THAT WRETCHED OLD FAMILY TREE

And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. Matt 1:16 (KJV)

Even Christ did not have to look back too many years until he found bad reputations in his family tree. I’m not sure what is absolutely true and what is primarily fiction but I was told that my great-grandfather Burtram’s grandfather was the first in our line to spell Burtram with one “t”. The story I was told was that either he or his brothers may have stolen horses so he was forced to change the spelling of his name. Either way it sounds like there could have been bad blood in my genes. Before my grandmother Sanders passed away she told me of one of my uncles way down the line that was killed because he crossed a picket line on the railroad. They killed him for being a “scab.” Oh well, before I found out those things I thought it was terrible that there had been some Methodist and Presbyterians in my family. Likely if some of my ancestors could speak to me they would say “you don’t know nothing.” Someone told me that a person needs a strong heart to trace his family tree. That may be true. Often we find out things we did not want to know.

Matthew tells of Rahab the harlot being in the line of Christ. It is his lineage that also speaks of Ruth the Moabitis. Judah begat twins of his daughter in law, of which was Pharez in the lineage of Christ. The sad thing is that one could take any person from that lineage and find fault in him or her. Christ was born in a long line of sinners. The wonderful thing is that Luke traced Jesus back to Adam because that is where the sin began. Jesus cross stood between heaven and earth, between God and man so that he became our mediator. It also stood between past and future so that sinners past and those to come could rely on the sacrificial death of Jesus to make them clean.

I cannot change what those in my family tree have done. Who they were cannot be changed. As a tree falls so shall it lay which means as they died so they remained. I cannot even change **my** past. Believe me there are things in my past that I wish could just go away but that is not possible but the one who hung on the cross for my ancestors hung also for me. Since I received Him as my savior he will never hold my past against me. “My sins are gone. I’ve been made free. My God my Savior has ransomed me.” May we always remember that Jesus died to save us from that wretched old family tree.

Yours in Christ,

Brother Randy Burtram