

## 5 Women who Changed the World, Part 1 of 2

**This tells us a LOT about how Messiah sees each one of us.**

*Philip Shields sermons*

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**Summary:** The Messiah changed the world. Only five women, (5 the number of grace) are listed by name or referred to, in Matthew's lineage of Yeshua, our Savior. Why were *these* five chosen? And why were most of them Gentile? Why couldn't five "pristine" women who were more 'righteous' be chosen? What role did each of these women play in the Royal family tree? Caution: this and the next sermon are fairly graphic, but nothing is said that the Bible doesn't say. Hear/read about these women who changed the world and the lessons they bring to all of us.

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*Hello all of my dear friends and brothers and sisters around the world, in our holy Messiah. I hope you enjoy and get encouragement from today's message. This is Philip Shields with Light on the Rock. Many of you are now regulars on this site, and remember – I'd love to hear from you. I get encouragement from the emails and phone calls from many countries around the world. I'm thrilled to see so many in China, Russia, Japan, Kenya, and 40 other countries coming to the light of Yehowah's word, as well as many of you from the US and Canada of course. Our #1 city for visits and hits is .... Moscow, Russia. I think that's amazing. Nairobi is #4. Beijing is #5.*

In this Passover to Pentecost season, I thought I'd do something different and talk about five Women, five the number of GRACE, who changed the world. These five are the ONLY women referred to, or mentioned, in Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1, though 41 *men* are mentioned as part of His family tree starting with Abraham. So if only five are mentioned, there must be some key reasons why. This is part 1 of a 2 part sermon.

Of these 5 women mentioned in Messiah's family tree, did you realize at least THREE of them are Gentiles and only two are Israelite? So Gentiles, take heart! And not only that, but THREE of them conceived their baby out of wedlock, certainly two, but 3 if you count Mary – who was betrothed, but not married when she conceived. Wow! Right in the genealogy of the Christ are stories that make many people blush! I mean Jesus' family line is riddled with accounts of incest, fornication, adultery, harlotry, and even murder.

WHY? The answer to that is part of the reason for this sermon.

Each of these five women had a big part in bringing about the very Messiah who would change the world and save the world.

WHY AM I BOTHERING with this?

This is the story of how Holy Elohim Most High, our Creator, wants to assure us that He has the power, the grace, the mercy, the wisdom and ability to take even very sinful men and women, bring them to repentance, and save them.

On a physical level, this sermon and the next one, is going to be fairly earthy, even sordid, as we see some of the people in the Messiah's lineage – people HE allowed to be in His

Family Tree. Why? Why not have the more pristine people of the earth, or those who think they are wonderful and without any major flaws?

**By showing us the more sordid part of even our Messiah's lineage, we see our Yeshua is born from sinners, to save sinners.** (Of course we know He is also "born from above".)

It shows He is not ashamed of sinners who repent – to the point where they are mentioned in His lineage, in his own family! Everyone in his lineage was a sinner – yes, even Mary his mother was a sinner! I know you Catholics find that hard to accept, but that's what scripture says. **Romans 3:23:** "ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" and that includes Mary, includes all the men and women in his family tree – and includes all of us, that includes you, all our parents, all our children, all our friends, everyone.

It also shows how He chooses ordinary men and women to do very extra-ordinary earth-shaking things. Maybe that includes YOU. You are an ordinary man and woman probably. How can I say that? Because 1 Cor. 1:26-27 says God purposely chooses the not-so great of the world to confound the great and the wise. Most of us don't show up in the book "Who's who?". A book written about most of us – at least when Yehowah called us – might just be titled, "What's *That?*"

So Almighty God typically chose shepherds, fishermen, despised tax collectors known for their horrendous lies and thievery, farmers – and ordinary *women* as well – to show His glory, of what HE could do. I say this because ALL of us, if we really are honest with ourselves *spiritually*, have *little* to brag about. I certainly often feel like a failure spiritually. I do. I am a failure at times (and maybe you do), but praise be to our Father and Savior who is changing you and me. Praise be to Yehowah – those in the coming first resurrection who will shine as the sun in their glory, will be people whom the world takes little notice of right now.

*No matter your past, no matter your sins, no matter your so-called station in life, you can be part of the first fruits, covered by the blood of the Lamb and given a new start. But more than that, you also are being called to be the very Son or Daughter of the Highest Royalty of all – a child of Yehowah in the Highest!* It doesn't get more royal than that!

So I don't care if you are one of the so-called "untouchables" in India hearing this, or just a dressmaker in China or a fisherman in the Philippines, or a small businessman in Russia: if you're hearing this, Yehowah is probably calling you to be of HIS royal family!

So as you hear about or read about these ordinary women who ended up being mentioned in Messiah's line – realize He is calling you also for HIS unique purposes. Let's get started.

It was important to prove who was of royal lineage – so we have the long list of "begats" in scripture. These 5 women are in the Matthew 1 lineage of begats.

Some years ago my wife and I were taking a tour of Versailles Palace in France. One of the things I remember was that when the queen gave birth to a royal, there were witnesses to that birth, and everything was chronicled carefully. Since royalty depended on being able to establish their heredity that is what Matthew does here (Matthew 1:1-17). He also establishes Yeshua's DIVINE lineage (see Matthew 1:18-25). Matthew basically gives the

lineage through the line of Joseph, and Luke gives the lineage through Mary. Either way, he shows Yeshua was of the royal Davidic line – as well as the son of God.

*In understanding Yeshua's lineage, we will see how God worked everything out so that there would be a Messiah, regardless of the many attempts no doubt of Satan to sabotage it all. **I'm going to focus on 5 women here.** It was very unusual to even include women at all in any genealogy since inheritances came via the fathers.*

The story of the 5 women mentioned in the lineage of Jesus Christ, or Yeshua our Messiah – is very telling. MUCH of the story involving each of these 5 women is wrapped up in some pain, shame, sorrow, accusation, and sin. There's incest, adultery, murder, lying, treachery, deception – all kinds of things going on. But nonetheless -- there are HUGE lessons to learn from this in this season between Passover and Pentecost. So today, I hi-lite five phenomenal women. Five women chosen to be in the very lineage of Messiah.

### **TAMAR**

#### **Matthew 1:2-4**

2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. 3 Judah begot Perez and Zerah **by Tamar**, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.

The first woman mentioned in Yeshua's genealogy is a Gentile, Tamar. There are several who are named "Tamar" in scripture. There is the Tamar, daughter of King David and sister of Absalom. *That* Tamar was raped by her half-brother Amnon, for example – but she's not the Tamar mentioned in Yeshua's genealogy.

The Tamar we speak of in the genealogy is the daughter-in-law of Judah, the son of Jacob. TAMAR means "palm" or "palm tree".

Judah had married a Canaanite woman, the daughter of Shua, (Gen 38:1, 12) who bore three sons. So Judah is mixing the holy seed, as it were. The eldest – Er – took a wife named Tamar, also a Canaanite, though the Bible doesn't say for sure. The apocryphal book of Jasher says she was a descendant of Shem, but nobody else says that. Most commentaries say she was undoubtedly a Canaanite woman. So Judah and his son were mixing the holy seed -- and God allowed it. That's something to ponder. You'll see in a lot of these stories that Yehowah *allows* things to happen that wouldn't be the way He would have done things. But in every case He works things out to HIS good timing and purpose in the end.

We are the children of God. Children have to be allowed to make mistakes and to have free choice, free will. Yehowah lets His children have free will. We can also – of our own free choice – choose to think, speak and act according to our heavenly Father's will. "THY will be done, on earth as it is in heaven". It is when WE decide to do the things that always please Father – as Yeshua said He was able to do-- when we're finally on solid rock as our foundation. Remember Yeshua said in John 8:29 --"I always do the things that please Him".

So right off the bat, Judah and his son are doing things NOT pleasing to the living God. The Living God wants us marrying people who have the same belief and worship the true God. He does not want us to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, as Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 6:14. But even if we do, when we are part of His plan, He will work even those things into His beautiful purpose and plan. In

the end, we'll see how the great Almighty God uses this Canaanite Gentile woman to play a most vital role.

*So one quick lesson is this: even when we've botched things up, if we commit our ways to our heavenly Father and repent deeply, He somehow has a way to make things work out, though there often are painful, painful consequences. How well I know that.*

Judah- the father of all Jews – had 3 sons – Er, Onan and Shelah.

*Tamar's importance in the genealogy is this: if none of Judah's sons had any sons, then there would have been no tribe of Judah – and therefore the promised Messiah would have never appeared! The royal family line would never have started and would have been extinct before going anywhere!*

So we need a male child to come on the scene in the line of Judah – and so far there are none. The “tribe” of Judah so far is just Judah and his sons, but they have no children yet. We'll see that one after the other, some of these 5 women mentioned were critical in continuing the Messianic line. Without them, there would have been no Messiah barring something extra-ordinary.

In this story is a lot of deception. Jacob had deceived Isaac by putting on something that felt like a hairy arm. Laban deceived Jacob by giving him Leah instead of Rachel, when it was dark and everyone had had a lot to drink at the wedding. Jacob's sons used a garment to deceive him about Joseph's whereabouts. And now Tamar will use a garment to deceive Judah into providing her a rightful son. What we do has a way of coming back on us. “What goes around, comes around”.

Let's read about it. Caution: scripture is pretty graphic about some of the sex lives of our forefathers.

**Genesis 38:6-7, 8-9**

6 Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. **7 But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of Yehowah (the LORD), and Yehowah killed him.**

*We are not told why Er was considered so extraordinarily evil but the point is: God sees everything. We can't hide our sins from Him. “Your sins will find you out”. How well I know that. So Yehowah slew him. Continue now in verse 8...*

8 And Judah said to Onan [his 2<sup>nd</sup> son], “Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother.”

9 But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother. 10 And the thing which he did displeased Yehowah; therefore He (Yehowah) killed him also.

In Bible times there was something *later* called “the Levirate marriage”. If a man died without having sons, then his brother would take the deceased man's wife and try to produce a son with that wife. The child would be considered part of the deceased man's lineage and would inherit anything the dead brother might have had.

**Deuteronomy 25:5-6**

5 "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. 6 And it shall be

that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

You can read verses 7-10 of Deut 25 for more detail, in the event that one brother doesn't want to do his duty for his sister-in-law. So the 2<sup>nd</sup> son, Onan, was willing apparently to have some sex with Tamar but was not willing to impregnate her and give her a child. Why sire a child and carry all that responsibility just to carry on his dead *brother's* line? So he selfishly spilled his semen on the ground rather than produce a child. Folks, I'm just openly saying what the Bible says, OK?

Again, why did he do this? Because he was next in line and if there was no child, he could inherit Judah's inheritance and perhaps even his brother Er's! If he had impregnated Tamar, then that boy would have been the "first born" as part of Er, and would have been the inheritor of all that was Judah's as well as Er's – at least the way I understand it. *So Onan very selfishly spilled his seed on the ground so Tamar could not conceive.* He did this because he realized it wasn't going to be his son anyway. HE wanted to be the main inheritor of Judah and did not want a child he was fathering to get what could have been his. So he's thinking selfishly just of himself. Well, this angered God greatly so Yehowah slew him as well.

Now what is the man Judah thinking? "The common denominator of my 2 dead sons now is this woman Tamar". Remember the promised Messiah was to come out of Judah. He has had 3 sons, and now 2 are dead. The 3<sup>rd</sup> one's still a child. Judah is understandably concerned about losing his last son Shelah to this woman who seemed to be involved in the death of each of his sons. So we pick up verse 11 of 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.

So Judah sends her packing back to her father's house. It was difficult in those days to be a widow, and a shame if you were a *childless* widow. So Judah's plan was fine and dandy but then Judah *never honored his word*. Tamar got older and older – and Shelah was never given to her as a husband. But Tamar wanted to have a child, a family, and without her there would have been no tribe of Judah, no royal line, no Messiah –at least so far! So she does something "out of the box"!

#### **Genesis 38:12-30**

12 Now in the process of time the daughter of Shua, **Judah's wife, died**; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. 13 And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep."

One source I have says that if the dead husband's brothers weren't up for the job, then the father of those boys should do the job of producing a child. At least, that may be what Tamar is thinking. She is not thinking in terms of incest – but in terms of producing a child for this very important family line to continue and to keep her from being childless, which was a shame for women in those days.

14 So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife.

15 When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face.

16 Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law.

So she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?"

*[He had no money but wanted sex with this woman he THOUGHT was a prostitute!]*

17 And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock."

So she said, "Will you give me a pledge till you send it?"

18 Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?"

So she said, "**Your signet and cord, and your staff that is in your hand.**" Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him.

The "signet" was very special, almost like one's ID. It was tied to a cord and hung around one's neck – not worn as a ring, but more like soldiers' tags today. So it would be equivalent to us today saying something like: "leave me your driver's license and car keys". One commentary I read said – based on the Hebrew words used in the text –that she was dressed up like a temple prostitute to Astarte, or what we now know by the name Easter. Ishtar, Astarte – called different names in different areas – was the goddess of fertility and sex. Anyway, Tamar is dressed as a temple prostitute and Judah – who is now a widower, "feels the need" – and goes in to her, as the Bible puts it. Back to Genesis 38:19.

19 So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.

20 And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her. 21 Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who was openly by the roadside?"

And they said, "There was no harlot in this place."

22 So he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this place."

23 Then Judah said, "Let her take them for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her."

So at least Judah is trying to pay for his sinful dalliance with someone HE thought was a whore- - and to get his ID signet and staff back – but she's nowhere to be found!

24 And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore she is with child by harlotry."

So Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"

Judah, like so many men through time, was a hypocrite here. HE was the one who had had sex with someone he thought was a harlot, but because men don't have to carry the evidence – the pregnancy – many men get away with it. There would be no "market" for prostitutes if men didn't use their "services". We men need to repent of our double-standard in the past. Let's make it "the past". In SO many societies, the sex sin is OK as long as it can be covered up – as in abortion, or a "shotgun wedding". Nowadays, people just openly live in sin and call their partner their "significant other" – and no one bats an eye. We don't even *use* the terms "*premarital sex*" or "*fornication*" anymore. So Judah has sex out of marriage, doesn't know it was with his own daughter in law, and now wants her burned to death. Typical male "justice" through the years. I hope you hear that as sarcasm.

25 When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." And she said, "Please determine whose these are — the signet and cord, and staff."

Surely many people would have recognized these articles as belonging to Judah, so he knew he was caught. And we're still reading about it today. But on the other hand, when we have done something wicked that we have repented of, though GOD puts our sin far away and buries it, people often don't. But perhaps we can take some strange comfort knowing that intimate details of some sins like Judah's, David's, Samson's, and others are *still* being told today thousands of years later. So we learn to accept that there are awful consequences to our sins. But we won't be the first who is having the equivalent of the National Enquirer screaming out our sins-- or gossip of alleged sins-- to everyone.

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.

Judah at least was honest and good enough to admit HE was the one who was the sinner and at fault. But his own sin was not just confined to having had lust-filled sex with what he thought was a temple prostitute. *No – it was that Judah had lied and broken his word. He had not kept his promise of giving her the youth Shelah when he had grown up.* By this sin on his part, he had helped push her into her own actions to somehow, in desperation, produce a child and have an inheritance in the tribe of Judah and start the Messianic royal line. Judah was being quite harsh – but in the end Tamar was more or less vindicated. The sin was more Judah's than it was Tamar's – by a long shot.

In so many cultures, if the woman is the least bit improper, she is condemned, burned, hanged, killed – honor killings, etc. But men can seemingly do what they want: go to strip bars, play on the internet, call an "escort" or have flirtations (or worse) at work – and seemingly get away with it. But sin is sin, and men... a big lesson here. He got caught. He wasn't the first, and he won't be the last man to dabble with sex sins while appearing righteous on the outside. For example, King Henry VIII notoriously beheaded Queen Anne for alleged improprieties, when HE was *constantly* having dalliances with other women. It was wrong for Anne, but not wrong for King Henry? No way!

27 Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins were in her womb. 28 And so it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took **a scarlet thread** and bound it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." 29 Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, "How did you break through? This breach be upon you!" Therefore his name was called **Perez**.

30 Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand. And his name was called Zerah.

Perez became an ancestor of King David, and eventually the Christ.

Now think about it: this is a precursor to the union of Israel and Gentile. Judah was an Israelite and father of all Jews. Judah became a great tribe in the nation of Israel.

*But Judah's next in line for the messianic lineage came from his INCESTUOUS sex with his own GENTILE step-daughter!* The Bible doesn't edit that out or make it seem rosier than it was!

And God in his grace and mercy – though not condoning the incest and deception – was able to use even that sordid story to fulfill His goal of having the Messianic line get started and not be broken. So PEREZ, the line from which Messiah came, was ½ Israelite, and ½ Gentile. Think about it! I think it carries a very strong message.

*A message to us all: when we repent of our sins and move on in His grace, Yehowah our God is able to use even former sinners to His glory. Yes, even you. Even me. Even Tamar. Even Judah.*

I can't imagine what it would be like to have intimacies with your FATHER IN LAW! That had to be horrible. But neither can I excuse her. But she waited and waited and waited – and finally took matters into her own hands, and yes, she got pregnant and the lineage of Christ after Judah was now on its way. We'll see even more Gentiles in the family line of the Messiah shortly.

**Without Tamar – the royal line of Messiah – the Lion of Judah –would have never even started. That's HER importance to the story. PLUS, it shows how Almighty God is including Gentiles in the royal and Messianic family tree!**

NEXT UP in the lineage of Christ – this time, a real prostitute or harlot.

### **RAHAB**

OK – let's check out who will be the next two women after Tamar -- in Messiah's genealogy:

#### **Matthew 1:3-6**

Judah begot Perez and Zerah by **Tamar**, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. 4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. 5 Salmon begot Boaz by **Rahab**, Boaz begot Obed by **Ruth**, Obed begot Jesse, 6 and Jesse begot David the king.

So the next one is **Rahab**. As you read the Bible, there are so many who are mentioned by their occupation. Nehemiah the cup bearer. Herod the king. David the shepherd. Joseph the carpenter. Lydia the seller of purple. Isaiah the prophet. Amos the sheep breeder and tender of sycamores. ...and then, there's Rahab the.... Harlot. And to make matters worse, we might normally think, this harlot finds her way somehow into the lineage of Messiah! WHY would Yehowah allow such a thing? The answer tells us so much about Yehowah, God Most High.

Just think: "street walker, whore, harlot, prostitute, woman of the night"—whatever you want to call her, that's what she was. And somehow she's in the family tree! *From the dunghill of humanity (as humans see it) – to glory!* Let's face it. That's really the story of all of us. Paul said his past was just so much dung or rubbish too (Philippians 3:6-8)! But do the rest of us realize that's the same for all of us? Maybe that's part of the reason for having Rahab in here. No need to whitewash her past. No need to pretend she was something she wasn't.

This is actually part of the message: *even a whore – if she repents of her sin and accepts the true living God – can be accepted in the camp of Israel and – in her case – even be part of the Family Tree of the Messiah!* So whatever your past, take heart! With repentance, you can move on.

Some like to teach that this Rahab was just an ordinary Israelite and not "Rahab the harlot". Now every other woman in the Family Tree IS someone we know from scripture. The only Rahab who is mentioned in Scripture, at about the time of Salmon – would be the woman referred to as "Rahab the harlot". So I am confident this is the "Rahab" mentioned in the book of Joshua.

***Rahab the harlot makes the Hebrews 11 Hall of Fame of faith!*** The ground is a level playing field at the cross of Messiah. ALL humans need the blood of the cross. So she is put right there next to giants of faith like Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses. ***She is only one of TWO women mentioned by name in Hebrews 11... only two.*** One is Sarah the wife of Abraham, and the other is a dark Gentile harlot named Rahab (Canaan was from Ham, a black race). God loves black people



as much as brown or white people. He made them all. And He made Rahab – whatever skin color she had.

There's some discussion whether or not she was a harlot or an **inn-keeper** based on the Hebrew word "zonah". The Greek translation of the OT calls her a harlot, using the word "porne". Hebrews 11:31 calls her in Greek, the "*porne*" Rahab – clearly meaning a harlot. God is very open about the sins and pasts of His heroes. I suggest you read Joshua chapters 2-6 to get the whole story which I won't have time to fully read today.

I would also say it is possible she could have been both: an innkeeper and harlot – all rolled up together. It would have been an effective way to have repeat customers. Give them an exciting experience under the cover of staying at an inn on the walls (room with a view) of the city -- and they would likely come again!

### **Hebrews 11:30-31**

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. 31 By **faith** the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

Of all the places the spies could have stayed, how they ended up staying with a harlot is beyond me... but that's the way it was. Apparently Yehowah wanted to save this woman who believed in Him. She apparently wanted a new, a changed life, as do we all. Right off the bat, the Bible doesn't hesitate to tell us that even a Gentile harlot can be extended the grace of God and be included in the lineage of the Messiah!

Some of you hearing this may have either used harlots or been harlots – both are the same. Yes, *even you, even I*, can be forgiven and given a fresh start – whether people give you that, or not. The grace of God, the blood of the Lamb of God, covers ALL our sins. This gentile whore had come to confess the God of Israel and believed in Him, and Yehowah honored that! Some of you hearing this needed to hear that. If you will confess your Master and have faith in Him as well, He will save you just as He did Rahab.

(Tell the story of Jericho – and Rahab—briefly on the audio... --Joshua 2-3-4)

When it is reported that two Israelite spies were at Rahab's – the men of the city, the king, etc. all seemed to know who she was and exactly where she was. Maybe that says something too.

### **Joshua 2:8-14**

Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, 9 and said to the men: "I know that Yehowah (the LORD) has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. 10 For we have heard how Yehowah dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. [And now comes her confession of the true Elohim]

Now comes her confession... not as well-known as Ruth's, but here it comes (and I will use the original Hebrew words when referring to our Living God):

11 And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, **for Yehowah (the LORD) your Elohim (God), HE is Elohim (God) in heaven above and on earth beneath.**

12 Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by Yehowah, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, 13 and spare

my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death."

Here's a despised woman, perhaps even shunned by her own kids or siblings, who is now thinking of them, and protecting them. Had any of them said anything to the authorities, she could have paid with her life for this. It would have been seen as treason.

14 So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when Yehowah has given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with you."

**Joshua 2:17-21**

17 So the men said to her: "We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, 18 unless, when we come into the land, **you bind this line of scarlet cord** in the window *through which you let us down*, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home. 19 So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him. 20 And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear."

**21 Then she said, "According to your words, so be it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.**

She lets them down the wall by a rope. A SCARLET rope. And SHE would be identified by the Scarlet rope. Passover was coming up. Scarlet. Red. The color of Yeshua's blood. I think there could be a tie-in. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18).

**In faith she confessed the Living God. In faith, her deeds matched her words.** True faith has actions that match what we say. Too many so-called believers – including most of *us* at one time or another, and we've had to repent of it – have said things that sound holy and then had ACTIONS that didn't match the words. That has to stop. I preach to myself also.

**James 2:24-25**

You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

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

All of this happened before the Passover that year. Then Israel circled the city of Jericho for seven days, and presumably on the Last day of Unleavened Bread, on the holyday, is when the walls fell. Some Jewish sources say it was a month later – in the 2<sup>nd</sup> month. So the whole city walls fell forward, probably with the exception of where Rahab and her family were. Something very interesting.

**Joshua 6:22-25**

22 But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her." 23 *And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab*, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel.

24 But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord.

**25 And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.**

Israelite men were not supposed to marry any of the Canaanites. But from what I can see, if Gentiles converted to, and worshipped the God of Israel, they were apparently allowed in the congregation. Don't forget, an entire "mixed multitude" came out of Egypt with Israel. Bathsheba married Uriah – a Canaanite (Hittites were among the nations of Canaan). But **Uriah** was a believer in the living God. So was Boaz, who married **Ruth**, a Moabitess who confessed her belief in the God of Israel as well. Remember ordinarily, Moabites were not to enter the congregation of God for 10 generations (Deut. 23:2). So I think after her show of faith to the living God, that she was allowed to marry Salmon and became an ancestress in Messiah's family tree. God is not against RACIAL issues so much as He is against believers being unequally yoked to unbelievers – of any race or color (2 Corinthians 6:14). It's a matter of who your GOD is. That's what matters most to our Father in heaven.

I need to say this: **Some teachers teach that Rahab and Ruth "converted to Judaism"**. I totally disagree. "Judaism", as practiced today, is *not* the religion of the Old Testament as I see it! I will speak on it in the next coming weeks. Judaism gives as much credence, or more, to the Babylonian Talmud as they do the holy scriptures. They certainly study the Talmud more than scripture and when they do study scripture, they put 90% of their focus, or so it seems, on to the Torah, the first 5 books. We are to "live by EVERY word of God", Yeshua said. And remember Yeshua was constantly at odds with the Pharisees, who were the ancestors of what is now Orthodox Judaism. So that should tell you something.

So Rahab – and later Ruth – converted to the religion of the Bible, which is based on having a worshipful relationship with the one true LIVING God, Yehowah in the Highest!

Rahab's story in a nutshell: from shame to glory! Whatever *your* past, commit your life to Yeshua, ask Him to cleanse you, to give you a new heart, to make you new. Whether people believe you're different now or not, doesn't matter. What matters is what our heavenly Father thinks!

I'm sure there were whispers for years about "Rahab the Harlot". But this I know: when you and I meet her in the resurrection, we *won't* be going up to her and saying "Oh, I read all about you, in God's word no less. You're that whore, Rahab the harlot". NO, you'll be honored to meet a woman who was a pillar of faith, who thought about her family too and saved many people alive. You'll be honored to meet the woman who put the scarlet cord on her window to identify that 'here lives Rahab the harlot who believes in the Living God of Israel, and wants to worship THAT God from now on.' You'll be honored to meet RAHAB the child of God, the woman of tremendous faith.

It's how we end up that counts. I wrote a blog on that. We must accept the Grace of God over our sins, and let Yeshua live in us once more. Rahab undoubtedly put away her sin of harlotry and became an outstanding citizen in Israel as she lived now in obedience to the living God

And here's the lesson from Rahab: we change. We must change. We must be new. And we must start seeing each other new. Elohim, the living God, wanted the Gentile Rahab in His son's royal line.

Now let's read some good scripture of how we are supposed to put our past in the past, keep it buried, and when we fail - - to be sure to come under the blood of our Messiah once more and use His Spirit to help us walk a NEW way.

**Ephesians 2:1-10**

And **you** He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you *once* walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, *fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, *made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

**Titus 3:3-7**

For **we ourselves were** also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 *NOT by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to HIS mercy He saved us*, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 **that having been justified by HIS grace** we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

**2 Corinthians 5:16-19**

16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

**2 Corinthians 5:16-17 HOLMAN**

16 From now on, then, we do not know anyone in a purely human way. Even if we have known Christ in a purely human way, yet now we no longer know Him like that. 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come.

I don't believe Rahab had to have a sign in front of her new house warning that "here lives a whore. Beware." I'm sure they didn't pin a scarlet A for "adulteress" on her blouse or robe. But we seem to like to keep a record of wrongs and to spread them around. That is not of God. Satan – the Adversary—is also called "the Devil". That means "slanderer". God's children don't go looking for

dirt and certainly don't repeat "dirt" that has been repented of. You be better than that. And we certainly will from now on think of Rahab as the repentant and faithful woman of God, placed into the genealogy of the Messiah.

I think any of you who have had a "past" – as I have had, and frankly we all have had – can take solace and encouragement from this story. Any of you who are Gentiles should rejoice that there are a number of Gentiles in the lineage of Messiah. Probably Tamar, and now also Rahab. There will be still more Gentiles in the lineage.

But the fact is, we have to change.

### **RUTH, the Moabite Princess**

The next woman mentioned among the 5 women listed in Jesus' family tree is another Gentile – a Moabite named "Ruth" – which may mean "companion, friend". I plan to give a whole sermon soon on the book of Ruth, so I will keep this commentary on her in here skimpy. She is known as the great humble Moabite who marries Boaz. It's almost like Yehowah (YHWH) is inspiring the inclusion of 3 Gentile women in the lineage just to make a big point that Gentiles are not excluded.

Please, all of you from Asia, Africa, South America and anyone not an Israelite – listen to the 2 sermons I gave on "Encouragement for Gentiles" late in 2012.

What you may not have known, Jewish and several extra-biblical sources say **Ruth was a Moabite princess. She was the granddaughter of the Moabite King Eglon** – who occupied Israel for 18 years until the Judge Ehud killed him (Judges 3). Eglon himself was the grandson of the infamous Balak, king of Moab in Moses' time. Balak was the one who enticed Balaam to try to curse Israel (Numbers 22-24).

So Yehowah is so merciful that He even chooses a descendant of the despised Moabite kings Balak and Eglon to be part of His lineage. Praise to Yah!

That also means that King David himself was part Gentile-Canaanite-Moabite and part Jewish – but that's getting ahead of the story. But I can't resist: **and it means Yeshua Himself as a man, had some Gentile blood in him as well, from Mary's ties to Gentiles in her line.** Did you deeply realize that before? Keep that in mind.

Moabites came from Moab-- who was one of the sons from the incestuous intercourse Lot had with his daughters after Sodom was destroyed (Genesis 19:36-38). The daughters thought the whole world had been blotted out, that they were the only ones left alive, and that the future of mankind rested on them to produce children. So they gave birth to Moab and Ammon, who became thorns in Israel's side for millennia. Except in the story of RUTH. Her story must have happened during one of the times of relative peace between Israel and Moab when Elimelech took his sons to Moab during one of the droughts.

I really want to wait for my full sermon on Ruth, as there's SO MUCH in that little book – so let me just mention the hub of it.

- Elimelech and his son all die in Moab –leaving widows behind.
- After the famine, Ruth converts to the God of Israel
- Ruth and Naomi return—where?? To Bethlehem, which means "house of bread" – where the future Bread from Heaven (Yeshua) was born.

- This was all during the barley harvest, so that's why I will focus more on it in a later sermon.
- Ruth throughout this story is a humble, selfless daughter in law caring for her aging mother-in-law. How blessed we are to have children and in-laws when they care about you. It's a wonderful story.

Just like the story of TAMAR, the "Levirate marriage law" came to play in this story too. Boaz, a leader in Judah and much, much older than Ruth, took his responsibility and marries Ruth. Out of that union, came their son Obed, who begat Jesse, who begat David the king of Israel – and eventually the Messiah.

Moab and Judah, Gentile and Israelite – becoming one, symbolized by that marriage.

**Galatians 3:26-29**

"For you are ALL sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; *for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* 29 *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*"

**Romans 3:28-31**

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. 29 Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, 30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."

This is what the story of Ruth is ultimately about: Yehowah loves ALL people of the world. As John 3:16 says, God so loved the WORLD that He gave ....for the whole world, not just Jews. And as Galatians 3 says, in Christ we are all of one. We all come from His creation Adam and Eve – all of us do! And He is going to bring us back into the ONE BODY – but this time, we're considered as part of the body of the "Second Adam", Yeshua the son of God.

God chose GENTILES as well as Israelites to be in His family tree so that we know He MEANT what He told Abraham that through Abraham ALL NATIONS would be blessed by the coming Seed of Abraham. What better way to show that than to have Gentiles in the family tree?

Let me say it again: any of you from China, any of you from Central or South America, or from Africa, or the Arab countries, or from Asia and all around the world: DON'T believe what some are preaching that you have no inheritance with the covenant promises. I just read you two scriptures in Galatians and Romans – and there are many more – that ASSURE YOU, if you accept the one true living God as YOUR God and King, YOU are "in Christ" and become an inheritor of all the promises. Hear my two sermons about Gentiles given the last few months of 2012.

Yehowah WANTS you in His family too. He wants to be YOUR father too. He wants you to be His child too – as much as any Israelite or Jew. Frankly I am watching with much interest the explosion of people in China searching for the truth and wanting a relationship with their Creator. So all of you, my brothers and sisters in China, Japan, Russia, Kenya and everywhere-- welcome to Light on the Rock.

I will give a whole sermon soon just about Ruth, the book of Ruth, the barley harvest and then the wheat harvest – and Pentecost – in the next few weeks as we come to Shavuot or Pentecost. I think the main purpose of Ruth being mentioned in the lineage is that this is Messiah's exciting way of telling all Gentiles – “Yes, you too, can be part of my family. I am NOT ashamed of Moabites or Gentiles. If you do what Ruth did - -and accept the one true God of ABRAHAM, Isaac and Jacob – YOU can be in my family too.”

**So Gentiles in Russia, China, Japan, Kenya,** or Gentiles in America and Canada -- and around the world – put away your false gods. Put away your idols and pagan beliefs and come to the one true Living God in heaven. Call out to him and ask Him to let you be His child. Repent of all your sins, confess Him as Lord over your life and ask Him to cover your sins in the blood of the Lamb of God. Then be baptized and receive the holy Spirit, and you also will be a child of Abraham and heir of the promises.

It's time to wrap this up. Next time we'll cover in-depth some things you may not have known about the two remaining women mentioned in scripture. You know their overall stories well, but I've dug up some interesting things about the last 2 that will be a good wrap-up of this 2 part teaching. *You'll be amazed what you probably didn't know before about Bathsheba and Mary.*

Until next time, this is your brother in Christ wishing you all the peace, shalom, and blessings in the Messiah. May Yehowah bless you and may His face beam with joy as you live a life pleasing to Him in Messiah. May Yehowah guard and keep you, and bring you peace.