius 1:1 Dari Sudut Pandang Biblical Dan Historical."

## Explaining God's Work of Salvation for the World

Sin has made it impossible for people to love each other sincerely, and all that remains is conflict, division between nations or tribes, racial prejudice, and mutual enmity.<sup>12</sup> Because of the destructive consequences of sin, God must act to prevent the destruction of mankind.<sup>13</sup> The Bible emphasizes that God hates sin, but God loves sinners. God's grace is greater than human sin. God's love moves God to bring man back to Him. God planned and provided the means to save mankind from the shadow of death. In the context of the New Testament, the means of salvation provided by God is through Jesus Christ as the sin offering.<sup>14</sup> Sin must be settled, and only through Jesus Christ can the problem of sin be resolved.<sup>15</sup>

## Historical Disclosure in Lineage

The Gospel of Matthew became such an important link between the Old and New Testaments that for about four hundred years, God was silent or did not deliver his message to the prophets.<sup>16</sup> Matthew's genealogy is numerically arranged and seems to be divided into three parts, each with fourteen names: fourteen generations of exile, fourteen generations from the Babylonian exile to Christ" (1:17). Each group contains 14 rosters: 14 generations from Abraham to David; 14 generations from David to the Babylonian captivity; 14 generations from the Babylonian captivity to Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:17). Matthew followed this concept by creating the structure of fourteen generations, for fourteen "correspond to the number from Aaron the high priest to the building of Solomon's temple; from the founding of the temple to the high priest Jadaiah,

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<sup>12</sup> Janes Sinaga et al., "Test of Faith When Experienced Temptation Based on James 1:2-3," *International Journal of Scientific Multidisciplinary Research* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 2023): 47–56, accessed March 1, 2023, <https://journal.formosapublisher.org/index.php/ijsmr/article/view/3200>.

<sup>13</sup> Erikson Pane et al., "Kisah Nuh Dan Terjadinya Air Bah Di Bumi: Tindakan Kasih Karunia Allah Berdasarkan Kejadian 6-9," *Manna Rafflesia* 9, no. 1 (October 31, 2022): 126–138, accessed December 25, 2022, [https://journals.sttab.ac.id/index.php/man\\_raf/article/view/269](https://journals.sttab.ac.id/index.php/man_raf/article/view/269).

<sup>14</sup> Solihin Bin Nidin et al., "Twelve Concepts of Salvation in the Bible Perspective," *International Journal Of Social And Management Studies (IJOSMAS)* 3, no. 2 (2022): 261–267, <https://www.ijosmas.org/index.php/ijosmas/article/view/187>.

<sup>15</sup> Juita Lusiana Sinambela, Janes Sinaga, and Beni Chandra Purba, "Recognition of Sins, the Way of Forgiveness and Purification Through Jesus Christ Based on 1 John 1: 9," *International Journal of Scientific Multidisciplinary Research* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 2023): 35–46, accessed March 8, 2023, <https://journal.formosapublisher.org/index.php/ijsmr/article/view/3205>.

<sup>16</sup> Theresia Endang Sulistyawati, "Tujuan Disertakannya Nama Perempuan Dalam Silsilah Yesus Berdasarkan Injil Matius 1:1-17," *KERUGMA: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 2, no. 1 (April 30, 2020): 1–15, accessed August 8, 2023, <http://www.sttiimedan.ac.id/e-journal/index.php/kerugma/article/view/15>.

the last high priest mentioned in Bible Numbers." Matthew uses the framework of fourteen generations of priests and the numerical value of the Hebrew name David to indicate the kingdom and priesthood.<sup>17</sup>

### Writing a Woman's Name in Jesus' Genealogy

The genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1:1–17 is surprising because it violates Jewish tradition of not including women's names in genealogies (cf. Gen 5:1–12; Luke 3:23–38). Women are rarely recorded in ancient Jewish genealogy, nor are there representatives of the 12 tribes of Israel. Instead, they are women with various reputations, even morally questionable ones. However, the inclusion of women's names in Jesus' genealogy stands out in the controversial Messianic expectations speculated by Jews.<sup>18</sup> It can be said that women entering the genealogy list is something special happening.<sup>19</sup>

In focusing on the Bible, feminists examine the biblical text to see how it is affected by patriarchy. The goal is to emphasize the helplessness of women just because they can have children. The social conditions under which women participate differ from those of men.<sup>20</sup> As a patriarchal society, Jews preferred sons to daughters. In Jesus' day, women were considered the root of all evil because they were considered to have a place in the field, in the well, or in the kitchen. They are not allowed to speak to men in public (except their own husbands), nor are they allowed to testify in court (because women's testimony is considered unreliable). This proves that the presence of women in social life at that time was not taken seriously, and this situation continued for generations.<sup>21</sup>

Among Jews, Judaism openly discriminates against women. Women were considered incapable of witnessing, and even women were ineligible to participate in most religious celebrations. In Jesus' day, women were obscure, insignificant beings

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<sup>17</sup> Sha Zeng, "Deliberate Numerical Discrepancy of Generation in the Genealogy of Matthew," *Journal of Religious & Theological Information* 17, no. 3 (July 3, 2018): 100–114, accessed August 3, 2023, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10477845.2018.1446709>.

<sup>18</sup> Waetjen, "The Genealogy as the Key to the Gospel According to Matthew."

<sup>19</sup> Plum, "Genealogy as Theology."

<sup>20</sup> Leonore Pietersen and Willem Fourie, "The Bible, Culture and Ethics: Trickery in the Narrative of Judah and Tamar," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 71, no. 3 (2015): 2–8, <https://hts.org.za/index.php/hts/article/view/2937>.

<sup>21</sup> Janes Sinaga and Juita Lusiana Sinambela, *Pedoman Kehidupan Kristen Dalam Kitab Perjanjian Baru* (Surabaya: Pustaka Aksara, 2022), 67.

whose lives and existence depended on the male figure.<sup>22</sup> But Jesus' presence greatly influenced the existence of women, because several times Jesus showed concern for women, such as: the Samaritan woman, the widow who raised her son, Mary who anointed Jesus' feet, Martha, the woman who was sick with bleeding and the woman who was possessed by Satan.

The way the Lord Jesus treated women was new and very different from the way the Pharisees and Sadducees treated women. Christ's redemptive work breaks down all walls of separation; every believer and every racial group has equal opportunities before him, ushering in a new era in human relations across races, genders, and social statuses. As Jesus points out throughout the Gospels, women are misunderstood people whose faith and devotion have proven to be recognized and admired and who are also called to lifelong service.<sup>23</sup>

Five women are named: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, the wife of Uriah (Bathsheba), and Mary. How can there be female names in the family tree of a Jewish family? Although an exception to mainstream tradition, the inclusion of the five women's names still raises big question marks, such as a puzzle full of secrets and certainly full of meaning. Including the names of the five women shows that Jesus' apparitions have brought great changes to people's lives. Jesus' presence further confirms God's concern for those who are suffering and oppressed.

Why did the author of Matthew prefer to write the names of these five women rather than names like Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel? Weren't Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel instrumental in continuing Israel's lineage? Who are the five women listed in Jesus' genealogy, and what are their strengths? Compared with Sarah, Rebekah, or Rachel, they are just ordinary women. In other words, although seeing this woman's life is abnormal, the five women are nothing. Through this woman, God's way seemed to take a detour in fulfilling her promises. David's point represents an anomaly in which God is at work and prepares the reader for the "divine chaos" of the "virgin birth." Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and "Uriah's wife" were indeed "perverts", "God's detours", and Mary's predecessors.<sup>24</sup>

*Strong women*

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>24</sup> Waetjen, "The Genealogy as the Key to the Gospel According to Matthew."

Another idea of including a woman's name in the family tree is to express a power, such as Rahab and Ruth. In general, strength and confidence are naturally considered masculine, while vulnerability and sensitivity are automatically considered feminine. But the accounts in the books of Joshua and Ruth show that Rahab and Ruth had extraordinary strength, fortitude, and courage.<sup>25</sup>

### *Reaching Out to Foreigners (Gentiles)*

The inclusion of Gentiles in the genealogy presents a picture of Jesus as the universal Savior. Through this mission, all nations have a place in the history of God's redemption. Somehow, in Matthew, there is the implicit difference that a Gentile Christian does not need to be Jewish first to enter his theological world.<sup>26</sup>

Not surprisingly, in Matthew, Jesus began his ministry in Galilee and other nations (Matt 4:12–17) and met his disciples there after his resurrection (Matt 26:32; 28:7, 10, 16). In Matthew, Gentiles are described as positive or praiseworthy: Magi (Matt. 2:12), centurion (Matt. 8:5–13), Queen of the South (Matt. 12:42), Gentiles (Matt 12:42), Nineveh (Matt. 12:41), and Canaanite women (Matt. 15:22–28). In fact, this inclusive concept corresponds to Genesis 12:3c ("All the nations of the earth shall be blessed to you"). These four Gentile women belong to Jesus' genealogy, which consists of the wives of Tamar, Ruth, and Uriah, claiming that "the male ancestors of the Messiah were direct descendants of Abraham."<sup>27</sup>

### ***Tamar***

Tamar was a childless widow after her husband died. The full story of Tamar's life can be found in Genesis 38, where Tamar is called a liar. The story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38 begins with Judah and his sons deceiving Tamar's heirs; however, she also deceived Judah by disguising herself as a prostitute to avenge her.<sup>28</sup> In this story, Tamar is also identified as having an affair with her father-in-law, Judah (Genesis 38:1–30). The story of Genesis 38 is disturbing. Simply put, Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law, secretly had

<sup>25</sup> Zeng, "Deliberate Numerical Discrepancy of Generation in the Genealogy of Matthew."

<sup>26</sup> Mogens Müller, "The Gospel of St Matthew and the Mosaic Law," *Studia Theologica - Nordic Journal of Theology* 46, no. 2 (January 1, 1992): 109–120, accessed August 9, 2023, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00393389208600121>.

<sup>27</sup> Zeng, "Deliberate Numerical Discrepancy of Generation in the Genealogy of Matthew."

<sup>28</sup> Pieterse and Fourie, "The Bible, Culture and Ethics: Trickery in the Narrative of Judah and Tamar."



incest with Judah to become a mother. This led to his almost being executed for infidelity.<sup>29</sup>

Through her relationship with Jesus, Tamar's "problematic behavior" was smoothed out. Tamar's intervention resulted in the birth of two sons, which eventually led to Jesus' birth. Jesus' presence brings mercy to every sinner, like Tamar.<sup>30</sup>

### **Rahab**

Rahab was a woman who was instrumental in helping the spies in Jericho (Joshua 2:1). Rahab was a Canaanite, but in her relationship with spies, she showed her loyalty to the Israelites. Rahab was a citizen of Jericho, but in an act that constituted treason, she deliberately misled the representative of the Commonwealth, the king's envoy. Rahab is the heroine, as she lets the Israelites escape through a window in the wall.<sup>31</sup> When Rahab decides to protect the spy, there are consequences. His life is at stake. If her actions were known to the messenger, Rahab would definitely be punished and possibly even killed.<sup>32</sup> He is willing to bear that risk.

Rahab's name merges with the liberated language of the Bible. As such, it joins another theoretical domain reflecting divine acts of liberation and restoration, arguably anticipating the redemption God would give to Israel. Similarly, in connection with Israel's imminent entry into Canaan, Joshua 2 describes a woman named Rahab as "undertaking the Great Expansion", referring to Israel's imminent territorial expansion.<sup>33</sup>

Rahab of the Canaanites went from idolatry to the worship of the true God and united with her chosen people.<sup>34</sup> What Rahab said about Josh's spies 2:9–11 not only describes and contains quotations from Deuteronomy in the style of Deuteronomy but

<sup>29</sup> David J. Zucker and Moshe Reiss, "Righting and Rewriting Genesis 38: Tamar and Judah in the Pseudepigrapha," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 45, no. 4 (2015): 195–201, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0146107915608592>.

<sup>30</sup> Janneke Stegeman, "Decoloniality, Theology and Bodies: Tamar and Jesus as Examples of Othering and Bonding," *Studies in Theology and Religion*, 2020, <https://brill.com/display/book/9789004417434/BP000018.xml>.

<sup>31</sup> Kimberly D. Russaw, "Reading Rahab with Larsen: Towards a New Direction in African American Biblical Hermeneutics," *Horizons in Biblical Theology*, 2020, [https://brill.com/view/journals/hbth/42/1/article-p1\\_1.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/hbth/42/1/article-p1_1.xml).

<sup>32</sup> Randy Frank Rouw, "Rahab's Trust Based on Joshua 2 : 1 -24," *JURNAL JAFFRAY* 15, no. 2 (2017): 1–24, <https://ojs.sttjaffray.ac.id/JJV71/article/view/259>.

<sup>33</sup> Ekaterina E. Kozlova, "What Is in a Name? Rahab, the Canaanite, and the Rhetoric of Liberation in the Hebrew Bible," *Open Theology* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 572–586, accessed May 4, 2023, <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/opth-2020-0106/html>.

<sup>34</sup> Ellen G. White, *Agama Yang Bersinar* (Bandung: Penerbit Advent Indonesia, 2022), 72.

also alludes to the Pentateuch, and more specifically, Exodus. Also, the words come from v. 11. For the LORD thy God is Lord in heaven and on earth" appears only at the mouth of Moses and Solomon in the Hebrew Bible (Deuteronomy 4:39; 1 Kings 8:23). The words thus put him on the same side.<sup>35</sup> "The Lord your God is Lord in heaven and on earth" (Joshua 2:11) is a sign of repentance. Rahab's confession shows her belief that the God of Israel is supreme. James 2:25 also mentions Rahab by name and states that her actions brought her justification.<sup>36</sup>

God is not favoritism (Romans 2:11). Although during Rahab's time, God primarily worked with the Israelites, salvation was not limited to just them. As long as a person recognizes that God is God and follows His will for his life, he will be welcomed into God's family. There is no doubt that Rahab lived a sinful life. Nevertheless, he had the faith to believe that God was able to forgive him for the many sins he had committed. There is no sin so great that God cannot forgive, but it must also be realized the role one must play in repentance (one must take part). Through God's mercy, Rahab was given the opportunity to repent of her sins and turn her life upside down. Rahab lived in faith when she realized that she needed God's forgiveness. He knew that he could not continue to live in sin.<sup>37</sup>

### **Ruth**

Ruth's introduction describes how Elimelech left Bethlehem for Moab because of hunger. He brought his wife, Naomi, and two sons, Mahlon and Kylyon. Both sons married Moabites. Mahlon married Ruth, and Kylyon married Orpah.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, all the males in the family died. After Elimelech and her husband died, Ruth insisted that she stay with Naomi, and at the heart of her insistence was the claim that, through her act of faithfulness, she was one of God's people. Ruth showed radical beliefs that Naomi clearly could not.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Kozlova, "What Is in a Name? Rahab, the Canaanite, and the Rhetoric of Liberation in the Hebrew Bible."

<sup>36</sup> Rouw, "Rahab's Trust Based on Joshua 2 : 1 -24."

<sup>37</sup> Suheru, "Rahab : From Harlot to Heroine By God's Grace," *Kingdom* 3, no. 1 (February 28, 2023): 75-85, accessed August 11, 2023, <https://ojs.sttkingdom.ac.id/index.php/Theo/article/view/80>.

<sup>38</sup> John T. Dekker and Anthony H. Dekker, "Centrality in the Book of Ruth," *Vetus Testamentum* 68, no. 1 (2018): 41-50, [https://brill.com/view/journals/vt/68/1/article-p41\\_41.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/vt/68/1/article-p41_41.xml).

<sup>39</sup> Amy Laura Hall, "Ruth's Resolve: What Jesus' Great-Grandmother May Teach about Bioethics and Care," *Christian Bioethics* 11, no. 1 (January 1, 2005): 35-50, <https://academic.oup.com/cb/article-lookup/doi/10.1080/13803600590926413>.

In the Septuagint tradition, Ruth followed the judges. The story of his heroic faith begins right after the ominous conclusion of the Judges: "There is no king in Israel; each does what is right in his own eyes" (21:25). Ruth's storyline is very strong. At this critical moment in the canon, a strange young woman did what was right in God's eyes. Ruth refused and cautiously opposed Naomi's realistic and pessimistic vision. Instead of accepting her mother-in-law's point of view like Orpah's, Ruth embraced Naomi passionately and indirectly urged her to remember her identity as Abraham's daughter: Don't force me to abandon you or refuse to follow you! Wherever you go, I will go; where you are, I will be; your person will be my person, and your God will be my God. Where you die, there I will die—there I will be buried. May God do this to me and more, even if death separates me from you! (1:16-17).<sup>40</sup>

The heroic thing is that the Moabite woman not only became a member of Israeli society but also played the male role of proposing to Boaz, resolving the crisis of the absence of men in this unique role, so that Elimelech's family did not perish. Ruth swore allegiance to Naomi in the language of the covenant, formed an inseparable bond with her, and accepted the difficult task of saving her husband's family from death.<sup>41</sup>

Moab will enter into the fellowship of God, and none of their seed, not even the tenth generation, shall enter into the congregation of the Lord, for they sought to change the circumstances that excluded the Moabites from the congregation of Israel.<sup>42</sup> In response to the crisis of racial exclusion, the author of the Law points out that God's faithful love has corrected and destroyed this racial exclusion. It can be said that this is the theological outline that the author wants to convey to the readers. The story conveys that God's goodness is not limited to Jews but extends to strangers.<sup>43</sup> The reference to Peres that "Tama begat Judah" may provide an authoritative historical precedent for the incorporation of foreigners into the Israelite community, since Tamar is generally regarded as Canaanite.<sup>44</sup>

Boaz's decision to marry Ruth was based on voluntary will, not demand. Boaz's decision to accept Ruth's atoning assignment to someone out of kindness and generosity

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Damian O. Odo and Collins I. Ugwu, "I Will Marry Ruth so That the Name of the Dead Will Not Be Blotted out: Exploring חֶסֶד (Hesed) in Ruth 4:1–13," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 43, no. 1 (2022): 1–6, <https://verbumeteclesia.org.za/index.php/ve/article/view/2471>.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

went beyond what was required.<sup>45</sup> Ruth's decision to marry Boaz was interpreted by Boaz as a selfless attempt to find a solution to her father-in-law's suffering that was more precious than her selfish hope of getting a husband. Arguably, Ruth's decision to propose to Boaz was seen as an act of good faith. Ruth's concern for her mother-in-law prompted her to propose to Boaz so she could give Naomi an heir. Ruth's request to marry Boaz was not out of fear for her own safety or out of romantic attraction to Boaz, but because of her strong commitment to her mother-in-law Naomi, which reinforced the thought.<sup>46</sup> It can be seen why the child born to Boaz and Ruth was ultimately considered Naomi's child and essentially Elimelech's son. So, Obed retained the name Elimelech and his legacy.<sup>47</sup>

### ***Uriah's wife (Bathsheba)***

Matthew's genealogical reference to the fourth woman in the Old Testament is astonishing. While the first three women are named, Bathsheba was not given a personal name and was only referred to as Uriah's wife. In this sense, he is anonymous. People were further shocked when the fact that Solomon's mother was not David's but Uriah's was mentioned, knowing that this was technically "wrong" because Bathsheba was pregnant and gave birth to Solomon, who was David's wife.<sup>48</sup>

Bathsheba was the least active of the four Old Testament women and the only one not explicitly mentioned in Matthew's genealogy. The only contribution "she was from Uriah" to the process of taking her from Uriah and being brought in to ensure the succession of the patriarchal line of Israel were the three words she sent to David after seeing, sending, and receiving bedtime messages, and he said, "I am pregnant". She almost did not affect the object of David's intrigues: firstly, because of her extraordinary beauty, she was considered an adulterer; secondly, she was widowed; and thirdly, she was a grieving mother.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Brad Embry, "Legalities in the Book of Ruth: A Renewed Look," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 41, no. 1 (2016): 31–44, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0309089216628519>.

<sup>48</sup> E. Anne Clements, *Mothers on the Margin*, The Lutterworth Press (The Lutterworth Press, 2014), 308, accessed July 3, 2023, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/j.ctt1cgf6wd>.

<sup>49</sup> Marika Rose, "Holy Mothers of God: Sex Work, Inheritance, and the Women of Jesus' Genealogy," *Theology & Sexuality* 25, no. 1–2 (May 4, 2019): 1–20, accessed August 3, 2023, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13558358.2019.1652031>.

David and Bathsheba sinned and suffered the consequences of their sins, but the lives of these two men were restored. Evidence of this resurrection is evident in Matthew's account of Christ's genealogy. The wife of Uriah, or Bathsheba, is listed as the ancestor of Christ. The story of David and Bathsheba is biblical empirical evidence of how sinners experience grace in God's plan.<sup>50</sup>

### **Maria**

According to Jewish tradition, women who became pregnant out of wedlock were punished or stoned to death (cf. Deuteronomy 22:23–27). The selection and inclusion of the names of five women who had a bad reputation in the eyes of the public at the time was partly to explain God's incomprehensible plans and actions. On the other hand, the selection of five women actually "created" new questions and doubts about God's consistency. It is with Mary that the reason for the emphasis on women in Jesus' genealogy in Matthew's genealogy becomes clear. It turns out that Christ Himself was not born or by natural inheritance but rather was adopted into the line of Israel by other respectable women concerned. While all the women in Matthew's family tree are disjointed in some way, disrupting the smooth flow of mathematical procreation, Mary's inclusion in the family tree is the most disturbing.<sup>51</sup>

Mary was an ordinary and simple woman who lived in a small town called Nazareth, south of Galilee. Mary was an innocent girl, but the angels called her "the gifted" because she was chosen by God to be part of Jesus' incarnation through the fruit of her womb.<sup>52</sup> It is no coincidence that Jesus was born of a virgin and was born through Mary. Mary's election as Jesus' mother is not only recorded in the New Testament but also prophesied in the Old Testament. The prophet Isaiah (740–710 B.C.) also prophesied that Mary would be a virgin who "shall conceive and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). The prophet Micah (740–670 B.C.), a contemporary of the

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<sup>50</sup> Sonny Zaluchu, Mesiwarati Waruwu, and Martina Novalina, "Batsyeba: Dari Selingkuhan Menjadi Ibu Suri Dan Leluhur Kristus," *Khazanah Theologia* 3, no. 3 (2021): 161–170, <https://journal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/kt/article/view/12710>.

<sup>51</sup> Rose, "Holy Mothers of God: Sex Work, Inheritance, and the Women of Jesus' Genealogy."

<sup>52</sup> Frida Laurencia and Grace Son Nassa, "Maria Sebagai 'Role Model' Bagi Wanita Kristen Masa Kini Berdasarkan Kitab Injil Matius Dan Lukas," *TE DEUM (Jurnal Teologi dan Pengembangan Pelayanan)* 11, no. 1 (2021): 75–98, <https://ojs.sttsappi.ac.id/index.php/tedeum/article/view/145>.

prophet Isaiah, also prophesied that Mary was a woman who would bear a child in Bethlehem (cf. Mic 5:1-2).<sup>53</sup>

Would God defile His holiness and glory because of such a person? Did God begin to compromise with the unrighteous (sinful)? Answer: No way! (See Leviticus 19:2.) Here, God has a plan we don't know. Mary maintained her own moral standards as part of worshiping God. Therefore, Mary is known as the only woman who conceived in a virgin state because she was a woman who conceived without male intervention or intercourse with any man. So Mary conceived while still chaste as a girl or virgin. Based on this doctrine of "virgin birth", Mary is referred to as the "Holy Mother".<sup>54</sup>

Jesus' birth was miraculous. The Virgin Mary was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18-23).<sup>55</sup> Mary miraculously conceived while still a virgin and did not have sex with men.<sup>56</sup> This miracle shows that it is from God, and it is an anomaly that a person is usually born because of the relationship between husband and wife, which further explains the divine nature of the conceived and born baby. Mary is Christ's entrance into the world.<sup>57</sup> Only by being born as a man can God carry out the plan of salvation from the time man sinned, as prophesied in Genesis 3:15.

## CONCLUSION

Looking at the description above, we can see that Matthew 1:1-17 contains a very deep message and meaning. Behind the sentence-by-sentence arrangement that may be boring (when reading it), it turns out that there is hidden a 'precious secret' that stirs faith and raises hope. This plan of God's salvation begins with the election and calling of Abraham and his descendants, the election of David and his descendants, and culminates in the presence of Jesus Christ. God's election of Abraham and David (and their descendants) makes it clear that there is God's love and grace to be revealed for His

<sup>53</sup> Agus Widodo, "Maria Dalam Misteri Kristus Dan Dalam Hidup Gereja," *Jurnal Teologi (Journal of Theology)* 10, no. 2 (November 30, 2021): 195-214, accessed August 10, 2023, <https://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/jt/article/view/5931>.

<sup>54</sup> Satoko Yamaguchi, "Rethinking the Life of Mary, the Mother of Jesus," *Journal of Early Christian History* 8, no. 3 (2018): 74-95, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/2222582X.2019.1585195>.

<sup>55</sup> Masehi Advent Hari Ketujuh Sedunia Departemen Kependetaan, *Kepercayaan Gereja Masehi Advent Hari Ketujuh Uraian Doktrin Dasar Alkitabiah* (Bandung: Penerbit Advent Indonesia, 2019), 49.

<sup>56</sup> Erliwati Waruwu, "Immanuel 'Allah Beserta Kita' Eksegesis Yesaya 7 : 14," *Geneva - Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 3, no. 2 (2021): 75.

<sup>57</sup> Jeannine Hill Fletcher, "Mary, Mother of God," *Ars Disputandi* 6, no. 1 (2014): 146-150, accessed August 10, 2023, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15665399.2006.10819916>.

people, not only in the days of Abraham and David but also their descendants, even today. So, there is love, grace, and also a promise that never changes and that is not 'timeless,' but will always be new and constantly renewed.' There are many names and figures involved in God's plan of salvation, and they were recorded by the author of the Gospel of Matthew. The involvement of these characters did not happen by chance, but there was God's initiative in them. God, in His authority, is pleased to choose and use them as His instruments.

Through theological analysis, this study reveals that the presence of foreign and sinful women such as Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Uriah's wife in Jesus' genealogy is neither accidental nor merely a historical record, but has profound significance in God's plan of salvation. Their inclusion highlights God's vast grace and love, which is not limited by one's background or sin. This research also shows that God can use even human weakness and sin to fulfill His plan. In this case, the presence of sinful women in the genealogy of Jesus Christ is evidence that God is able to use anyone, regardless of their past, to accomplish His purpose of giving salvation to mankind. This research confirms that the genealogy of Jesus Christ is not just a list of names, but a mirror of the secret of God's plan of salvation that involves all people, without exception. The message of inclusivity, hope, and love emanating from this genealogy becomes a source of comfort and inspiration to all who believe, offering confidence in God's unwavering faithfulness in fulfilling His promises to His people.

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