

## The Ancestors of the Messiah: Pushing the Boundaries Towards Redemption

King David descends from three women – Ruth, Tamar, and Lot's daughters – all of whom pushed (crossed?) sexual boundaries. Since the Messiah will descend from King David, what does that tell us about how ultimate redemption will arise?

### Source 1 – Read Genesis Chapter 38 (preferably the entire chapter)

Questions: What are the character traits of Tamar and Judah in this story? In what way does Tamar “redeem” Judah?

### Genesis - Chapter 38

- כד** וַיְהִי כְּמִשְׁלֹש חֳדָשִׁים, וַיִּגַּד לִיהוּדָה לֵאמֹר זָנְתָה תָמָר כַּלְתֶּךָ, וְגַם הֵנָּה הָרָה, לְזָנוּנִים; וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה, הוֹצִיאוּהָ וְתִשְׂרֹף.
- כה** הוּא מוֹצֵאתָ, וְהִיא שְׁלָחָה אֶל-חַמְיָה לֵאמֹר, לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-אֵלֶּה לוֹ, אֲנֹכִי הָרָה; וְתֹאמְרִי, הֶכֶר-נָא--לְמִי הַחֲתָמֹת וְהַפְּתִילִים וְהַמָּטָה, הָאֵלֶּה.
- כו** וַיִּכְּר יְהוּדָה, וַיֹּאמֶר צְדָקָה מְמֹנִי, כִּי-עַל-כֵּן לֹא-נִתְתִּיחָהּ, לְשָׁלַח בְּנִי; וְלֹא-יִסַּף עוֹד, לְדַעְתָּהּ.
- כז** וַיְהִי, בְּעֵת לְדֹתָהּ; וְהִנֵּה תְאוּמִים, בְּבֶטְנָהּ.
- כח** וַיְהִי בְּלִדְתָהּ, וַיִּתֵּן-יָד; וַתִּקַּח הַמִּילְדָּת, וַתִּקְשֹׁר עַל-יָדוֹ שָׁנִי לֵאמֹר, זֶה, יֵצֵא רֵאשִׁיטָה.
- כט** וַיְהִי כְּמִשִּׁיב יָדוֹ, וְהִנֵּה יֵצֵא אָחִיו, וְתֹאמְרִי, מֵה-פְּרָצְתָּ עָלֶיךָ פָּרֶץ; וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ, פֶּרֶץ.
- ל** וְאַחַר יֵצֵא אָחִיו, אֲשֶׁר עַל-יָדוֹ הַשָּׁנִי; וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ, זֵרַח.
- 24** And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told to Judah, saying: 'Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; and moreover, behold, she is with child by harlotry.' And Judah said: 'Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.'
- 25** When she was brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law, saying: 'By the man, whose these are, am I with child'; and she said: 'Discern, please, whose are these, the signet, and the cords, and the staff.'
- 26** And Judah acknowledged them, and said: 'She is more righteous than I; forasmuch as I did not give her Shelah my son.' And he knew her again no more.
- 27** And it came to pass in the time of her labour that, behold, twins were in her womb.
- 28** And it came to pass, when she laboured, that one put out a hand; and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying: 'This came out first.'
- 29** And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold his brother came out; and she said: 'Wherefore have you made a breach for yourself?' Therefore his name was called Peretz.
- 30** And afterward his brother came out, who had the scarlet thread upon his hand; and his name was called Zerah.

## Source 2 – Read the end of chapter 4 of the Book of Ruth (below)

Question: How does the genealogy of King David (and therefore the Messiah) trace itself back to Judah? [Hint: Look at Genesis 38:29]

- יח וַיֵּאֱלֶה תּוֹלְדוֹת פֶּרֶץ, פֶּרֶץ הוֹלִיד אֶת-חֶצְרוֹן.** 18 Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez begot Hetzron;
- יט וְחֶצְרוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת-רָם, וְרָם הוֹלִיד אֶת-עַמִּינָדָב.** 19 and Hetzron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadav;
- כ וְעַמִּינָדָב הוֹלִיד אֶת-נַחֲשׁוֹן, וְנַחֲשׁוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת-שַׁלְמֹה.** 20 and Amminadav begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon;
- כא וְשַׁלְמוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת-בְּעוֹז, וּבְעוֹז הוֹלִיד אֶת-עוֹבֵד.** 21 and Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Oved;
- כב וְעוֹבֵד הוֹלִיד אֶת-יֵשׁוּ, וְיֵשׁוּ הוֹלִיד אֶת-דָּוִד.** 22 and Oved begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

## Source 3 – Read Genesis 19:30-38

Compare this story of Lot's daughters to that of Tamar in Genesis 38. Why do you think the ancestors of the Messiah contain stories of "sacred seduction"? Why are they not condemned for breaking sexual taboos (incest, adultery)?

- ל וַיַּעַל לוֹט מִצּוֹעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּהָר, וּשְׁתֵי בָנָתָיו עִמּוֹ, כִּי יָרָא, לְשֹׁבֵת בְּצוֹעַר; וַיֵּשֶׁב, בְּמַעְרָה--הוּא, וּשְׁתֵי בָנָתָיו.** 30 And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar; and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.
- לא וַתֹּאמֶר הַבְּכִירָה אֶל-הַצְעִירָה, אָבִינוּ זָקֵן; וְאִישׁ אֵין בְּאֶרֶץ לְבוֹא עָלֵינוּ, כְּדָרֶךְ כָּל-הָאָרֶץ.** 31 And the first-born said to the younger: 'Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth.
- לב לָכֵן נִשְׁקָה אֶת-אָבִינוּ יַיִן, וְנִשְׁכְּבָה עִמּוֹ; וְנַחֲמֶה מֵאָבִינוּ, זָרַע.** 32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.'
- לג וַתַּשְׁקִין אֶת-אָבִיהָ יַיִן, בַּלַּיְלָה הוּא; וַתְּבֹא הַבְּכִירָה וַתִּשְׁכַּב אֶת-אָבִיהָ, וְלֹא-יָדַע בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ וּבְקוּמָהּ.** 33 And they made their father drink wine that night. And the first-born went in, and lay with her father; and he knew not when she lay down, nor when she arose. . . .
- לד וַתֵּלֶד הַבְּכִירָה בֵּן, וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מוֹאָב: הוּא אָבִי-מוֹאָב, עַד-הַיּוֹם.** 37 . . . And the first-born bore a son, and called his name Moab--the same is the father of the Moabites to this day.