

Preaching Dates

24 December

Irene Campbell (am) at
Westwood Baptist Church, East Kilbride
Alan Milnes (am) at
Leslie Baptist Church
Jim McNulty (am + pm) at
Islay Baptist Church

25 December

Phill March (am) at
Langdale Church Dunstable



“The Genealogy Of Jesus”

By Mark Donaldson

Two genealogies of Jesus are provided in the gospels of Matthew and Luke; with the former tracing the family line from Abraham to Joseph (Jesus' legal father and guardian) and the latter from the first man, Adam, through Mary's line (Jesus' genetic relative). Matthew, of course, balances Jesus' earthly lineage perfectly with a parallel account of His Heavenly origin, using the same Greek word, “*genesis*”, to introduce each section in the opening chapter.

Matthew also, very interestingly yet shockingly within the context of Jewish culture of the time, named four women within Joseph's family tree whose stories recount some very poignant moments within the historical narrative of the Old Testament: Tamar, a woman who resorts to trickery and incest because of the unfair way she is treated by her late husband's family. Rahab, the prostitute in Jericho, whose faith in the God of Israel played a pivotal role in its downfall. Ruth, the Moabitess, who left hearth and home out of loyalty to her mother-in-law and the God she had taken as her own despite being from a people under a curse and Bathsheba, a woman who found herself the unwitting victim of her powerful king's treachery - which included adultery, deceit and murder.

Yet, despite each troubling circumstance alluded to within these Gentile women's stories, a picture of persistence, faith, grace and redemption emerged: A foreshadowing of the wonderful salvation which their 'descendent' would bring to their broken and disfigured world; a salvation of grace for all who, like them, would place their faith in God.

The inclusion of these “outsiders” in Matthew's genealogy was, in common with all Scripture, inspired by the Holy Spirit: An indication that Jesus had come not only as the long-awaited Messiah of Israel, whose credentials Matthew had carefully presented, but as the Saviour of the entire world. For God's Son was to be named Jesus (Yeshuah), meaning the LORD is salvation, because His purpose in coming to earth had always been to save His people from their sin.

We celebrate the coming of Jesus at Christmas precisely because of the salvation He brought. A salvation we enjoy and have, as lay-preachers, the privilege of declaring in all its fullness as we expound God's Word. In light of the inclusion of these four women's names in Matthew's genealogy, let's be encouraged to remind those to whom we preach that our God is not looking for perfection but faith: That He is a gracious God, willing that none should perish. A God who is ready to look beyond our deepest sin and darkest circumstance, rather than abandon us to them, if we would come to Him in humble repentance and faith. He is the God who will take and use us where we are if we would but place ourselves under His mighty hand. He is the God of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba - the One who in grace through faith can transform and redeem the most hopeless of cases.