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Tamar Gave Birth to Twin Boys, She Named them Perez and Zerah **38: 27-30**

Tamar gave birth to twin boys, she named them Perez and Zerah DIG: Why is Tamar only in Matthew's genealogy? Why is Perez in both genealogies of Matthew and Luke?

REFLECT: What can we learn about God's grace from Judah's story? When has the LORD brought something good out of a bad situation for you? Where would you like to see some good come out of a bad situation today?



When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand; so assuming that the baby would be born first, the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his wrist and said: **This one came out first.** This would secure his right as the firstborn. **But** then, unexpectedly, he drew back his hand, and his twin brother came out, and she said: **So this is how you have broken out! And he was named Perez** because it means *breaking through*. His name is a word play in Hebrew, *paratzta peretz*, meaning *you have breached a breach*. **Then his brother, who had the scarlet thread on his wrist, came out and he was given the name Zerah,** which can mean *scarlet or shining* (38:27-30).

There is an interesting parallel between the birth of Rebekah's **twin boys** and those of

Tamar. In Rebekah's case, the firstborn came out with reddish hair (along with the red stew for which he sold his birthright), which caused his nickname to be Edom. His twin brother, Jacob, held on to his heel as he emerged, and even though he was not born first, he was chosen to be the seed son and receive the promises of **God**. In the case of **Tamar's** twins, the one that apparently was to be firstborn was likewise marked with a red or scarlet color, but was replaced by **his brother** who was destined to inherit the promises of **ADONAI**. Both **brothers**, as well as Judah's other living son, Shelah, eventually became ancestors of large families in the tribe of Judah but it was **Perez** who was the ancestor of King David (see the commentary on **Ruth, to see link click [Bd](#) - Coda: The Genealogy of David**) and eventually of **Jesus Christ**.⁵⁹⁰

Perez is listed in the genealogies of both **Matthew** and **Luke**, whereas **Tamar** is named only in **Matthew's** genealogy. There are two genealogies in the New Covenant because there were two requirements in the TaNaKh for kingship. One related to the Southern Kingdom of Judah with its capital of Jerusalem, which said that **the Messiah** had to be in the line of King David, *so no one who was not of Davidic descent could sit on the throne in Jerusalem*, and anyone who conspired to do away with the house of David was doomed to failure. The other related to the northern Kingdom of Isra'el with its capital of Samaria, which said *no one could sit upon Samaria's throne unless he had divine appointment*, and anyone who tried to become king without it was assassinated.

In a mother's womb were two babies. One asked the other: "Do you believe in life after delivery?" The other replied, "Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later."

"Nonsense" said the first. "There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be?"

The second said, "I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths. Maybe we will have other senses that we can't understand now."

The first replied, "That is absurd. Walking is impossible. And eating with our mouths? Ridiculous! The umbilical cord supplies nutrition and everything we need. But the umbilical cord is so short. Life after delivery is to be logically excluded."

The second insisted, "Well I think there is something and maybe it's different than it is here. Maybe we won't need this physical cord anymore."

The first replied, "Nonsense. And moreover if there is life, then why has no one has ever come back from there? Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery there is nothing

but darkness and silence and oblivion. It takes us nowhere.”

“Well, I don’t know,” said the second, “but certainly we will meet Mother and she will take care of us.”

The first replied “Mother? You actually believe in Mother? That’s laughable. If Mother exists then where is She now?”

The second said, “She is all around us. We are surrounded by her. We are of Her. It is in Her that we live. Without Her this world would not and could not exist.”

Said the first: “Well I don’t see Her, so it is only logical that She doesn’t exist.”

To which the second replied, “Sometimes, when you’re in silence and you focus and you really listen, you can perceive Her presence, and you can hear Her loving voice, calling down from above.”

- a parable from Your Sacred Self by Dr. Wayne Dyer

The purpose of Matthew’s genealogy is to show that if Jesus really were Joseph’s son, He could not be King. **Mattityahu** focuses on the story from Joseph’s viewpoint. He starts his gospel with the genealogy and presents us with a problem. The problem is that **Matthew** breaks Jewish tradition by adding the names of women and skipping names, both of which are forbidden in formal Jewish genealogies. But the biggest problem in **Matthew’s** genealogy is that we are told that Joseph was a direct descendant of Solomon and then **Jeconiah**. In **Jeremiah 22:24-30** we are told that a curse has been put on **Jeconiah** and no descendant of his could sit upon the throne of David. *So if Jesus really were Joseph’s son, He could not be King.* So even though Joseph was a descendant of King David, he was also a descendant of **Jeconiah**. **Matthew** solves this problem with the virgin birth.

Because **Mattityahu** breaks with Jewish tradition and lists women, **Tamar** is listed in **his** genealogy. **He** also mentions **Rahab**, **Ruth** and the woman **who had been Uriah’s wife, Bath-Sheba**. It is remarkable that all four of these women were Gentiles who came to a believing faith in the **God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob** by other Jews. **Tamar**, who posed as a prostitute, was a Canaanite, **Rahab**, was a prostitute and a native of Jericho and presumably also a Canaanite, **Ruth**, who persuaded Boaz to marry her after spending the night at his feet, was from Mo’ab, **Bath-Sheba**, who committed adultery with King David, was probably a Hittite (by marriage to Uriah, if not by birth), and the Hittites were the second of eleven Canaanite nations. Yet in spite of the apparent unsavory past of these

women, each one became faithful believers and **ADONAI** honored them by placing them in **Matthew's** genealogy. The one who was, in **her** early days, probably the most carnal of them all was **Rahab**, and **she** has actually been included by **the Holy Spirit** in the great catalog of the heroes of the faith in **Hebrews 11:31**. What a marvelous testimony to **the LORD's** grace and the truth that **He** forgives past sins and brings new life to those who ask for forgiveness.⁵⁹¹

The purpose of Luke's genealogy is to show that Jesus is King of the Jews by divine appointment. **Luke** focuses on the story from Mary's viewpoint. **Luke's** genealogy follows strict Jewish custom and he mentions no women, not even Mary whose line he is tracing, and **he** skips no names. **He** shows why **Jesus** could be King, because **Christ** was a descendant of David, but apart from **Jeconiah**. Both genealogies trace descendants down to King David, and then they split with two of his sons, Solomon and Nathan. Joseph's genealogy was traced through Solomon and **Jeconiah**, whereas Mary's genealogy was traced through Nathan. So there was no blood of **Jeconiah** in **Yeshua** and therefore, **He** could be King. But that did not solve the entire problem because there were many other descendants apart from **Jeconiah** after Nathan. Why would **Jesus** be chosen above all the others? Because of the virgin birth, **Luke** proves that **Jesus is King of the Jews as a result of divine appointment**.

Judah did not act in ignorance. **He** brought shame on **himself** by the sinful decisions **he** made. However, **the LORD** did not write **him** off. **He** showed grace to **Judah** and worked out his sovereign plan even through Judah's wrong choices because his son **Perez** became a Seed son, and an ancestor of **Yeshua Messiah (Luke 3:33)**. Therefore, it should be no surprise that the grace and mercy of **ADONAI** extends to us as well. No matter who you are or what you have done, **God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).**⁵⁹²

When Joseph was sold into slavery, all seemed lost. But by the grace of **God**, **He** would not only save Joseph, but **He** would save the entire nation of Isra'el. **ADONAI** had called Jacob back to Bethel (**28:20-22; 31:13**), but he took his family to Shechem instead and his family was seduced by the worldly Canaanites. His oldest son then slept with his father's concubine Bilhah (**35:21-22a**). Then the prince of Shechem raped his daughter and his sons deceived and slaughtered the men of the city for revenge, then took their wives and children captive (**34:25-29**). The morality of his sons had sunk so low that they sold their brother Joseph off into slavery (**37:25-36**). And just when Jacob thought it couldn't get any worse, Judah moved away and married a Canaanite woman just as his brother Esau had done (**38:2**). But when **Judah** fathered a child with **his daughter-in-law Tamar** because



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he mistook **her** for a prostitute, the family had hit rock bottom **(38:12-30)**. The terrible influence of the Canaanites was so damaging to Jacob's family, it reached the point where **the LORD** had to act. No further damage could be done. If **He** did not intervene and literally drive them out of Canaan and isolate them in the land of Egypt, they would be lost. By **God's** grace, Joseph would save them.