

December 14/15, 2024
"Scandal in the Family Tree"
Pastor Aaron Buer



SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.

2024 Challenge: Finding Jesus in the Old Testament

December: Read Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Haggai to see how people, situations and events point to Jesus

Day 1 [Matthew 1:1-6](#) | God's Heart Revealed

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram. Matthew 1:3

Matthew's gospel begins with a surprise. Rather than starting with an epic story or a cliffhanger introduction, Matthew begins with a list of names. These names (or genealogy) serve a specific role—they point to Jesus as the long-awaited Savior or Messiah. During the past two weeks, we've considered the beginning of this genealogy, specifically Jesus's relationship to Abraham and David. This week, Matthew's genealogy takes an unexpected turn and features an unlikely cast of characters. Matthew includes multiple women in his genealogy—such as Tamar, Rahab and Ruth—which was uncouth for the day. As we will explore, Matthew's inclusion of these women reveals something about the heart of God and the type of Savior Jesus is. Jesus is the Savior for *all* people, including women, the vulnerable and all those looking for redemption.

We tend to have preconceptions about how God works. But he often works in unexpected ways and through unexpected people. Matthew's genealogy reveals God's heart for the outsider, the oppressed and the forgotten and his heart to redeem. This week, we will consider how these truths about his character should transform how we understand him and how we treat and respond to others.

TODAY: Spend time praising God for who he is. Join Ada Bible Worship as they sing, "[Holy, Holy, Holy](#)." As you do, think about the character of God and ask him for the grace to think rightly about him and his greatness.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Micah 6](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Reflect on Jesus's teaching about true worship ([John 4:23-24](#)).

Day 2 [Ruth 4:13-22](#) | God's Heart for Women

The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel!" Ruth 4:14

Ruth was a Moabite widow following the death of her husband, Mahlon. In an act of faith, Ruth journeys with her mother-in-law, Naomi, to the land of Israel, where she eventually meets and marries Boaz. Through the working of God and an unlikely set of circumstances, Ruth, a Moabite woman, would eventually become the great-grandmother to King David, the ancestor to Jesus the Messiah. When Matthew includes Ruth in his genealogy of the Messiah, it draws attention to this story and the unexpected working of God behind the scenes. God has been working throughout all of human history through women and elevating them in the process. Women throughout the Bible, including the New Testament, such as Lydia ([Acts 16:14](#)), Phoebe ([Romans 16:1](#)), and Priscilla ([Acts 18:18-19](#)), have been used mightily by God.

God has a heart for women, and we should, too. Women have been devalued in myriad ways throughout human history. But this is *not* God's design. God values and honors women. As Jesus ministered with and to women, so we, too,

should value and appreciate the women in our lives. In the kingdom of God, women are not forgotten, marginalized or neglected. They are nurtured, appreciated and honored.

TODAY: Think about the women in your life who follow Jesus faithfully. They could be a friend, mother, grandmother or spouse. Thank God for their faithful influence in your life, and consider sending them a text or note thanking them for modeling how to love Jesus.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Micah 7](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus.

Day 3 [John 4:6-10](#) | God's Heart for the Vulnerable

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." John 4:10

Matthew's genealogy of the Messiah features a surprising cast of characters, including a widow and foreigners. Including these unexpected people points to a core value of God revealed in the Old Testament and echoed in the New Testament: *God cares for the vulnerable*. Throughout the Old Testament, God commands his people to care for the vulnerable, particularly widows, orphans and foreigners. These commands reveal God's heart for those who are less able to care for themselves.

God's care for the vulnerable reflects his heart, revealed in the gospel. Our greatest need is to be rescued from our sins. As sinners who have rebelled against God, we are all in need of rescue—rescue that we cannot perform on our own. Yet, God came on a rescue mission in Jesus Christ to "seek and save the lost" ([Luke 19:10](#)). Jesus entered a broken world and bore our sins on the cross. This Christmas season, we get to celebrate his coming and, ultimately, the work of salvation he accomplished.

TODAY: Caring for the vulnerable around you reflects God's heart to the world. Ask God to open your eyes to someone who needs support this Christmas season. Take one specific step to help them—whether bringing a meal to someone grieving, including a lonely person in your holiday plans or supporting a single-parent family.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Nahum 1](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Consider Jesus as both grace and truth ([John 1:14](#)).

Day 4 [John 8:3-11](#) | God's Heart to Redeem

Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." John 8:10-11

Religious leaders brought a woman caught in adultery to Jesus. They wanted to use her to trap Jesus in his words. However, Jesus saw past their trickery and winsomely responded to the self-righteous men: "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her" ([John 8:7](#)). The men leave, and Jesus says, "Neither do I condemn you... Go now and leave your life of sin" ([John 8:11](#)). For Jesus, this encounter is about grace and repentance. Jesus did not condemn her, but he did not condone her sin. It was both-and. This story reminds us that *both* grace *and* repentance (turning from sin) are key to the Christian life.

Grace is the spark that ignites a life of repentance. When we recognize that we have been spared from what we deserve (judgment) and have been granted what we do not deserve (salvation), gratitude and worship should be the result. God's forgiveness through Christ doesn't excuse our sin—it empowers us to walk away from it. Understanding and embracing God's grace and mercy should lead us toward grateful obedience.

TODAY: Examine your heart. Are there sins you've been excusing? Have you grown comfortable with disobedience? Confess these to God, thank him for his grace through Christ and write down one specific step you'll take to "leave your life of sin." If you have not yet received salvation through Jesus, today is a great day to do so. Email us at btw@adabible.org if you want to know more about following Jesus.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Nahum 2](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Focus on Christ's ultimate victory ([Revelation 19:11-16](#)).

Day 5 [Matthew 1:1-17](#) | Ancestors of the King

Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah. Matthew 1:17

Matthew's biography of Jesus begins with a genealogy that identifies Jesus as the long-awaited Savior. Matthew connects the coming of Jesus with the family line of Abraham and David. God promised Abraham (then Abram), "I will bless those who bless you . . . and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" ([Genesis 12:3](#)). Similarly, God promised David that he would raise up an offspring to succeed him. "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" ([2 Samuel 7:13](#)). Matthew demonstrates that Jesus is this long-awaited descendent of Abraham and David, the one who would establish God's kingdom and bring blessing to all peoples.

The Christmas season is a time to slow down and (re)consider the coming of Jesus as Savior. He is the long-awaited deliverer who fulfilled the promises of God—promises given thousands of years ago. In the life and ministry of Jesus, we see that Jesus is a shepherd king who loves and leads his people through sacrificial service. He cares for the broken and hurting and has come to "seek and save the lost" ([Luke 19:10](#)). He has a heart for all people, a heart that is to be reflected in the lives of those he has made his own.

TODAY: This Christmas is a perfect time to invite family or friends to church. We will offer multiple Christmas services at various times this weekend. Attend the service that best fits you and your family. Find times and locations at adabible.org/Christmas. As you prepare your heart for Christmas, join Ada Bible Worship as they sing "[What Child is This?](#)" Thank God for sending Jesus as the Messiah.

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Read [Nahum 3](#). Highlight anything that points to Jesus. Reflect on Jesus as the righteous judge ([John 5:22-23](#)).