

# Coach House Church BEACONS

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## WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE

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I recently watched a few of the new episodes of the programme: Who do you think you are? It's where celebrities are given the opportunity to trace their family tree, to delve into the archives, meet historians who can unearth documents and discover their ancestors. For some this is a moving experience as they explore the difficult lives people had, how they had endured significant life events such as living through the holocaust-Robert Rinder. For some, there is amazement that they have royal blood-Josh Widdecombe. For others, they are thrilled to find family members on other continents –Judi Dench and so making their family line so much more interesting.

In the beginning of the new Testament there is a genealogy, a family description going back to Abraham, known as the father of the Israelites, which tracks the descendants all through the generations to the birth of Jesus. Read it in Matthew chapter 1. The genealogy is an important feature of Jewish culture as land rights and positions were passed down from father to son and accurate records ensured this happened within the law. It is the same with wealthy generations in our present day culture. Stately homes proudly display portraits of the ancestors and can identify who made and lost the wealth over generations, and who it will pass to next.

The other essential feature of this biblical family tree is that it traces Jesus lineage not just to Abraham but more importantly through the Royal Line of King David. Jesus is a rightful heir to the throne of David, he is of Royal blood. Isaiah prophesied hundreds of years before Jesus' birth:

### **Isaiah 9:6-7**

**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.**

**And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.**

This wasn't to say Jesus would be crowned a physical King on earth as King David was but that he would be an eternal King, a heavenly King, seated at the right hand of Almighty God.

The apostle Paul talks about this In Ephesians 1 where he describes the power of God that brought Jesus back to life:

**...the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.**

There is more information about Jesus family tree written a few books along in Luke 3: 23-38. Luke traces the family tree right back to Adam, such is the detail in the family records. The purpose of this is to establish Jesus as the Saviour of the human race. By tracking back to the root cause of sin, poor choices and mistakes, at the time of Adam, Luke can link the problem to a solution: God's great plan for a Saviour, the only way out of the mess.

Luke, in chapter 2:28 , describes how Jesus was presented to Simeon in the temple. Simeon was a man who had been waiting his whole life for this Saviour, a hope for both for Jews and for Gentiles. The combination of prophecies throughout the old testament, the detailed family records and inspiration of God's Holy Spirit allowed Simeon to look to the future, eagerly waiting a solution.

**Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss[d] your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."**

One of the great things about the family tree of Jesus is that it does not just mention the mighty and the good. It does mention those who would be looked

down on in any society such as Rahab the prostitute, for example and it does mention others, such as Ruth who were definite outsiders, not of pure Jewish descent. The whole point of this is to recognise that Jesus is the Saviour for everyone, despite their ancestry or roots.

Ruth is a key player in the genealogy of Jesus but on paper she would not have been identified as an important character if viewed through the eyes of the people of the time. That was because she was a Moabite, not a Jew. She married into a Jewish family but when her husband died before she had descendants, she made a brave choice. She chose to leave her own country, her own family and to accompany her mother-in-law, Naomi, back to Israel. This relocation should not be regarded lightly. As females, both Ruth and Naomi, had no income, no rights to land, no inheritance and yet they set off on a journey together.

In Ruth 1:16-17 the famous declaration is made by Ruth when Naomi tells her to stay with her own family.

**16 But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me."**

Ruth, the outsider, takes on the responsibility of searching for food, collecting grain left alongside the fields. Through Naomi's encouragement, Ruth then initiates a meeting with a wealthy landowner, Boaz. Boaz recognises Ruth's dedication and selfless attitude. He eventually takes on the legal responsibility for them both, marrying Ruth and the new family unit is established. Ruth and Boaz become the great grandparent's of King David and hence a significant part of the genealogy of Jesus.

It says in Matthew 1:5-6

**5 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,  
Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,  
Obed the father of Jesse,  
6 and Jesse the father of King David.**

Read the rest of the story in the book of Ruth. It is only 4 chapters long and it is a great book of hope in difficult circumstances, highlighting God's plan for us all. Ruth bravely did the right thing, taking care of Naomi, putting her trust in God to

provide for them both. When faced with tricky situations, this story reminds us to trust God because he always has a plan. Could Ruth have ever imagined what Hope her story would provide to future generations and one of her descendants would be Jesus, Saviour, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.



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