

Matthew 1:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

Analysis

And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse. This verse appears in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, remarkably including two Gentile women—Rahab and Ruth. The Greek *egennēsen* (ἐγέννησεν, "begat") indicates fathering or ancestry. The phrase *ek tēs Rachab* (ἐκ τῆς Ῥαχάβ, "of Rachab") explicitly names the mother, unusual in ancient genealogies which typically traced only patrilineal descent.

Rahab (Hebrew Rachav, רָחָב) was the Canaanite prostitute of Jericho who hid Israelite spies and confessed faith in Yahweh (Joshua 2:1-21, 6:22-25). Ruth was a Moabite widow who clung to her Israelite mother-in-law Naomi and declared, "Your God shall be my God" (Ruth 1:16). Both women were foreigners who entered Israel's covenant community through faith, becoming ancestors of David and ultimately Jesus.

Matthew's inclusion of these women (along with Tamar and Bathsheba, vv. 3, 6) demonstrates several crucial theological truths:

1. God's grace extends beyond ethnic Israel to include believing Gentiles
2. God's redemptive plan operates through unlikely, even scandalous, means
3. faith, not ethnicity or moral perfection, qualifies one for participation in God's purposes
4. the Messiah came to save sinners, foreshadowed by His genealogy including those with checkered pasts.

This anticipates the gospel's universal scope (Matthew 28:19, Ephesians 2:11-22).

Historical Context

Matthew wrote his Gospel primarily for Jewish Christians (likely 60s-80s CE), systematically demonstrating that Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecy and is the promised Davidic Messiah. The genealogy serves crucial apologetic purposes, establishing Jesus's legal right to David's throne through Joseph while highlighting divine sovereignty in using unexpected people.

Rahab's story (Joshua 2, 6) occurred during Israel's conquest of Canaan (circa 1400 BCE). Her faith saved her family and incorporated her into Israel. Jewish tradition honored her as a proselyte and paradigm of repentant faith (Hebrews 11:31, James 2:25). Salmon, from the tribe of Judah, married this former Canaanite prostitute, and their son Boaz became a wealthy landowner in Bethlehem.

Ruth's story (circa 1100s BCE) shows her commitment to Naomi and Yahweh despite widowhood and poverty. Boaz, as kinsman-redeemer, married Ruth, and their son Obed became grandfather to David. For Matthew's Jewish audience, these inclusions would have been startling—Gentile women, one formerly a prostitute, in Messiah's lineage. Yet they demonstrated God's consistent pattern of including outsiders through faith, preparing readers for the gospel's extension to all nations. The genealogy's structure (three sets of fourteen generations) further emphasizes divine ordering of history toward Christ's coming.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God's inclusion of Rahab and Ruth in Jesus's genealogy challenge our assumptions about who qualifies for God's purposes?

2. What does this verse teach about the relationship between faith and ethnicity in God's redemptive plan?
3. How should the scandalous elements in Jesus's genealogy affect how we view our own past or imperfections?
4. In what ways does this passage foreshadow the gospel's universal scope and availability to all who believe?
5. What does God's use of unlikely people in salvation history reveal about His character and methods?

Interlinear Text

Σαλμὼν	δὲ	έγένυνησεν	τὸν	Βοὸζ	ἐκ	τῆς	Ῥαχάβ·	Βοὸζ
Salmon	And	begat		Booz	of		Rachab	Booz
G4533	G1161	G1080		G1003	G1537		G4477	G1003

δὲ	έγένυνησεν	τὸν	Ωβὴδ	ἐκ	τῆς	Ῥούθ·	Ωβὴδ	δὲ
And	begat		Obed	of		Ruth	Obed	And
G1161	G1080		G5601	G1537		G4503	G5601	G1161

έγένυνησεν	τὸν	Ἰεσσαί						
begat		Jesse						
G1080		G2421						

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 11:31 (Parallel theme): By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

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

Ruth 1:4 (Parallel theme): And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

Ruth 4:21 (Parallel theme): And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed,

