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## **Was the harlot Rahab, mentioned in the book of Joshua, the same person who is mentioned in Matthew 1:5, as being an ancestor of Jesus Christ?**

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The answer is yes. She was that very same person. And this is significant, as we will see.

To begin with, we should mention that Christ's genealogy, as set forth in Matthew 1:1-17, is different, to an extent, from the genealogy as set forth in Luke 3:23-38. The reason is that the genealogy in Matthew "is traced through Joseph, Jesus' legal (though not natural) father, and it establishes His claim and right to the throne of David (1:6). The genealogy in Luke 3:23-38 is evidently that of Mary..." (compare Ryrie Study Bible).

There can be no doubt that the woman Rahab, who is described in the book of Joshua as protecting and rescuing the Israelite spies in the city of Jericho, was a harlot (see our Q&A on this topic).

In that above-mentioned Q&A, we are also saying that "Rahab later married Salmon and brought forth Boaz. Boaz married Ruth and brought forth Obed. Obed, in turn, brought forth Jesse, the father of David (compare Matthew 1:5-6). David became the forefather of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and of Mary herself..."

We also said:

"The only women specifically mentioned by name in the genealogy of Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 1, besides Rahab, are Mary, the wife of Joseph (verse 16), who was a righteous woman; Tamar, the daughter in law of Judah (verse 3), who played the HARLOT with him since he had broken his promise to give her one of his sons in marriage

(compare Genesis 38:1-30); and Ruth, a non-Israelite from the tribe of Moab (verse 5). One more woman is mentioned, without naming her directly, in verse 6, where we read: 'David the king begot Solomon by her [who had been the wife] of Uriah.' This refers to Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, whom David had killed, after Bathsheba became pregnant as a result of David's adulterous affair with her.

"All of these women are listed in the genealogy of Jesus, the stepson and foster child of Joseph. They are listed because they deserved to be listed--not because of their weaknesses and sins, but because of their subsequent repentance and faith. Rahab is no exception. She clearly was a harlot and she was known as such, but she acted upon faith, repented and changed her lifestyle, and she is today memorialized in God's Word as one of the ancestors of Jesus' stepfather Joseph. In addition, she was an ancestor of Mary, the mother of Jesus--which means that Jesus Christ was a direct descendant of Rahab! (Compare Luke 3:32 with Matthew 1:5, showing that Boaz, an ancestor of King David, was the son of Salmon and Rahab). Most importantly, however, is the fact that she will be in the first resurrection (Hebrews 11:31, 39-40)."

This conclusion is, as far as we can see, supported overwhelmingly by the most respected commentaries.

The New Bible Commentary:Revised states regarding Matthew 1:5: "Rahab had been a harlot and was a foreigner (Jos. 2)."

The Nelson Study Bible agrees, saying that Rahab, mentioned in Matthew 1:5, was "the Canaanite harlot of Jericho (Josh. 2)."

The commentary by Dummelow states: "Contrary to Jewish custom... Matthew introduces into his genealogy four women, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. Of these, two (Rahab and Ruth) were Gentiles, and three were guilty of gross sins... Jewish Christians instead of regarding Gentile converts with contempt, should be proud of them, as their ancestors were of Rahab and Ruth, who, on becoming proselytes, were accounted mothers in

Israel..."

The Life Application Bible writes to Christ's genealogy in Matthew 1: "Some were heroes of faith--like Abraham, Isaac, Ruth, and David. Some had shady reputations--like Rahab and Tamar. Many were very ordinary--like Hezron, Ram, Nahshon, and Akim. And others were evil--like Manasseh and Abijah. God's work in history is not limited by human failures or sins, and he works through ordinary people..."

The Jamieson Fausset and Brown commentary states:

"Four women are here introduced; two of them Gentiles by birth - Rachab and Ruth; and three of them with a blot at their names in the Old Testament - Tamar, Rachab, and Bath-sheba. This feature in the present genealogy - herein differing from that given by Luke - comes well from him who styles himself in his list of the Twelve, what none of the other lists do, 'Matthew the publican'; as if thereby to hold forth, at the very outset, the unsearchable riches of that grace which could not only fetch in 'them that are afar off,' but teach down even to 'publicans and harlots,' and raise them to 'sit with the princes of his people.'... It will be observed that Rachab is here represented as the great-grandmother of David (see Ruth 4:20-22; 1 Chronicles 2:11-15) - a thing not beyond possibility indeed..."

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible adds:

"There are four women, and but four, named in this genealogy; two of them were originally strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, Rachab a Canaanitess, and a harlot besides, and Ruth the Moabitess; for in Jesus Christ there is neither Greek, nor Jew; those that are strangers and foreigners are welcome, in Christ, to the citizenship of the saints. The other two were adulteresses, Tamar and Bathsheba..."

The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge supports the conclusion as well that the harlot Rahab was indeed the same person as the one listed in Matthew 1.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible reads:

"That Salmon begat Boaz, is affirmed in [Ruth 4:21] but it is not there said, nor any where else in the Old Testament, as here, that he begat him of Rahab, that is, of Rahab the harlot. This the Evangelist had from tradition, or from the Jewish records. That the Messiah was to spring from Boaz is asserted by the Jewish writers... and they also own that Rahab was married to a prince in Israel, which some say... was Joshua: they pretend that she was ten years of age when the Israelites came out of Egypt; that she played the harlot all the forty years they were in the wilderness, and was married to Joshua upon the destruction of Jericho.

"To excuse this marriage with a Canaanitish woman, they tell us, she was not of the seven nations with whom marriage was forbid; and moreover, that she became a proselyte when the spies were received by her: they own that some very great persons of their nation sprung from her, as Jeremiah, Maaseiah, Hanameel, Shallum, Baruch, Ezekiel, Neriah, Seraiah, and Huldah the prophetess. The truth of the matter is, she became the wife of Salmon, or Salma, as he is called [1 Chronicles 2:11]. And in the Targum on Ruth 4:20 [it] is said [that Salmon was] of Bethlehem; he was the son of Nahshon or Naasson, a famous prince in Judah, and the head and captain of the tribe [Numbers 1:7, 12]. And from Rahab sprung the Messiah, another instance of a Gentile in the genealogy of Christ..."

Rahab became indeed the wife of Salmon, and they brought forth Boaz, the later husband of Ruth.

The New International Version translates Matthew 1:5-6: "Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David..."

The Living Bible states: "Salmon was the father of Boaz (Rahab was his mother)..."

The Jerusalem Bible states: "Salmon fathered Boaz, whose mother was Rahab..."

Therefore, there should not be any doubt that the harlot Rahab was indeed an ancestor of Jesus Christ.

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