

# **Ridin' High Cowboy Church**

**8771 FM 35**

**Union Valley/Royse City, TX**

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***"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace.  
In this world you will have trouble. But take heart!  
I have overcome the world."***

**John 16:11**

## **December 11, 2016 – Merry Christmas from the Fam O Lee**

Matthew wrote the first book in the New Testament and his book is about Jesus' life but instead of starting with his birth, he starts with a list of his ancestors (two reasons – 1. To prove Jesus was Jewish and 2. To prove he came from King David), required stuff for Jesus to be the messiah.

But like we talked about last week, Matthew does something very strange when he lists the people, he includes some people you would not want included in your family history.

It's like Matthew is doing this on purpose to make a point. He goes out of his way to make sure we know that not everybody related to Jesus was an upstanding person, many of them lived "R" rated lives.

Matthew knew that most religions including being Jewish require you to impress a god based on how you live. Matthew realized and wanted us to know that a new approach to God was not based on the good or bad things we do, but what Jesus has done.

***Matthew 1:1 This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:***

***2 Abraham was the father of Isaac.***

***Isaac the father of Jacob,***

***Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers*** (Jacob had twelve sons and two of them were really famous) one of them was Joseph and Judah was the other. Joseph was one of the best people listed in the bible and Judah was not so good (as we will see today). Most people would choose Joseph to be in their family, he lived a life much like Jesus, but God chose Judah. Why? Because that is the point of the Bible.

***3 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,*** All of Jacob's sons were jealous of Joseph because he was the favorite son.

## Genesis 37

***23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe – the ornate robe he was wearing – 24 and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty: there was no water in it.***

***25 As they sat down to eat their meal, (we just threw our brother in a well so he will die a slow death and someone says, Hey! It's lunch time!) they looked up and saw a caravan Ishmaelite's coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.***

***26 Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? 27 Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelite's and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.***

This is the Judah who is in the ancestry of Jesus our savior, they thought they would never hear from Joseph again. They take his coat and dip it in blood and LIE to their parents that he was killed and they keep this a secret. They look at an empty chair for Joseph every day for over 20 years.

Judah eventually goes on with his life and he gets married, he has three sons and he finds the oldest one a wife, her name is Tamar mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus, but the bible says **Genesis 38:7 "he did evil in the sight of the Lord and the Lord put him to death."** (I read that verse to my kids a lot)

So the way things worked back then, the next son had to take Tamar as his wife but he also "did evil in the sight of the Lord and the Lord Killed him" (this guy's story is the part I won't read in church, read that one for yourself).

So the third son is just a teenager and Judah is thinking this girl is bad luck so he tells Tamar when the boy is older, he will give her to him for a wife but for now just live as a widow (a terrible thing in those days basically begging for food.)

In truth Judah just forgot about her and wanted to be rid of her, he did not do what he was supposed to do.

So Tamar takes matters into her own hands, she dresses up like a prostitute and sits at the gate where Judah would sit and talk with the elders of the village (like Burgers & Fries!).

Judah sees her there and his wife had died a little while back, and he does not recognize her (shows how long it had been since he had seen her) and he

decided he is going to hire this prostitute, so they talk and decide the price for her services would be a goat. (I guess that was the going rate back then).

So Tamar says I need something to make sure you bring me the goat back and she says she wants his seal (the way he signed his name for business deals, basically like a credit card now days) and his staff, a useful tool for working sheep and they were unique to every shepherd.

So when Judah gets home from his rendezvous, he tells his servant, "Hey, I need you to take a goat to a prostitute who sits by the gate (don't ask any questions). The servant can't find her and all the men at the gate say there is no prostitute who hangs out here. So the servant goes back and says that he can't find her. So Judah just wants to forget about it and not let anyone know so he just lets it go.

Three months later someone comes running to Judah and says your daughter-in-law is pregnant and she never remarried, so she must have been prostituting.

Judah does what all people do who have a secret and pretend everything is OK with them, he gets really self-righteous (ever met someone who is always hammering everyone else about some sin and down the road you find out they were doing the same thing).

Judah says, "My daughter-in-law has shamed my family and she must be burned alive." Is this the same Judah who sold his brother into slavery and lied to his parents about it, the same Judah who promised to take care of his daughter-in-law and didn't do it.

So they get Tamar and start gathering wood to burn her, but Tamar has something of Judah's.

### **Genesis 38**

***25 As she was being brought out, she sent a message to her father-in-law. "I am pregnant by the man who owns these," she said. And she added, "See if you recognize whose seal and cord and staff these are."*** (the messenger must have said do you know what she is talking about, and Judah must have said OK, folks nothing to see here, the burning is cancelled, I forgot about the burn ban!)

***26 Judah recognized them and said, "She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn't give her to my son, Shelagh." And he did not sleep with her again.***

Tamar gives birth to a boy named Perez and he is in the family of Jesus.

I think, Matthew why would you include these people in the story of Jesus and mention Tamar by name, this is the kind of thing you usually hide, never talk about. Because that is the point of the Christmas story.

God since the first book of the Bible has chosen the broken, messed up people to accomplish his will on the earth.

20 years later there is a terrible famine in the land and Judah had to go to Egypt to buy grain. Joseph is the prime minister of Egypt now. Judah met Joseph again in Egypt.

Judah is a picture of person who got something he did not deserve, he is a picture that God's grace is available to people who have never made themselves available to God.

Judah fell before Joseph and had to accept undeserved grace and forgiveness from Joseph and we have to do the same thing.

This is your story, you are the point of Christmas, the story of Christmas is the story of a savior being born for people with secrets they never want told, with a past they can't seem to get away from.

When Jacob was really old and about to die, he called Judah into his tent hundreds of years before Jesus came and said, "Judah through your family will rise up a king and your brothers and their descendants will bow down to him."

Eventually, David was born and then Jesus.

The Message of Christmas is that God invited messed up people to have a relationship with based on what Jesus has done.