

# The Genealogy of Jesus

By Kathy Applebee

## Characters

Narrator	Tamar	
Sarah	Rahab	Minor roles
Rebekah	Naomi	
Leah	Ruth	Miriam
Shiprah	Bathsheba (Uriah's wife)	Pharaoh's daughter's maid
Puah	David	Rahab's children
Pharaoh's wife	Athaliah	Orpah
Jocabed	Jehosheba	Nurse (Joash)
Pharaoh's daughter	Mary	
Pharaoh	Gabriel	

NARRATOR: A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:  
Abraham was the father of Isaac, whose mother was Sarah

*Insert Sarah monologue*

SARAH: I was old and well advanced in years when three guests showed up at my husband Abraham's tent. One said "About this time next year Sarah will have a son." I was past the age of childbearing so I laughed to myself thinking, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

But nothing is impossible with God. The Lord was gracious and brought me laughter. I, at ninety years of age, became pregnant and bore a son.

NARRATOR: Isaac was the father of Jacob, whose mother was Rebekah

*Insert Rebekah monologue*

REBEKAH: I grew up in the town of Nahor, but was married to a man almost 500 miles away. Once I left home I knew I would never return. As I left, they blessed me saying

"Our sister, may you increase  
to thousands upon thousands;  
may your offspring possess  
the gates of their enemies."

But it seemed like it would never happen. For twenty years we tried to have children. It wasn't until my husband Isaac prayed that I became pregnant. I had twins, Jacob and Esau.

But things were still not easy for me. The boys did not get along. The older one was godless, marrying disgusting Hittite women. He held a grudge against Jacob and consoled himself with thoughts of murdering him. I did not want to lose both in one day, like Eve did when Cain killed Abel. So I sent Jacob away for 20 long years. Yet I managed because nothing is impossible with God.

NARRATOR: Jacob was the father of Levi and Judah and their brothers, Leah and Rachel were his wives

*Insert Leah monologue based on Genesis 29-31.*

LEAH: Do you have any idea what it's like to never measure up? To try your best but always fall short? To live in your sister's shadow your entire life?

I do.

All the while growing up I was second best to my younger sister Rachel. She was the beautiful one. She was the beloved one. She was the one Jacob asked to marry and gladly worked for seven long years to have her. And for seven long years I was unloved, unwanted, (*Agonized Sniffle*) unchosen by anyone. (*Crying*)

My father despaired of ever being rid of me, so he devised a plan, a plan to trick Jacob into marrying me so he could be rid of me, his daughter, the one who never quite measured up. (*wipes away tears*)

When God saw that I was not loved, he opened my womb. (*hopeful*) I gave birth to a son and named him Reuben, thinking, surely my husband will love me now. (*hopes dashed*) But he did not.

I conceived again, and gave birth to Simeon. (*hopeful*) I thought "the LORD heard that I am not loved, so he gave me this one too." (*happy*) And after Levi was born I thought, "Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons."

(*hopes dashed*) But he did not. Not after four. Not after five. (*Crying*) After my sixth, Zebulon was born I thought, "God has presented me with a precious gift. (*slightly hopeful*) This time my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him six sons.

But he did not. (*Through tears*) I gave him a daughter. (*with heart wrenching desperation*) I gave him everything I could but it still wasn't enough.

Was I ever loved? Ever chosen? Yes, because nothing is impossible with God. The Lord does not judge by outward appearance but by the heart. And the Lord chose me to be the mother of Judah, from whom the kings of his people and the Messiah descended. The Lord chose me to be the mother of Levi, from whom the priesthood descended.

NARRATOR: Levi was the father of Kohath

Kohath was the father of Amram

Amram, who was married to Jocabed, was the father of  
Aaron, Moses and Miriam.

*Insert skit about Midwives and Moses*

PHARAOH 'S WIFE (*Concerned*) These Israelites are multiplying faster than flies. No, not flies. Flies are an annoyance. They multiply like locusts. Swarms of locusts that will descend on Egypt and eat our crops and leave us to starve.

(*Heartlessly to unseen minions*) Use them ruthlessly. Use them up. Make their lives bitter with hard labor. Let them build store cities for you, (*with pride*) the Pharaoh, the most powerful man in all of Egypt. No, in the entire world.

PHARAOH: Let it be so.

SHIPHRAH: (*Leaning towards audience as if drawing them into her confidence to share a secret*) Pharaoh has decided that when I help Hebrew women in childbirth I should kill the boys; but if it is a girl, let her live. What kind of a monster is he? Is it not enough that we toil under the sun, building his cities and pyramids? Is it not enough that the whip lashes us like we are cattle? Must he take away our only joy, our precious children as well?

(*Drawing herself up straight, firm in her conviction*) I am Shiphrah, Hebrew midwife, not Shiphrah, assassin for the Egyptians. They may force me to cook their food, wash their feet, accept their blows but they will never force me to kill the babies of my sisters, my friends, my daughters.

Never! (*Looking up and to the right at the Pharaoh*) Do you hear me Pharaoh? (*Raising her fist*) NEVER!

PHARAOH'S WIFE: (*Exasperated to audience*) No matter what we do, the Hebrews multiply like rats and if we are not careful like rats they will gnaw away at Egypt until there is nothing left but these accursed Hebrews! The more we oppress them, the more they spread. If war breaks out, those Hebrews will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country. (*hands on hips*) That must not happen.

(*Slyly*) But do not kill them. No, they are far too useful as slave labor. (*To unseen minions*) Use the men ruthlessly. Use them up. Wear them out. Make them unable to raise their fists against us. (*Walking over to stand above the seated Puah who appears to be cowering*) When they give birth, kill the boys but keep the girls alive to serve us. (*Laughs at her own cleverness*)

PHARAOH: Let it be so.

PUAH: (*Some Outrage, some sarcasm*) I have new orders; despicable orders. (*Stands, looks around to make sure she is not overheard and directly to the audience, imitating the voice of Pharaoh's wife*) Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live. (*Switches to own voice*) Those are the new orders.

The old orders weren't being obeyed so now we have the new orders. (*Mocking the voice of Pharaoh's wife*) "Throw those babies in the river". So the crocodiles can feed on Hebrew flesh and blood? I think not. Do they think we fear them so much we would stand by, watching a helpless baby be swallowed by the Nile? I think not.

I may only be a slave. *(With as much pride as Pharaoh's wife had)* But I am a Hebrew slave. I may be beaten, even killed for disobeying. But I, Puah the midwife, will not obey the Pharaoh. *(Resumes her position on the floor as if she is cowering and afraid)*

NARRATOR: God was kind to the midwives. Because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own

JOCABED: What shall I do? Pharaoh has decreed that boy babies be thrown into the Nile. But this child of mine, this precious baby boy, is no ordinary child. Miriam, we will hide your baby brother.

MIRIAM: I'll help. *(Freeze for two beats to show the passage of time)*

JOCABED: We have hidden him for three months but we can do so no longer. God must protect him now. Get me a papyrus basket. We'll coat it with tar and pitch. That will make the basket waterproof so when I place him in the Nile, he won't drown.

MIRIAM: Mama! Those crocodiles will eat him or the basket will tip and he'll drown.

JOCABED: Nothing is impossible with God, my child. Let us wait and watch and see what God will do.

MIRIAM: I'll stand at a distance to see what happens to him when you put him in the water.

*Pharaoh's daughter and her maids enter. Pharaoh's daughter points to the basket.*

PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER: Fetch me the basket.

*MAID 1 gets the basket and brings it to her.*

PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER: *(opening the basket)* it's one of the little Hebrew babies. He's crying. *(She lifts him out)* I think I will keep him and adopt him as my son. I will call him Moses because I drew him out of the water.

MIRIAM: Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?

PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER: Yes, go.

MIRIAM: Mama, Pharaoh's daughter is going to adopt him. God saved our baby. It is just as you said – nothing is impossible with God.

*JOCABED goes to and bows before PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER*

PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER: Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.

JOCABED: *(to audience)* So I took my baby and nursed him. When Moses grew older, I took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. But he never forgot who he really was. By faith, when he had

grown up, he refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. The LORD would speak to my Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. He led our people to freedom because (*with MIRIAM*) nothing is impossible with God.

NARRATOR: Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, who after being widowed twice, risked her life to have those children

*Insert Tamar monologue*

TAMAR: Judah's son Er married me. But he was wicked in the LORD's sight; so the LORD put him to death. His brother Onan treated me badly and the Lord also put him to death. Widowed twice, I was banished to my father's house rather than wed to the youngest son, Shelah because Judah was afraid he might die too.

I could have died alone and childless but with God nothing is impossible. He was with me when I risked my life to become a mother and because I was more righteous than Judah, he blessed me with twins.

NARRATOR:

Perez was the father of Hezron,  
 Hezron the father of Ram,  
 Ram the father of Amminadab,  
 Amminadab the father of Nahshon,  
 Nahshon the father of Salmon,  
 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, the prostitute of Jericho

*Insert Rahab monologue*

A: Mommy, mommy. Tell us the story of how you became an Israelite.

RAHAB: One day some men from Israel came to my house. The king of Jericho found out and commanded me to bring them out because they have come to spy out the whole land.

I said, yes, they were here. I had no idea where they came from. I'm a prostitute, not border patrol. At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.

I had hidden the men on the roof and spread flax over them to hide them. And then I told them how they could repay me. I said....

I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and that you completely destroyed Sihon and

Og, the two kings of the Amorites. When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death.

Then the spies said “Our lives for your lives! If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land. Just make sure this scarlet cord is hanging from the window.”

The next day I let them down by a rope through the window. My house was part of the city wall. I told them to hide in the hills for three days until the men sent to hunt them down returned.

The king shut the city gates so no one went out and no one came in. I gathered my whole family in my house. For six days all the Israelites did was march once around the city, carrying this golden box. Can you guess what the box was?

A: The Ark of the Covenant.

RAHAB: That's right. I was not easy keeping everybody inside. Your grandmother wanted to go home and one of the cousin's thought we were being stupid, having a scarlet cord hanging out the window like laundry drying. On the 7<sup>th</sup> day, the Israelites marched around 7 times, shouted, blew their trumpets. We felt a rumble, then all around us the walls were falling. The army marched in and took over but the two young men who I hid brought me, my parents' brothers and all who belonged to me to a place of safety outside their camp. You know why we were saved?

A: Faith

RAHAB: Yes, but a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. Even though I knew the LORD our God is God in heaven above and on the earth below, I had to act on my belief and save the spies.

A: But mommy, how could the city walls fall down with just shouts and trumpets?

RAHAB: Nothing is impossible with God.

NARRATOR: Boaz was the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, who was widowed, barren and yet went to a foreign land.

*Insert Ruth Monologue*

NAOMI: *(to Ruth and Orpah)* My daughters go back, each of you, to your mother's home.

ORPAH: We will go back with you to your people.

NAOMI: Return home; I am too old to have another husband or more sons.

ORPAH: Alright (*exits*)

RUTH: 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. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.

NAOMI: Then to Bethlehem we go.

WOMAN: (RAHAB): Can this be Naomi?

NAOMI: Don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara, because my life is very bitter. I went away full, but have come back empty. I am a widow, my two sons are dead. I have no land, no home. All I have is my daughter in law Ruth and she's not in much better shape. She's a widow too, unable to have children and a foreigner who must pick up leftover barely wherever she can so the two of us don't starve to death.

RUTH: Don't despair. For nothing is impossible with God. (*to audience*) God richly blessed me for choosing him over the gods of Moab. He blessed me with a kind hearted husband, a son and a great-grandson, David, who faced Goliath, knowing that nothing was impossible with God.

NARRATOR: Obed was the father of Jesse,  
and Jesse the father of King David,

DAVID: Goliath, I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands. Nothing is impossible with God.

NARRATOR: David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

*Insert Bathsheba monologue*

BATHSHEBA: Do you think it impossible to be forgiven? It is not. Some people tease me, Bathsheba, that I'm not the sharpest tool in the shed. They joke that I couldn't find sand if I fell off a camel. I am rather naive. I almost cost my son Solomon his kingdom by asking a favor for his elder brother. I'm glad Solomon saw through his brother's trickery, when he asked to marry Abishag. I didn't see the harm in it. But, like I said, I'm not the sharpest tool in the shed.

I shouldn't have been bathing on my rooftop where David could see me. But once he summoned me to the palace, what could I do? Even God compared me to a little lamb, a pawn, when he sent Nathan to confront David with his sin

I paid a steep price for my adultery. I became pregnant out of wedlock. My husband died, murdered because he was a noble man. The child I carried died as well, breaking my heart.

Yet God is a merciful God. He forgives. I had other children, four of them. One was Solomon, the man God blessed with wisdom.

NARRATOR: Solomon's son was Rehoboam,  
 Abijah his son,  
 Asa his son,  
 Jehoshaphat his son,

Jehoram his son, who married Athaliah,  
 Ahaziah his son,  
 Joash his son who was saved by his Aunt Jehosheba

*Insert Athaliah skit*

JEHOSHEBA: Mother, I bring bad news. Your son King Ahaziah has been killed in battle.

ATHALIAH: Then I shall rule in his place. Guards – find and kill my grandsons, every last one of them.

JEHOSHEBA: Kill all the grandsons. But why, mother?

ATHALIAH: Do you think I don't have the nerve or the strength? I come from a long line of ruthless rulers and strong women. My grandfather, Omri, did not let anyone stand between him and a throne. His son Ahab, married Jezebel who was a strong woman. She killed off all the Lord's prophets she could find. When Naboth would not sell his vineyard, she wrote letters in Ahab's name and had him killed. I'm every bit as strong as her.

When my husband and your father Jehoram became king, he put all his brothers to death so there would be no one to challenge him. Now be off, I have a throne to claim. Guards – find and kill my grandsons.

JEHOSHEBA: *(stage whisper, secretive)* Nurse, bring baby Joash and come with me. I will hide you both and save his life.

NURSE: *(Afraid)* Your mother will find out. We can't hide from her.

JEHOSHEBA: Nothing is impossible with God. *(to audience)* And I, with God's help, hid the baby who was rightfully king in the temple of the Lord for seven years. And he did become king. Queen Athaliah thought herself strong because she wasn't afraid to take lives. I know I am strong because I wasn't afraid to save a life, though it meant risking my own.

NARRATOR: Joash's son Amaziah fathered kings and exiles and eventually a child born to Mary.

GABRIEL: Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.

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MARY: (*Troubled*) What kind of greeting is this?

GABRIEL: Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.

MARY: How will this be since I am a virgin?

GABRIEL: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. For nothing is impossible with God.

MARY: I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said.

And it was as he said. But it was not easy. My betrothed Joseph sought to divorce me. I had to make a long journey in the final days of my pregnancy and gave birth in a stable. But we managed, for nothing is impossible with God.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> day we circumcised our son, offering two doves instead of a lamb. A poor man's offering. Then Magi from the east presented us with the most valuable, easily transported gifts. The timing was perfect. As in the time of Moses, a ruler sought to kill all the male children. Herod wanted no rivals. And we escaped to Egypt because nothing is impossible with God.

Simeon had warned me my heart would be pierced as with a sword. And it was. I had to watch as my son was beaten past recognition, mocked and hung to die on a Roman cross. Buried in a borrowed grave. How could I as a mother endure it? Nothing is impossible with God.

*All the women gather behind and around the NARRATOR in a semi circle. As the NARRATOR closes, each woman to whom the narrator refers, steps forward each time her circumstance is mentioned, then steps back, to remind everyone of their story.*

NARRATOR: Throughout the ages, women have faced impossible circumstances – barrenness, widowhood, sometimes multiple times. They have endured the death of their children. Being unloved, rejected, second best.

They have faced down cruel and oppressive regimes and ruler and defied ungodly laws. They risked their own lives to save a child's. They have left home and family. Some faced squarely their own sin and shame in order to turn from their old way of life to a life in God.

Women have faced uncertain circumstances and fresh pain with honor and nobility. And yet we women endure because...

ALL: Nothing is impossible with God.