

Four Bad Women

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The Roman Catholic Church maintains that Mary was sinless, that she is the mother of God, and that she ascended to heaven and now intercedes with Christ on behalf of all who pray to her. Mother Tereasa even considered Mary co-redemptrix with Christ with the power to forgive sin and in this she was supported by Pope John Paul.

Scripture makes it plain that the Lord Jesus was sinless and in every way, perfect. He was *“holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens”* (Heb.7:26). It is unthinkable to the Catholic Church that such an one should, could be born of a woman that was a sinner. Didn't Jesus say that

“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?” (Matt.7:18).

An didn't Job say:

“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one” (Job 14:4).

Yet to deny that Mary was a sinner needing a Saviour is a denial of the statement that

“there is none righteous, no, not one...for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom.3:10,23).

The difference between the Lord Jesus and all other men was that He had no earthly father. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and God was His earthly father as well as His Heavenly Father.

When we were born we came into the world with the nature of our parent and the sinful nature of Adam was transmitted to each one of us. We were not guilty of what Adam did but we inherited a nature prone to do evil. Consequently we sin by choice and need to be saved from our sin. Jesus had no sinful Adamic nature and though He was tested in all points like as we are yet He chose not to sin and could say

“Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?” (John 8:46).

On the other hand Mary confessed:

“My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in

God my Savior. For he hath regarded ***the low estate of his handmaiden***" (Luke 1:46-48).

If we are to believe that Christ, who was sinless, could not be born of a sinner then how can we believe that Mary was sinless unless her mother was sinless and indeed all her forebears all the way back to Eve must also be sinless. But Eve sinned before Adam!

Much is made today of tracing our family tree and those of us who have boasted of our forebears have been surprised to find many skeletons in the cupboard. Some had criminal records while others were born out of wedlock in family tangles we would rather forget. The same is true of the genealogy of Joseph the legal father of Christ and God makes no attempt to hide the facts in the Old Testament record.

In Matthew's genealogy, which traces the line of Joseph from Abraham to the time of Christ, we have mention made of four women who had an unsavoury past.

Tamar the Harlot Begat Phares

The first is Tamar (Thamar) who bore Pharez(s) to Judah (Matt.1:3). Christ had to come from the tribe of Judah according to Jacob's prophecy (Gen.49:10) yet it is recorded in Genesis 38 that Judah had three sons to a Canaanite woman and the eldest son was Er, to whom he gave Tamar to be his wife.

Er was so wicked that the Lord slew him and Tamar was given to Judah's second son Onan as the custom was to raise seed to the deceased older brother.

Onan also was wicked and was slain by God but Judah's third son, Shelah, was too young to marry Tamar so he told her to go home to her father's house, to wear a widows clothes until the third son was old enough to marry her.

However, when Shelah was old enough Judah failed to keep his promise so Tamar covered her face as harlots did in those days, and when Judah passed by, she enticed him and asked for a pledge of his signet, bracelet and staff, to guarantee payment for her services.

When Judah was told that Tamar, his daughter in law was pregnant and had played the harlot he demanded that she should be burned. Tamar then produced the items belonging to Judah and his sin was

revealed. The child that was born was Pharez who is included in the line of Joseph the legal father of the Lord Jesus!

Later, when Boaz took Ruth to wife the elders at Bethlehem said,
“The LORD make the woman... like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah” (Ruth4:11-12).

Also, David had a beautiful daughter whom he named Tamar. Tamar means *Palm Tree* and her name was on the doors of God’s House where palm trees were carved and covered in gold.

Rahab the Harlot Begat Boaz

When Joshua led Israel into the land of Canaan the first city that was destroyed was Jericho. Two young men were sent in to spy out the land and when they came to Jericho they took accomodation in the boarding house run by a harlot named Rahab. She was in all probability an Egyptian (Isa.51:9) but she feared the Lord and helped the young men to escape on condition she and her household were spared when God destroyed Jericho.

Rahab was preserved and married Salmon to whom she bare Boaz the husband of Ruth. If the lineage of Christ had to be perfect for Christ to be perfect then why would God chose a converted harlot?

Ruth the Heathen Moabitess

The Book of Ruth tells the beautiful story of a Moabite girl who married one of Naomi’s sons but was widowed. Naomi and her husband had left the land of Judah and dwelt in Moab during a time of famine but then Naomi’s husband and two sons had died leaving three widows, Naomi and two Moabite daughters-in-law.

Naomi decided to return to her inheritance in Judah and the daughters-in-law had the choice of going to Judah with Naomi or staying in Moab. Ruth chose to not only go with Naomi, but also to trust in the God of Israel. Her people were descendants of Lot who had an incestuous relationship with his daughters while drunk after Sodom was burned. They worshipped the god Chemosh to whom they burned their children in sacrifice yet, by the grace of God, Ruth was elevated to the genealogy of Christ.

Bathsheba the Adultrous Mother of Solomon

Another sordid story can be told of David’s sin when he enticed Bathsheba while her husband Uriah was away on military duty. She was a Jewess who married a converted Gentile *“stranger in*

Israel". After Uriah was killed in battle David's sin was exposed and he repented. Bathsheba then married David and later gave birth to Solomon who built the first Temple at Jerusalem and she entered the noble genealogy of Christ.

Bathsheba's grandfather, Ahithophel, was one of David's trusted counsellors but when David's son Absalom, led a rebellion against David, Ahithophel joined the rebellion. When Absalom rejected his counsel Athithophel went home to Gihon and hanged himself. Had Absalom taken Ahithophel's advice he might well have killed David.

Two of Bathsheba's sons were chosen by God to be in the line of Christ because another of Bathsheba's sons, Nathan, is mentioned in the genealogy of Mary in Luke 3:31; 1Chron.3:5. When the line of David through Solomon was taken to Babylon God said that none of Jehoiakim's sons would ever sit on the throne of David (Jer.36:30-31). Johoiakim's descendants continued down to Joseph the husband of Mary but Joseph was not the father of Jesus.

Mary was also a descendant of David through Nathan and when Jesus was born to Mary He was a son of David physically through the line of Nathan. Joseph was only the legal father of Jesus for He was conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Lessons to be Learned

While God requires that which is past, in grace, He blots out the past.

The story is told of a preacher in Ireland who returned to preach in the town where he grew up. When he entered the pulpit he found a note on the lectern which read, "If you preach here tonight, I'll tell all about your past". The preacher held the note high before the congregation and read it out, saying, "You can paint it across the sky and I'll paint over it, the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin!"

What we were in the past is under the blood of Christ and God has blotted it all out as with a thick cloud so that He cannot see it. The Apostle Paul said he was the "*chief of sinners*" because he murdered believers and threw others into prison. As a young man he joined with the murderers of the first martyr, Stephen, yet God took him up and mightily used him more than all other Apostles to establish the Church.