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Genealogy & Early Ministry



Survey of the Life of Christ - Steve Gregg

In this discussion, Steve Gregg explores the genealogy of Jesus as presented in the Bible. He explains why women were included in the genealogy, despite traditional genealogies typically listing only male ancestors. Gregg also proposes a solution to the apparent discrepancy in Joseph's and Mary's genealogies. Additionally, he touches on the early ministry of Jesus, including his baptism and temptation.

Transcript

In our last session, we covered the opening portion of the book of John, the first 18 verses of the Gospel of John, sometimes called John's Prologue to his Gospel, where he talks about Jesus' pre-existence in the form of God prior to becoming a man. And then we turned to the first two chapters of both Matthew and Luke, because there we have the birth narratives about Jesus. And we covered everything in them, with the exception of two items that need to be considered.

One, is that the genealogies of Christ are found in Matthew and in Luke. Interestingly, Luke and Matthew do not put them both in the same place relative to their stories. Matthew opens his account with the genealogy of Christ, and Matthew waits until he's already described the adult entrance of Jesus into ministry at age 30, and then in that connection gives his genealogy.

So that would be at the end of chapter 3 of Luke. We haven't actually studied chapter 3 yet, but in Matthew chapter 1, the opening verses give a genealogy of Christ, and Luke chapter 3, beginning at verse 23, also gives a genealogy of Christ, and it's been often observed that these genealogies are not identical. In some ways, they don't attempt to be identical.

For example, Matthew starts with Abraham, he starts his genealogies with Abraham and moves forward to Christ. Luke starts with Christ and works backward. But he doesn't work backward to Abraham, he works backward to Adam.

And even from there he says Adam was the son of God. So he traces the genealogy of Jesus all the way back to Adam. In Luke chapter 3. Whereas Matthew covers the

genealogy forward from Abraham in verses 1 through 17 of his gospel.

Now there are other differences, let me just make some observations. If you look at Matthew chapter 1, this obviously is written for the sake of a Jewish audience. I say obviously partly because I'm informed by other information in the gospel besides what we find in this opening verses, but even opening it, he says the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

He is concerned to show that Jesus' pedigree is from Abraham, that is he's Jewish, and secondly that he's from the line of David, which is the royal lineage. And then he begins to itemize it from Abraham forward in verse 2 and following. What's interesting about this genealogy, among other things, is that there are four women mentioned in the genealogy, which really breaks character.

When you consider all the genealogies in the Bible, you will not find others that include the names of mothers, only of fathers. And yet we have four women in this genealogy that are mentioned. Now obviously for every man mentioned there was a woman in that generation that participated, but generally speaking the genealogies do not mention the women for the simple reason that the woman's family does not carry the heritage forward.

It's the father's name and the father's heritage that is passed along from generation to generation. So that even if a mother happened to be the most important person in the world and her husband was not very important, yet it would be him and not her whose name would figure in the genealogies as a person tracing their lineage. Now here of course we don't have women standing instead of men, but we just have four instances where upon giving the name of a man it also tells who his wife was or who bore the child that is mentioned.

In verse 3 it says Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar. Tamar was the woman. In verse 5 it says Solomon begot Boaz by Rahab.

And the same verse says Boaz begot Obed by Ruth. And in verse 6 it says in the middle of that verse, David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. So we have these four women mentioned.

Tamar in verse 3, Rahab and Ruth in verse 5, and her who had been the wife of Uriah in verse 6, of course that's a reference to Bathsheba. Now the fact that he does this, he doesn't do it for every generation, but he does it for these few cases. Matthew lists these four women, obviously raises questions.

Why does he include women at all? That's not the way you usually do genealogies. And if he chooses to include some women, why does he include these ones only and not all of them? Why has he chosen these four women to mention? And why has he chosen to

mention women at all? I think it is probable that Matthew is trying to break the Jewish prejudices against certain classes of people. Because he's writing to Jews and he's trying to show that Jesus is linked by lineage to some people that the Jews don't think very highly of.

But Jesus is not necessarily ashamed to be associated with. God was not ashamed to bring his son through such people. Among them, women.

Of course, everyone who's ever come into the world has come through women. But Matthew mentions specific women in the genealogy for the purpose, probably, of pointing out that Jesus was not ashamed to mention or to associate with the female side of his lineage. There was a female side of everyone's lineage, it's just not usually recorded.

Jesus associated with females in a way that the Jews generally did not do. And there was nothing improper in the sense of modesty or morality about the way he associated with them. It was just not customary for men of Israel to associate with women at all in public, to talk to them.

Jesus' own disciples were amazed to find Jesus talking to a woman when they found him doing so at the well in Samaria in John chapter 4. And Jesus just didn't have any problems including women in his circle of friends as if they were real people too. You may have heard that the Jews frequently, the devout Jews, on a daily basis thanked God that they were created neither a woman or a Gentile or a dog. They apparently considered those three categories to be about equal.

Gentiles and women and dogs. It's not a very high view of women. Jesus, however, associated with women and Matthew is not ashamed to put some of the names of some of the significant women in his genealogy because they were important characters.

All of them are known to us from the Old Testament. They're not people whose names... See, some of the men's names in the thing we don't know anything about from the Old Testament except their names. But these women, they have stories.

Furthermore, it's very likely that all four of these women were Gentiles. Now this is significant since that means at least four of the men in Jesus' genealogy were born from Gentile mothers. Now there's never been a real clear way of identifying what makes a person a Jew.

The modern way that most people, I think, acknowledge is that if a person has a Jewish mother, he is a Jew. If he has a Jewish father but not a Jewish mother, it is disputable whether he is considered a Jew. But a Jewish mother guarantees it.

And that may be simply because it's easier to ascertain who a person's real mother is than who their real father is. If a person claimed to be a Jew, claimed to have a Jewish

father, no one could really prove for sure who was anyone's father. But it would be not difficult to prove who was a mother because the mother bears the child herself and is quite visibly associated.

But it's interesting that Jews are identified these days by having Jewish mothers and yet four of the people in this lineage, if not more, had Gentile mothers, which would raise questions as to whether they're even rightly called Jews at all. Of course they are. But it shows that Jesus had Gentiles, Gentile mothers even, in his lineage.

Now I said it's probable that all four were Gentiles. We only know for sure about three of the four. The fourth might have been a Gentile.

Tamar, we know, was a Gentile because she married the sons of Judah at a time when the family of Judah and his brothers were all there were of Israel and they didn't marry within their own family. So obviously Tamar was from another family outside of Israel. Her actual genealogy or her actual heritage is mentioned for us in the book of Genesis in chapter 38.

She was therefore a Gentile. Rahab, we know, was a Gentile. She was an inhabitant of Jericho.

She was actually a Canaanite. A Jericho citizen and that was a Canaanite city. So she was a Gentile.

And Ruth, we know, was a Moabitess. The story of Ruth is in the Old Testament. So she was not Jewish.

And then the last woman mentioned is Bathsheba and we don't know for sure what her nationality was. Her grandfather was Ahithophel, the counselor of David. Ahithophel is a Jewish sounding name and therefore he may well have been a Jew, although he might have been a Gentile who had a Jewish name.

That would not be unheard of. Bathsheba, we know, married a man who was a Hittite, which is again a Canaanite. Her original husband was named Uriah the Hittite.

So he was not a Jew. And since the Jews were forbidden to marry Canaanites, except in the instance where the Canaanites would convert to Judaism, we don't know whether she was a Jewess or not. She probably was, but she may not have been.

And then there's at least the known fact of her prior marriage to a Canaanite, which raises the possibility that she might have been a Canaanite or she might at least not have been Jewish. In any case, we know that three of the four were Gentiles and possibly all four were Gentiles, which again associates the lineage of Jesus not only with women but with Gentiles. And then there's this additional factor, that of the four women, three of them were known to be sinners and are remembered for their sinfulness, for their sinful

careers.

They're also remembered for their later conduct too, but we know, for example, that Rahab was a harlot. She was a harlot in the Sea of Jericho before she apparently reformed, came to Judaism and married a man of the tribe of Judah named Solomon and became the mother of Boaz. Who is a figure in the story of Ruth.

Ruth, of course, has no scandal associated with her necessarily, but she would be the only exception. Tamar also played the harlot. She was the widow of Judah's sons and she disguised herself as a harlot, sat by the road in Judah after he was widowed himself, went into her, made her pregnant, she was pregnant with twins, and when the thing was found out it was a great scandal because of course he had impregnated his daughter.

And this was scandalous on her part. And then, of course, Bathsheba, what is she best remembered for but her affair with David when she was still married to another man. So, four women, three of them, if not all four, Gentiles.

And three of them also scandalous Gentiles. Gentiles with a scandalous sexual history. Now, it seems as if there are other mothers in the genealogy of Jesus who are probably less scandalous and not Gentiles that Matthew could have mentioned, but he doesn't mention them.

Which makes you wonder. We can say at least this much about all four of these women. All four of them were either Gentiles or notorious sinners or both.

And Jesus, of course, transcended the prejudices of the Jews toward such people, toward people who were notorious sinners. Jesus scandalized the Pharisees by letting women who were notorious sinners wash his feet with their tears and wipe them with their hair. And they said if this man was a prophet, they would never let this woman associate with him.

But Jesus felt otherwise. Jesus stood up for women, the woman caught in adultery, and so forth. So, Jesus was a friend of sinners, and a friend of women, and a friend of Gentiles, we could say.

And Matthew brings this out in a rather modest and subtle way, just by naming four of the women in Jesus' genealogy, all of whom were either Gentiles or notorious sinners or both. And so that is a unique feature of Matthew's genealogy of Jesus. It ties Jesus to a wider body of humanity than just the Jews and just the righteous.

There's some checkered paths there in his genealogy. Now, if you would follow the genealogy through, you'd find that it is followed through David's son Solomon in verse 7. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, Abijah begot Asa, and so forth, all the way through the kingly line. This goes all the way down to Jeconiah in verse 11, who was the last king of Judah when the nation was taken into Babylon.

They had no more Judean kings after that, but the genealogy nonetheless continues through the line that would have been kings, that would have been the royal line, had the kingdom continued. You find Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, is there in the genealogy in verse 12. And he was, of course, the governor of Jerusalem when the exiles came back, who did come back.

And then there's some rather unknown names, that is, names that fall into the intertestamental period and we have no history about them, only the names are given. And finally it comes down to verse 15 and 16, which says, Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Mithan, and Mithan begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. So, we have here very plainly the genealogy of Joseph.

Interestingly enough, his father's name was Jacob, just as Joseph in the Old Testament had a father named Jacob. It was probably not uncommon for these Old Testament heroes of the Hebrews to supply name ideas for their descendants, and a man named Jacob might well name some of his children after the names of the Old Testament character Jacob's sons. Anyway, verse 17 is peculiar.

It says, So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until Christ are fourteen generations. Now, it has been observed that this isn't precisely true. From this you get the impression that there were 42 names in the list, but there are not.

The only way you can get 14 and 14 and 14 is to alter things a little bit. For one thing, you have to count David in two of the lists. From Abraham to David is 14, and from David to the captivity is 14, but David has to be counted in both lists.

He's counted twice. Furthermore, from David to the captivity being fourteen generations requires that a few names are left out, and they are. A couple of the kings of Judah are removed, are simply left out of the list.

The list is therefore abridged, and it would appear that it was abridged in such a way so that Matthew could make this observation. Fourteen and fourteen and fourteen generations. He's not making a literal statement.

He's making a statement that is intended to serve as a mnemonic device to help aid the memory. The Jews, of course, at a time where paper and pencil and books were rare, most people didn't, a lot of people weren't even literate, they remembered things by rote. Jewish boys, in their synagogue training, learned to memorize genealogies, they learned to memorize the laws of Moses, they learned to memorize all kinds of scripture, and it was simply part of their training that they developed a memory for detail.

And apparently Matthew was seeking to aid those who wished to memorize the genealogy of Jesus by abridging it a little bit, leaving out some names, he was not doing so to be deceptive, he was simply giving the high points of the genealogy, and he divides it into a symmetric group of three sets of fourteen each in order to do so. Strange that he would do it, but if anyone would say, well, that represents a mistake on Matthew's part, that could hardly be the case. Matthew could hardly be ignorant of the names of the kings of Judah in the Old Testament.

It's clear he left out a couple names on purpose to make it symmetrical, and he would not be intending to fool his readers either. There would be no reason to. There's nothing to be gained by fooling them about this.

Furthermore, his readers could check it out in the Old Testament for themselves and find him to be wrong. It's clear that Matthew intended his readers to understand that he was sort of stylizing the genealogy, leaving out a name or two here, using one name more than once in order to fill in the gaps and so forth, and he did this for whatever reasons, apparently memory reasons, that it's easier to memorize if you remember, okay, there's fourteen in this part of the list, there's fourteen in that part of the list, and so on. At least that is what scholars believe to be the case.

Now, let's look over at the genealogy in Luke. By the way, as we turn there, I might just summarize what we just saw in Matthew, that Joseph, who married Mary and was the legal father of Jesus, though he was not the biological father of Jesus, Joseph actually rose from the kingly line of Judah. He's descended from David through the kings, every generation.

By the way, every generation after David, there were an incrementally larger number of people descended from David who were not kings. David had eight wives at least and many, many sons. The full number of his sons is never given in the Bible, but he must have had, it would seem, scores of sons, but only Solomon became king.

Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines, must have had hundreds of children, but only Rehoboam became king. I don't know how many children Rehoboam had, but only one of his sons became king, and so forth, and every generation, the line was narrowed. The likelihood that someone would come through the line of the kings in every generation, the chances against it would be very great.

Of course, some people would come through that line, but very few would. Most of the people descended from David would not, they would have fallen out of the kingly line somewhere back there in David or Solomon or someone else's day because they happened not to be the one out of their generation of David's descendants who was chosen to be king. But Joseph, generation after generation, continues, his line goes through the kings all the way down to the end of the kingdom in Jeconiah, and then continues through apparently what would have been the kingly line.

So that Joseph was truly of royal birth. It's possible that Joseph, had there still been a kingdom of Judah, might have been born to the throne. But the times had changed.

There was no Jewish throne for the Judean kings. Herod was on the throne now, he was not a Judean. The scepter had passed from Judah.

And so those of David's line, like Joseph, who had really all the best pedigree to have royal standing in society, they were just ordinary peasants. Joseph was a peasant, and there's evidence that he was not a rich man. The fact that it says that they offered two turtle doves or two pigeons when they dedicated Jesus proves they were a poor family because if you look back at the law, this was not the normal sacrifice for the average person dedicating a child or finishing their purification rites.

It was usually a lamb, but if they were too poor, they could offer two pigeons or two turtle doves. And we read that that is exactly what they did in Luke chapter 2, we're told that. So Joseph, though descended directly from the kings of Judah and some of the purest royal blood probably of his generation, yet was an ordinary peasant carpenter because the kings of Judah were not on the throne.

Now, when we have studied Joseph's genealogy, we have learned nothing about Jesus' genealogy. We learn only what Jesus' legal standing would be in the community. As far as legally, Jesus was Joseph's son.

Joseph was his, we'd have to say his foster father or his stepfather or something like that. And so whatever status Jesus held, whatever inheritance in the land and so forth, it would come through Joseph. Jesus was Joseph's legal son.

We might even suggest that if there had been kings of Judah and if Joseph had been the king of Judah, Jesus would have been born to the throne because he was legally the son of Joseph, though not biologically. And Joseph apparently was of royal blood and Jesus, his first born legal son, would very probably be born to be king. It's interesting that the wise men, when they came to Jerusalem looking for Jesus, said, where is he who was born the king of the Jews? Now, when we call Jesus king of the Jews, we're thinking in terms of some of his deity or some of his special things we know about him being the son of God and so forth.

But actually, the wise men, when they used the term king of the Jews, they apparently understood simply in the strictly political sense. That's why it bothered Herod so much, because he was the king of the Jews in that sense. And he was not ready to brook any rivals in that position.

They were asking, where was the one who was born to be the Jewish king? And there's good reason to argue that because of the family line that Jesus came through and his legal standing in the community as the son of Joseph, he would have been king of the

Jews by birth, even apart from any appointment or special anointing or special identity as the son of God. Just by genealogy. Now, if you turn to Luke chapter 3, we'll see the genealogy of Jesus there is very different.

And there's a variety of ways to explain it. A simple way and a whole bunch of hard ways. I take the simple way.

Luke 3.23 says, Now Jesus himself began his ministry at about 30 years of age, being as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Methath, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, etc., etc., etc. And obviously, if you compare this with Matthew chapter 1, there's no resemblance. It appears here that verse 23 is saying that Joseph was the son of Heli.

Now, according to Matthew chapter 1, Joseph's father's name was Jacob. And if you go back through the line, you'll find no points, really, of identity with the genealogy in Matthew, except at David. Both of these lines come through David.

Because you'll see in verse 31, the son of Meliah, the son of Menah, the son of Methath, the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, and so forth. And going back from there, of course, it's the same all the way back to Adam. But notice the genealogy in Matthew chapter 1 was traced from David through Solomon, the king, and through this kingly line.

This genealogy is not traced through the kingly line of David. David is in the genealogy, but a much less important son of his, Nathan, born way down the line. He's something like the eighth or tenth son of David.

Much less significant than Solomon, and never a contender for the throne in any way, shape, or form by primogeniture, that is by age, by birth order. Nathan is the progenitor of this particular line. So we have both lines come from David, but they bifurcate at that point.

One line goes through Solomon, David's son, and another line goes through Nathan, David's son, and they're totally different lines. Now the biggest problem with this is that both genealogies appear to be the genealogy of Joseph. Because verse 23 says, the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Methath, and so forth.

Sounds like Joseph is the son of Heli. And yet Matthew said he's the son of a guy named Jacob. Now there are several ways that some have tried to work this out and try to make there be no contradiction here.

One possibility, of course, is that there is a contradiction. Now I don't believe there is, but I mean, for there to be a contradiction, we'd have to say that both Matthew and Luke intended to give the same genealogy, that is of the same man, Joseph, but one of them really missed it real bad. I mean, one of them may have gotten it right, and the other

one just kind of missed it altogether.

But that doesn't seem like the right solution to this dilemma. And the reason it doesn't is because you'd have to assume if two men, two historians, are writing the genealogy of the same person, and they're totally different from each other, either that one of them is making it up off the top of his head, which seems very irresponsible and unlikely, or that one of them got a hold of the wrong records. You see, Matthew and Luke did not know by instinct the genealogy of Joseph.

They would have, in order to give such records, they would have to go to the temple records and see, you know, what is the ancestor of this man, Joseph, that Jesus came through. And if Matthew went to the temple records and got Joseph's genealogy and copied it out, and Luke went to the temple records and got Joseph's genealogy and copied it out, we would have the same genealogy in both places. And there's no other place they could have gone to get Joseph's genealogy.

So, we would have to say that one of these two men is either very stupid and can't copy one name correctly, or accidentally got the records of the wrong guy thinking he was writing down the records of Joseph, or that one of them is dishonest and he's just making up a list of names off the top of his head. None of those things seem very likely. There are better explanations.

One of the most complex explanations, and this is given by one of the church fathers in the 2nd century, I forget what his name was, but Eusebius records it, but he quotes somebody previously who gave this, is that Joseph came through a line that was mixed up by the phenomenon of levirate marriage. In the Old Testament there was a law that if a man married a woman and died before they had a child together, that his brother, if he had one, would marry her and would have a child and the first son that was born to them would be named after the deceased brother, so that the deceased brother would not, his name would not perish from history. That he would have a son named after him, fathered indeed by his brother, not by himself, but through his wife, by his brother, just by blood that a child can't get any closer than your own child if your own child would have been through that woman, and this child is through that woman.

And you can't father the child, but your brother, the nearest kin to you, does. That's about as close as you can get to getting your own child to carry on your family name, and that's what the law required to be done. Now, it would mean, of course, that when it says that Jacob begot Joseph in Matthew, that Jacob was the actual biological father of Jesus, of Joseph, excuse me, of Jesus, but Jacob was the actual biological father of Joseph.

He begot him, Jacob begot Joseph. But in saying Joseph was the son of Heli, it may well be, and it was suggested by an early source, that Heli was the brother of Jacob, these two men who are both credited with being the father of Joseph. Jacob, the biological

father, Heli, the legal father.

This would suggest that Heli had first married Joseph's mother, and Heli had died childless. His brother Jacob then married her and bore a child by her, so that Jacob begot Joseph, but the child was named after his deceased brother, Heli. So we'd say Joseph was the son of Heli, by legal terms.

And this has been one way people have tried to solve it. The problem with that is it doesn't work. Because that would require that Jacob and Heli would both be brothers for that to work.

But they have different fathers. Jacob has one father and Heli has another father by these two lists. You'd have to argue that these men also were the products of such mixed legal fiction in terms of parentage.

It just doesn't work well. There is a much simpler suggestion that to my mind seems to be correct, and I'll tell you all the reasons it seems to be correct. And that is that this is, in Luke, Mary's genealogy, not Joseph's.

Now you might say, well that's a total fabrication. It says right there it's Joseph's genealogy. Joseph, the son of Heli.

But wait a minute. You'll notice how the verse is worded. Jesus was about 30 years of age, being as was supposed.

Now different translations use different punctuation marks, because the punctuation marks are not found in the original Greek, so the translators insert them as they see fit. Here in the New King James, as was supposed, is a phrase that is enclosed in parenthesis. And of course you know that if you have a phrase in parenthesis, it means the sentence could be read without that parenthetical material and it would continue the train of thought uninterrupted.

The parenthesis is something said on the side, which you could leave out and the sentence makes perfectly good sense and makes its point without it. Now the translators of the New King James have put, as was supposed within parenthesis. And then you should, if you would accept that parenthesis as it stands, then the sentence could be read, being the son of Joseph, the son of Heli.

But suppose, instead of accepting that parenthesis as it stands, suppose you put the whole longer phrase, as was supposed the son of Joseph, in parenthesis. Try that. And remember, the parenthesis can be put anywhere that they fit best, because they're not in the Greek.

They're added in order to make it readable in English. Suppose the parenthetical remark is this whole statement, as was supposed the son of Joseph. Now what it would be saying

then is that Jesus was 30 years of age being, as was supposed the son of Joseph, but actually being the son of Heli.

The whole phrase being, as was supposed the son of Joseph, you could omit in order to get the sense of the sentence. And if that is the case, if that long phrase or clause is taken as a parenthesis, which is entirely reasonable to do, then the sentence thought would be, Jesus was 30 years of age being the son of Heli, the son of Methab, and so forth. Now, the reason that helps is because that would tell us something about Jesus' actual parentage as opposed to his supposed parentage.

It was supposed by the general public that he was the son of Joseph. But Luke has already made it clear earlier that Jesus was not the son of Joseph. Mary said, how can I have a child, I haven't known a man, and the angel in chapter 2 of Luke tells it that no man is going to be involved in this.

Luke has made it previously clear that Jesus was not born a son of Joseph. But he would say here, he was supposed or thought to be the son of Joseph. But in fact, his genealogy was other than that of Joseph's.

And it was this. Now, if that is true, then of course, it would be the genealogy of Mary. Now, I would also point out that throughout the genealogy in Luke chapter 3, you won't see this in the NIV because the NIV doesn't use italics.

But all good translations use italics because they have to identify the words in their translation that aren't found in the Greek. And when you find an italicized word or phrase in your Bible, it is not for emphasis that the words are in italics, it is to show you that that phrase or those words are not found in the Greek and the translators have supplied them. And therefore, in the Greek, you'll notice, well, in your Bible, the term the son, the son, the son throughout this entire genealogy, the son, the son are all in italics.

That means in the Greek, it really says being of Heli, of Methath, of Levi, of Melchi, etc. etc. It doesn't mean he was the son literally of, but he was descended from, he was of him.

On this understanding, we would say that Heli was the real line through whom Jesus biologically came. And that would of course make Heli the father of Mary. Mary's name is not given in this genealogy because no women's names are given in the genealogy.

The male name that belongs nearest yours in your genealogy is that of your nearest male ancestor. But your nearest male ancestor is your father. Jesus didn't have an earthly father, so his nearest male ancestor was his mother's father.

And therefore, Jesus biologically was of Mary's father, whoever he was. I believe Luke is telling us who he was. He was a man named Heli.

But he too was descended from David, as Joseph was, but not the same line of David, a different family line from David. Now, if this is the case, and this is extremely reasonable it seems to me, and it doesn't seem like it takes any twisting, it just removes the parentheses to include a larger phrase, which seems even more reasonable to me. It would be saying that Jesus was thought to be, generally by the public, thought to be the son of Joseph, but was in fact descended through another line, the line of a man named Heli, who would have been, in this case, Mary's father.

Now, what are some of the arguments in favor of this rendering? First of all, it solves the problem. I mean, any explanation that solves the problem without too much twisting, turning, or contortions is to be considered to have something in its favor, that it does solve a problem. The problem is the difference between Matthew's genealogy of Joseph and Luke's genealogy of Joseph.

It's solved, if this is true. And it's solved without making either Luke or Matthew a liar, or an incompetent historian, or an incompetent copyist off of temple records. We could say both of these men copied their records off the temple records and did it right.

They just copied the records of different men. Matthew copied the records of Joseph's lineage, Luke copied the records of Heli's lineage, because he was Mary's father in this view. Another thing that helps is that it tells us, of course, that Jesus was actually biologically descended from David.

Because this man Heli, we see, is descended from David, according to verse 31. Now, the Messiah had to be biologically descended from David. It was not enough that he be legally descended from David.

Now, you see, if Joseph is descended from David, and Jesus was his legal son, but not biological, that's not enough to qualify Jesus to be a seed of David. David was told that a seed that would proceed out of his body, out of his own bowels, would become the Messiah. Messiah has to be physically, biologically, descended from David.

If we know only Joseph's genealogy, but we don't know Mary's, we'll never know whether Jesus was qualified in this sense. We don't know if Jesus ever descended from David if we don't know who Mary came from, because she is the only blood relative he had. So, it would make sense that the Bible would give us somewhere Mary's genealogy in order to confirm that most important point, that Jesus was the seed of David.

And this would prove it, if this is Mary's genealogy. By the way, if this isn't Mary's genealogy, then we don't have her genealogy anywhere in the Bible. And therefore, we would have no way to even affirm that Jesus was the son of David.

This genealogy would solve that problem if it is Mary's, and I believe it is. There's a third consideration that supports this notion, it seems to me. And that is, as you read the birth

narratives in Matthew and in Luke, Matthew always, always, tells it from Joseph's side.

In Matthew chapters 1 and 2, we have Joseph receiving angelic visitors, but no mention of Mary doing so. All the story in Matthew is told from Joseph's point of view, and interestingly, he gives Joseph's genealogy. When you turn to Luke's birth narratives, we don't have anything told from Joseph's side.

Everything is told from Mary's side. We read nothing of an angel visiting Joseph in any way, shape, or form, or telling him anything. But we have the angel visits Mary's relative Elizabeth, and the angel visits Mary herself, and Mary goes in for her purification on the 40th day, and so forth.

It's all about Mary. Even when the wise men come, Mary is treasuring these things in her heart. We're not told what Joseph did or thought.

Luke is telling the whole story from Mary's side, and therefore it would be in character for him, in giving a genealogy, to give Mary's genealogy. His sources of the story were apparently from Mary, whereas Matthew's seemed to have been more from Joseph. And that would explain why Joseph would give, I should say Matthew would give Joseph's genealogy, and Luke would give Mary's.

So there are a number of reasons to favor this particular interpretation. It is the simplest solution to the problem. It gives us the only possible documentation that Jesus is actually descended from David.

And it fits the trend of Luke's reporting in general, that he gives things from Mary's side, and that would be the case if this is Mary's genealogy. I have nothing more to say about the genealogy, except for one other observation, and that is this. That Jesus was physically descended from Mary, but not physically descended from Joseph.

Yet he got his legal standing in society from Joseph, his legal father, right? Everyone understands that? He was adopted by Joseph, so his legal status was that of Joseph. Joseph was of the legal, legally, of the kingly line. And as a legal son of Joseph, Jesus would have kingly standing, if that line were in its proper kingly position in society.

Mary's line would not have been royal, although David was somewhere way, way back there a thousand years earlier, no generation since David had ever been royalty in her. So Mary didn't come from a royal family, unless you want to go back a thousand years before her time. There was a king there, but after that, no kings in her family.

So Jesus' biological line was not through the kingly line of Judah. Although he was a seed of David, he came down through a circuitous route, and not through the kingly line. Now why would that be? If there's going to be two lines here, why wouldn't God have Jesus come biologically through the line of the kings? Well, one reason would be that that wouldn't give him any legal standing as a king, necessarily, since it would be his legal

father's lineage that would give him legal standing, and therefore it's good that Joseph comes through that line.

But there's another very important consideration. If you look at Jeremiah chapter 22, this is a prophecy against Jeconiah, also known as Jehoiakim, also known as Cuniah in the scripture. Same man, known by three different names in the historical and prophetic writings of the Old Testament.

And in Jeremiah chapter 22, there's this prophecy against this man Jeconiah, who is here called Cuniah. It's just an abbreviation of his name. Jeremiah 22, 28 says, Is this man Cuniah a despised broken idol? Is he a vessel in which is no pleasure? Why are they cast out, he and his descendants, and cast into a land which they do not know? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.

Thus says the Lord, write this man down as childless, a man who shall never prosper in his days, for none of his descendants shall prosper sitting on the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah. Now this is a significant curse on a family. He introduces earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.

I mean, he calls everyone to attention. Listen, this is an important announcement. This man Jeconiah, the last king of Judah, who was taken into captivity in Babylon, and there have never been a Judean king in Judah since.

He was the last. It was announced no descendant of his would ever prosper again sitting on the throne of Judah and reigning in Jerusalem. Never again.

Now that was true. It never happened. But you realize if Jesus had been the physical son of Joseph, then Jesus would have been a descendant of Jeconiah.

Because according to Matthew chapter 1, Joseph was a descendant of Jeconiah. And Jesus would have been a descendant of Jeconiah. And what would that mean? It would mean he would be disqualified forever from ever being the king of the Jews.

Because all descendants of Jeconiah are disqualified. Joseph himself was disqualified. He couldn't be the king of the Jews because he was descended from Jeconiah.

But Jesus avoids that family curse by coming through a different line of David, missing Jeconiah altogether, retaining the Davidic ancestry, but avoiding that curse upon that kingly line. So that Jesus can still be king of the Jews, but not everyone descended from David could be king. You would have to have the royal family in your background.

And here's the catch 22. If you didn't come through the royal family, you couldn't have the right of ruling by descent. But if you did come through the kingly family, there's a curse on that family.

No one from that family would ever rule again. So you're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't. If you come through the line of Jeconiah, you're cursed.

You can't be the king. If you don't come through that line, you're not in the kingly line, so you can't be king either. Jesus avoided that problem.

He was indeed in the legal standing of the family line. Had there been no curse on that family line, Jesus would have been probably king, born king. But there was a curse, so none of the people in that line were king.

But Jesus was in that position legally. But physically he came in another direction and avoided the curse on that family line by coming through a different line from David. I don't know if that confuses you or if that's clear, but it seems like God found a loophole, really, to allow Jesus to be the only man, probably, in his generation who was legally descended from the kingly line, but not physically.

And therefore he missed the curse that's on Jeconiah's descendants by not being one of them, but he stood in the royal line by being adopted into it by his stepfather Joseph. Therefore, when the wise men said, where is he who is born king of the Jews, they weren't just whistling Dixie. They were talking the truth.

He was born by right king of the Jews and probably the only man in his generation who would have qualified on that basis. Well, there's one other story related to Jesus' early life and that's found in the closing part of Luke chapter 2. We ran out of time last time before we could give this. We talked about the birth stories, but we did not talk about the childhood story.

And there's only one. It's bothered some people that there's no more in the Bible than there is about the childhood of Jesus. Doesn't make these books very good biographies.

A biography ought to tell you something about some childhood. But the Gospels, Mark and John, they don't even start telling the story until Jesus is 30 years old. And Matthew and Luke tell the story of his birth and then skip to his being 30 years old, leave almost his entire childhood out with one exception.

Luke tells one story about Jesus that probably was associated with his bar mitzvah. As a Jewish boy, he would come to be recognized as having the responsibilities of manhood at age 12 or 13. And there is a story in Luke 2 about Jesus at age 12.

Verses 40, Luke 2, 41 through 50. And we read that Jesus went down to Jerusalem with his family at the Passover. This may have been his first time there.

Jewish boys over 12 were required to go three times a year to Jerusalem. They were not required to under that age, though they could. And so Jesus may or may not have ever been in Jerusalem prior to this.

He lived at the other end of the country and maybe had not made the trip before. But whether it was his first visit or not, Jesus went to Jerusalem at age 12 and got lost in the crowd. Apparently, his parents in 12 years of raising him had become aware that he was quite mature, quite reliable.

They didn't have to keep an eye on him every moment. They were, you know, they could trust him in the crowd. And so they didn't pay that close attention to where he went.

And they assumed he was with the family group as they headed back to Nazareth after the visit there. Since it was a long walk of about seven days, it was typical for groups from one town who made the migration to, you know, to go together with their neighbors and with their kin and so forth. And Mary and Joseph, assuming that Jesus, being a responsible young man, would stay close when they headed back to Nazareth, they didn't check to see if he was with them.

They just assumed it was a big group of people they were with, probably. And by the time they got a day's journey from Jerusalem about ready to camp and bed down, they found Jesus was nowhere in the crowd. And they searched and asked and no one knew where he was.

So in great anxiety, Mary and Joseph made a trip back to Jerusalem a day's journey back to find him. And they did find him. And we read in verse forty six now.

So it was that after three days they found him in the temple sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. So when they saw him, they were amazed.

And his mother said to him, son, why have you done this to us? Look, your father and I have sought you anxiously. Notice she refers to Joseph as his father. This does not mean that she thought she didn't believe in the virgin birth or something.

It means that, you know, Joseph had assumed the role of father in that home. I mean, children who are adopted at infancy almost always call their foster parents mom and dad. And I'm sure that that was the normal way to speak about Joseph.

But Jesus corrects her here. And he said to them, why is it that you have sought me? This doesn't mean that they shouldn't have sought him. It means, why did you have to look so far? Couldn't you be able to anticipate where you'd find me? Did you not know that I must be about my father's business? Now, notice she spoke your father and I've been seeking you anxiously.

He said I was about my father's business. Now, Jesus had until this time and interestingly, probably for the next 18 years after this time, continued in Joseph's business. He was an apprentice in the carpenter shop.

That was Joseph's business. He was, most boys were about their father's business. It was typical for a tradesman to teach his trade to his son and to apprentice him and turn the business over to him.

It was, of course, a son must be about his father's business. And Jesus assumed father Joseph had a business of carpentry. But Jesus was not at this time doing that kind of business.

He was doing a different kind of business. He was in the temple, a place he would later refer to as my father's house. He was not building things.

He was talking. He was teaching. He was confronting the religious establishment with truth, astonishing them.

This was what he would later do full time. This was the business that his real father, God, had called him to. And this tells us something about Jesus, that at least at age 12, he knew he was the son of God.

You might sometimes think that Jesus knew he was the son of God from the day he was born. After all, he was God. How could he not know something? But the Bible indicates that when Jesus became a man, he took on human handicaps and certain privileges that he had possessed prior to this as God.

He simply laid aside in order to live as a real, genuine man. For example, God never gets weary, but Jesus got weary and fell asleep. God is everywhere at once, but Jesus wasn't everywhere at once.

He was one place at a time when he was a man on earth. And God knows everything, but Jesus didn't know everything. There's at least one thing he said he didn't know that the father did, and that was the day of his return.

He said, of that day and hour, no one knows. Even I don't know, he said, but the father knows. So Jesus admitted he was not omniscient, he was not omnipresent, and he was not omnipotent.

He ran out of energy sometimes when he was on earth. He didn't have all power. He could do miracles through the spirit just like prophets, and we can do only more so because he walked in the spirit all the time.

But he was God in the flesh, but he had reduced himself, or it says in Philippians chapter, he emptied himself to become a man. And apparently among the things he emptied himself of were some of these divine privileges, including omniscience, that is, knowing everything. It would be peculiar to imagine that this newborn baby Jesus was laying in the manger, and he knew everything that was going on in the universe.

He knew what these shepherds' names were who were looking at him, and what was going on in all their minds, and all that stuff. I mean, it might be fun to think that way, and some of the traditions of the church might indicate that. There's that Christmas carol about the poor baby wakes, but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.

He's already a perfect man in infancy. He was a real human being. He didn't sin, but he had emotions, he had limits to his strength and to what he knew and so forth on earth.

He operated in the gifts of the spirit. He could prophesy, he had the word of knowledge, he had the gift of healing and teaching and all the gifts. But he was a man living under the same handicaps we are, and as such he didn't know everything.

And therefore we can assume that Jesus wasn't born knowing how to read, he had to learn to read. He probably went to school. He wasn't born knowing everything about God, he had to learn about God.

God had to reveal himself to him. It's a mystery how a person who had been God before and became a man could become ignorant and have to grow again, but that's part of his self-humiliation. It's part of his self-reduction to be one of us.

And so we find Jesus when a woman touches him, he says, who touched me? He didn't say, you touched me, he said, who touched me? And when he didn't get an answer, he kept asking, who touched me? Someone touched me. It's clear Jesus didn't know everything when he was on earth, because he had reduced himself and emptied himself to become a man. That being so, I think it's fair to assume that as a baby he knew about as much as a baby knows.

As a toddler, he knew about as much as a toddler knows. As he went to school when he was a little boy in the synagogue, he learned probably what other little boys learned at about the same rate, though he may well have been far more intelligent. Because at age 12, he clearly was a bright boy.

The word kenosis is the Greek word emptied, which is used in Philippians chapter 2. It says Jesus emptied himself. He existed in the form of God, but he emptied himself and took on the form of a servant. That's the Greek word kenosis, and they call it the kenosis view.

That Jesus laid aside some of his privileges as God in order to be confined in a human existence. Therefore, we can raise the question, when did Jesus learn that he was not just another Jewish boy? When did he learn that he was the son of God in a unique sense? We don't know, but we can say he knew it at least at age 12, because it's at that time we have the first recorded statement of Jesus, and he identifies himself as the son of God, and says it was about his father's business. Now, he had apparently never talked that way before, because his parents didn't know what he was talking about.

It says, but they did not understand the statement which he spoke to them. Now, it's understandable to me, and I'm not all that smart, I mean, he was in the temple, he's the son of God, he's doing God's work, he says it's about his father's business, that's a pretty plain statement. They didn't understand it.

Why? It must be that they had never told him, and he had never mentioned it before, that he was the son of God. They knew it, of course, but having never discussed it for 12 years, and never heard it from his lips, they weren't quite sure what he was referring to, or where he got his information, or whatever, you know? I mean, it must have surprised them. After all, it's clear from what Mary said, that they had become accustomed to speak of Joseph as his father.

Now, that's an important thing to note, too, before we go any further, that Joseph, we don't know an awful lot about Joseph, but he is certainly spoken of highly in the places he's referred to in the scripture. Joseph apparently died before Jesus grew up. The reason for saying so is because when Jesus started his ministry, we don't read of Joseph anymore.

In fact, after this story, when he was 12 years old, we read of Joseph no more. He probably lived for some time afterwards, but apparently died before Jesus was 30. Mary and Jesus' brothers sometimes traveled around with Jesus, but not his father, not Joseph, I should say.

And furthermore, when Jesus died, he committed the care of his mother to John, one of his disciples, rather than, why would you do that if she had a living husband? It seems clear Mary was kind of on her own. She was following Jesus around, and he was taking care of her, and when he died, he committed the care of her to one of his disciples. This would be unnecessary if her husband was still alive.

And so it's a fair inference that Joseph did not live to see Jesus begin his ministry. Joseph, therefore, we could assume, had the principal purpose in life of not even being a disciple of Jesus, but being the father, the role model for Jesus in his formative years. Remember, Jesus referred to God as father, and that was a unique thing for Jesus.

The rabbis didn't talk that way, but Jesus did. That kind of shocked them. Sometimes they took up stones to stone him because he called God his father, making himself equal with God, it seemed to them.

They didn't like that kind of talk. They didn't talk that way themselves, but Jesus did. But what's interesting is that when Jesus called God father, he obviously had some imagery of fatherhood that he was basing the metaphor on.

And the closest example of human fatherhood that Jesus had ever seen was the father in the home he was raised in. Jesus was the first of at least seven children. We know he had

more than one sister because his sisters were spoken of in the plural, so he had at least two.

And he had four brothers whose names were given. That means he had at least six siblings, that makes seven with him. A reasonably large family, poor family, a laborer's family.

But God selected not only Mary but Joseph to play the role they did in the formation of Jesus' early life and character. And Joseph must have been a pious, poor man, and a godly one. A good example of what a father should be, because Jesus would have first as an infant learned the word father as Abba, which is the affectionate term for father that children use in the Aramaic language.

And Jesus in his adult life, at least once on record, referred to God as Abba. He probably did some more, but we have most of it in Greek, not Aramaic. But when he was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, he said, Abba, Father.

If it's possible for this cup to pass from me, let it do so. And it's interesting, when he used that word Abba of God, he was using a word that he had first in his early life used of Joseph. And Joseph must have been the kind of person who is a wonderful example of a godly father, that Jesus could easily transfer what he knew of father from his childhood in Joseph's home to what he wanted to communicate about who God is to us and to him.

There is a place where Jesus talks about fathers and sons generically, where I believe there is an echo of what happened in the home when he was a young man himself, a child growing up. In John chapter 5, Jesus was explaining to the Jews why he felt the liberty to heal on the Sabbath. Because he said, my father works until now, and I work.

My father works on the Sabbath, so I work on the Sabbath. In verse 17, they got mad when he said that, and he further elaborated. He said in verse 19, Most assuredly, I say to you, the son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the father do.

And whatever he does, the son also does in like manner. For the father loves the son and shows him all things that he himself does. Then it goes on and says, And he will show him greater works than these that you may marvel.

Now apart from that last line, everything Jesus said is true of fathers and sons generally in that society. A father apprenticing his son in the business, in the trade. Sometimes scholars call this little section, the parable of the apprentice son.

Whether Jesus meant it as a parable or simply as a statement about his relationship with his father in heaven, we don't know. But it could be a parable. Basically saying, the reason I work on the Sabbath is because I learned everything I know about my job from my father.

He works on the Sabbath. I just do the job the way he did it. And he says, Children always learn that from their fathers.

Sons don't know anything of themselves. Babies aren't born knowing how to shape wood into furniture. But the father knows how to do that.

So he shows his son, the father loves his son, and shows him everything he does. And the son does it exactly the way the father shows him. Jesus is simply talking about the common phenomenon in that society of a father apprenticing his son in the business.

He's saying, I'm apprenticed of my father. My father works on the Sabbath, so I work on the Sabbath. I do the business the way he does it.

I learned it from him. And yet, Jesus learned carpentry before he learned ministry. And he must have learned it from Joseph.

And when he spoke about a father lovingly guiding his son's hands and showing him how to do the business, he could not help but have memories of how Joseph in his own childhood had taken his small hands and helped him to do his first projects and showed him what he was doing wrong and how to do it right and made a craftsman and a tradesman out of him. And of course he then applied that to now what was the father in heaven doing in his life. He was showing him his new trade.

But Joseph was the legal, the de facto, the father and nurturer and role model for Jesus when he was little and must have been an exceptional man, though he was not recognized in society as anything special. Yet in God's eyes, he must have been a great man. Now, we read further, and this would also confirm that Mary and Joseph were apparently fine people, although they weren't all necessarily astute because it says they didn't understand what Jesus said.

So it doesn't indicate that they were all that spiritually bright necessarily. But it says in Luke 2.51, then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them. But his mother kept all these things in her heart, and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.

It's interesting, Jesus went down to Nazareth with them from that point on, and all we know about his activities for the next 18 years is that he was subject to his parents. Now, he was superior to his parents, smarter, he was even smarter than the wise men in the temple, much more than these peasant parents of his. He was a better man than Joseph, and Jesus was perfect.

Joseph and Mary were not perfect. Though he was their superior, he knew his place as a child under his parents. And apparently, until he was 30 years old, he stayed in the home and was subject to his parents until he left home.

And he left home for the reason that the Bible says, men leave home, to be joined with a wife. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and be joined to the wife. Jesus, when he began ministry, began calling a bride to himself.

John the Baptist identified Jesus' ministry that way in John chapter 3. He said that the bridegroom was taking a bride. And Jesus left home only when it was time for him to get his bride. In the meantime, he stayed home, even until age 30.

It's interesting, too. 18 years are traversed with a single verse in verse 52. Jesus increased in wisdom.

Now, that proves he didn't have all wisdom when he was born, because you can't increase in it if you have all wisdom. He didn't have omniscience when he was born, or else he couldn't increase in that category. If you've got it all to start with, there's no room for improvement.

But he increased during that time in wisdom and stature, that means height, grew up, and in favor with God and men. He had a devout life with God and a life that men recognize as a good life, too. So, he was a good young man.

And there are 18 years covered in that one sentence. What was Jesus doing in those 18 years? There are some who'd like to say that Jesus went off to Egypt and India and Nepal and studied under the sages and the magicians and learned all kinds of things, was gone for most of these 18 years, and then came back at age 30, and everyone marveled by the powers he'd learned, which happened to be magic and so forth that he'd learned in the Orient. This is the New Age view of what Jesus did during those so-called silent years.

However, the Bible certainly indicates that that is not the correct theory. It indicates that he was essentially subject to his parents. And we read later that he is referred to by those of his own town where he grew up as the carpenter, as well as the carpenter's son.

He's called both the carpenter and the carpenter's son. So, he apparently practiced carpentry. Furthermore, if Jesus had learned such things from such places, it seems like his teaching would accord with them.

If Jesus had learned under the Hindus, it seems like he would have taught something more like Hinduism, rather than something so close to Judaism, is what he taught. Also, if Jesus learned magic from magicians, then he certainly lied about the source, because he said that the works he did were the Father doing works for him. So, if he was a magician, he was a bold liar as well.

But everything we know about Jesus does not incline us to believe that he had something to gain by lying or that he would lie if he had something to gain by it. And therefore, we can just accept the implications or the inference, I should say, of Scripture that he probably just stayed home and worked the carpenter's shop for that period of time. Now,

that certainly dignifies manual labor, that Jesus, the most important man who ever walked the earth, with the greatest mission to perform, with the greatest scope of impact of any man who ever lived on the face of the earth, and with a life that was cut in half and died at age 33 rather than 70, that of his 33 years, 30 of them were spent doing menial, mundane handiwork.

We don't read of him ever preaching a sermon, healing a person, doing one miracle, making any kind of public, drawing public attention to himself during that time. But did he do? He worked in a carpenter's shop for 30 years out of 33. And three years he ministered, but that was enough.

And, you know, a lot of times people who want to go in the ministry, especially young people who are impatient, they get antsy. They want to propel themselves there rather rapidly because they figure they're not getting any younger. Well, how do you suppose Jesus would have felt knowing that he was the Savior of the world, the whole world's salvation depended on him, and here he is, he has his 20th birthday, and he's not launched.

He's still in the carpenter's shop. 25 years old, 26, 27, 28, 29, he's still in the carpenter's shop. Can you imagine knowing your mission and yet shaving wood pieces smooth for 30 years and how difficult it would be to submit to that kind of work? The reason I know that is because my ministry is not anywhere near as important as Jesus was, but I sure got antsy working in ordinary jobs.

Whenever I went in and got a regular job, you know, doing something menial, I don't mind menial work at all, and sometimes I had to do it for money, but I just always felt like I should be doing something more important than this, you know, what I'm working on here, anyone can do. I've got, you know, ministry to do, and I usually didn't stay at a job very long because of that. Because I always thought, this is worthless, anyone can do this, all this is doing is making money, and I can live without much of that, but I can't live without feeling I'm doing something important for the kingdom of God, so I usually wouldn't hold jobs very long.

I imagine Jesus endured the same temptations, but he stayed at the job. And if God would call his son to work 30 of his 33 years at a job making money, probably supporting his family after his father died, after Joseph died, Mary needed support and Joseph and the older boys probably provided it, then that means that there's something very dignified in the mind of God in just humble, honest labor. Preachers get a lot more attention in the church than plumbers, but Jesus spent 10 times as long of his life doing menial work of an ordinary type that most people will do than he spent in preaching.

And that should help to shape our perspective of what Jesus thought about work, what God thinks about work, ordinary work. Obviously it's something that is good. Now, that brings us to the end of any consideration of Jesus' childhood.

We come now to his adult life. His adult life in all four Gospels is introduced by, not focused directly on Jesus initially, but on John the Baptist. Jesus' adult ministry began really by John the Baptist beginning his ministry a few months earlier.

Now, when we come to the adult life of Jesus, we know that he's about 30 when he starts his adult ministry, and we know he didn't live very long after that. The exact number of years he lived after that is not really known. We usually say that he ministered for three and a half years, and there are some reasons to think that is so.

But the Bible nowhere says exactly that his ministry was three and a half years long. We know this. There are three separate Passover seasons that are recorded in the Gospels.

And Jesus' ministry began, it would appear, a few months before the first of those. So, Jesus' ministry begins, and then a few months later we have the first of three Passovers that are mentioned by name. Now, the distance between the first and the third Passover is two years.

There's one Passover in between, a Passover once a year. So, if there are three Passovers in his ministry, the space between the first and the last, and he died on the last Passover, he died on Passover. So, the third Passover mentioned, he died.

That's two years between the first and the third Passover of his ministry. If he started his ministry a few months before the first of those Passovers, which appears to be the case, then we would have reason to believe his ministry is at least two and a half years long. Now, we don't know that there weren't more Passovers.

We only have record of three of them. There could have been more. There is a feast mentioned in John chapter five that Jesus went to Jerusalem for.

It does not say what feast it was. Many scholars think it was probably a Passover. If it was, then that makes four Passovers in the ministry of Jesus, extending the length of his ministry to three years and some, three and a half.

Of course, traditionally we believe Jesus' ministry was three and a half years long for various reasons, but I don't have time to go into them all. But, that would be based partly, at least on the assumption that the unnamed feast of John 5, 1 was a Passover feast. Now, having said that, we can conveniently break up the consideration of Jesus' ministry into three sections, once he was an adult.

Scholars sometimes refer to the three segments of Jesus' adult ministry as the year of obscurity, the year of popularity, and the year of opposition, respectively. Now, these years were not entirely one year exactly. We're not talking about exactly twelve months.

We're talking about approximately. We don't know when some of these things started and ended, but we can say that judging from the data given in the Gospels, Jesus'

ministry was probably three years and then some. And that this period of time can be broken into approximately a year where he was relatively obscure, approximately a year, a little longer than a year, where he was very popular in Galilee especially, and then approximately a year where he was opposed and had to kind of hide and run away a lot from those trying to kill him.

And that's an easy outline, of course, of the life of the ministry of Christ, to see it that way. In the handouts I've given you, as you can see, there's not very much in the year of obscurity. I've given you four pages, a handout, of the events of the life of Christ from all the Gospels.

And you can see that there's only, what, about eight or nine events listed in the year of obscurity. Whereas in the year of popularity, there's more than a page of them. And then you have the year of opposition, which also there's quite a bit on, which ends up with his crucifixion.

But the year of obscurity, we have so little on it because it was in fact an obscure year. It's obscure because we have so little about it. We know so little about what he did.

We know this, that the year of his obscurity began pretty much with his baptism. Now John's baptism is described in some detail, both in Matthew and Luke, in chapter three. At the beginning of chapter three of those two books, Matthew and Luke, we have some description of John's ministry and a specimen of his preaching.

Mark gives a little bit of it, and John's gospel gives a little bit of it, but not anywhere as much detail. We don't have time right now to go into detail about John and his significance. Jesus made some comments about his significance later on.

John was the forerunner before the Messiah. He was predicted in Malachi and in Isaiah that he would come, and he came. When he came, he was an unusual man.

He dressed in garb reminiscent of Elijah. He had a hairy garment. He ate locusts and wild honey because he lived out in the wild where he couldn't farm.

He lived out in the wilderness, so he just ate whatever wild foods were available there. And he preached a harsh message of repentance and called people to be baptized. His message was heeded to a large extent.

All Judea and all Israel came out to be baptized by him, though we don't know to what degree their repentance was genuine or deep. John obviously questioned the genuineness of some of them who were responding because he called them a brood of vipers and said he required that they show some fruits of repentance before he would take them seriously, and gave instructions to certain categories as to what fruits of repentance could be expected of them. But after John had conducted his ministry for a while, and he had become very famous, everyone was buzzing, is he the Messiah? Is he

a prophet? And almost everybody in Israel knew who John was.

In fact, all the Jews outside of Israel knew who he was too, because later on Paul encountered people in Ephesus who knew of John's baptism but didn't know about Jesus. So John was more famous in the Jewish world than even Jesus was, of course. Because John was never rejected by the Jews as a nation as Jesus was.

John actually died a martyr of the Jews and a hero of the Jews. The Jewish establishment didn't like him much because he called them hypocrites, but still the nation largely accepted John the Baptist. And when John had become rather famous, and possibly near the end of his period of fame, Jesus appeared to be baptized.

And this begins the obscure year of Jesus' life. Jesus comes and is baptized. There's a little bit of a dialogue between John and Jesus there because John thinks himself unworthy to baptize Jesus.

He knows immediately that Jesus is his superior, but Jesus says, let's go ahead with this, so let it be that we should fulfill all righteousness. So John baptizes him, and we read there that when Jesus came out of the water, that the heavens opened, the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and rested on Jesus. This is apparently what we call the baptism of the Holy Spirit for him.

The Holy Spirit came upon him as he came on the prophets in the Old Testament or on the apostles in the day of Pentecost. And a voice from heaven, that of the Father, said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And then Jesus left.

John continued baptizing, and Jesus went off, led by the Spirit, into the wilderness where he was tempted for forty days by the devil while fasting. We don't know if those temptations were spread out through the whole forty days, although Mark's gospel seems to imply that it was. We know of three specific temptations he encountered during that time.

He was fasting, and he was tempted to turn stones into bread. And he was also tempted to hurl himself from the pinnacle of the temple as a spectacle for all so that the angels would have to save him and demonstrate that he was unique and special. And he was also tempted to bow down and worship Satan, a strange temptation to enter the mind of Jesus.

But he was tempted to bow down and worship Satan so that all the kingdoms of the world would be given to him. But he resisted in every case and did not accept these propositions from the enemy. He resisted by quoting scripture and simply by holding to his guns.

And so he was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. We could say much more about this if we weren't trying to survey. There's many lessons we learned from Jesus'

temptation, but we don't have time to go into these things quite as deeply as we might if we're going to take ninety sessions instead of ten to do this whole series.

But after his temptation, he returned to the place where John was baptizing, which is of course where he had been before that. This was now, of course, his temptation was forty days long, so that would be over a month and a half after his baptism, he reappears at Bethabara. This story begins at John 1, 18.

And for the rest of the year of obscurity, we're going to have to stick with the gospel of John. Because one of the reasons that year of obscurity is obscure is because there's nothing in the synoptic gospels about this year except for the baptism and temptation of Jesus. So the synoptic gospels, all of them, describe the baptism of Jesus and his temptation, but they tell us nothing else about this year of obscurity.

They jump immediately from there to his year of popularity. John, on the other hand, writing to supplement what was left out by the synoptics, does not actually tell us the story of Jesus' baptism nor of the temptation. John picks up after that, where the synoptics leave off.

And when Jesus had come back from being tempted in the wilderness for four days, he came back to where John was, and there's a series of several consecutive days recorded in John chapter 1. It says in John 1, 19, excuse me, now this is the testimony of John. When the Jews sent priests and Levites to Jerusalem to ask him who you are, etc., etc., he told them, I'm not the Christ, I'm the voice of one crying in the wilderness. But then it says the next day, verse 29, the next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, apparently from the wilderness where he'd just been tempted for 40 days and was the victor.

And John said, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me comes a man who is preferred before me, for he was before me. I did not know him, but that he should be revealed to Israel.

Therefore I came baptizing with water. And John bore witness, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove. And he remained on him.

Of course, all this happened before Jesus was tempted, but John's now telling the story of this happening some month and a half earlier as he sees Jesus coming back from being tempted in the wilderness. Now, it's interesting that he said, I didn't know him until I saw the dove come down. And yet in the synoptics, John certainly knows who Jesus is and argues that, you know, you should baptize me, not the other way around.

But I think that what John is saying here is that I didn't know the full impact of who he was until this voice spoke and said he was the Son of God. And he closes by saying in verse 34, I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God. I think before Jesus was baptized, when he first came to John, John knew he was the Messiah.

But very few Jews, and possibly John himself, might not have even known that the Messiah was deity. And he could testify to that now, because when he baptized him, the Spirit came down and a voice came down and said, this is my son. So John says, I can now testify that this is the Son of God.

Then John 1.35 says, again the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. These were Andrew and probably John. Andrew is named, the other is not named, but John never gives his own name in his own gospel.

It's almost certain that John and Andrew were together on this occasion. They were partners in fishing and they were disciples of John. And they were standing there and John said, behold the Lamb of God.

And those two disciples, I'm going to call them Andrew and John, went and followed Jesus. Andrew went and got his brother Peter and brought him. Actually, Peter's name was Simon at that time and Jesus on that occasion changed his name.

So you're going to be named Peter, the rock. And then the next day, verse 43, the following day, Jesus wanted to go to Galilee and he found Philip and said, follow me. Now, we don't know where Philip comes in here.

We haven't seen Philip before that. But Philip may have been another disciple of John the Baptist or he may have been just someone standing around. Jesus called him, said, follow me.

But Philip, like Andrew, went after one of his friends first. His friend was Nathaniel and Jesus and Nathaniel have a striking encounter. Jesus being able to tell Nathaniel things about himself that Nathaniel didn't think Jesus should be able to know and therefore was impressed.

And so Philip and Nathaniel become followers of Jesus. So we have in this series of four consecutive days, the second day Jesus appears to John and John identifies him and testifies of the spirit coming on. The third day of the sequence, two disciples of John follow Jesus.

And the fourth day of the sequence, Philip is called and calls Nathaniel. So Jesus, by the end of John chapter one, has at least met. We don't know if all these men are permanently following him yet, but he has at least met Peter and his brother Andrew.

John and very possibly James, but that's not mentioned because John and James were also brothers. And he's met Philip and Nathaniel. Nathaniel is later known in the list of the disciples as Bartholomew.

So about at least five, if not six of the twelve are now acquainted with Jesus. And yet this is an obscure year and he's traveling with a very small band. And the remainder of the

year of obscurity is found in chapters two, three and four of the Gospel of John.

And just to summarize what happened to them, Jesus, the first miracle he performed was in Galilee in the town of Cana. His mother and he and his friends apparently were invited to a friend's wedding at the wedding. And these weddings sometimes would go for two weeks.

It'd be hard to gauge how much catering you'd need, how much food you'd need and so forth. And the people had miscalculated how much wine would be drunk and they ran out of wine at the wedding. And Mary approached Jesus about it.

At first he indicated to her, you know, I can only do things when it's my hour to do them. I can't do them when you want me to necessarily. That was probably a change because he had always been her oldest son in the home and always probably the one she counted on to do things.

She naturally came to him when her friends were found to be without wine. And Jesus then commanded some servants to fill some jars with water and to pour it and take it to the master of the feast. And it turned out to be wine.

This miracle is one of the few that John records in his gospel. John's gospel records only a handful of miracles. And generally speaking, links them with some significant statement of Jesus about himself.

Later in the gospel of John, Jesus is recorded as saying in chapter 15, I am the true vine. And no doubt this miracle was an illustration of that. A vine is something that can transform water into wine.

The vine is watered with water and that liquid is transformed in the process of the growing of grapes and so forth into wine. And so Jesus at this wedding showed himself to be, as it were, the true vine. Then the next thing that's recorded, and that was his first miracle that he performed in his life.

And apparently the next thing recorded that he did in this obscure year is he went to Jerusalem. And he found the money changers and the merchants in the temple, which he did not like. They were ripping people off.

They were misrepresenting God. They were changing the focus of the worshippers coming to the temple to one of a commercial interest instead of one of devotion to God. And he took a small whip and drove everyone out.

And he basically said that that was his father's house. He said in verse 16, take these away. Do not make my father's house a house of merchandise.

And he was confronted about this, as one might expect him to be. He was talking about

the temple as if he owned it and driving out the people that weren't welcome there by him. It was a public building.

So they confronted him and said, by what authority do you do this? Give us a sign. What sign will you give that you have the authority to do these things? He said, well, destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it up again. And although they mistakenly thought he was talking about the temple in which they were standing and mocked him, saying he could not possibly do that, yet we're told he wasn't really talking about that.

He was making his first prediction of his resurrection, that he would die and three days later he would rise again. The temple was his body that he spoke of. Now, there is a story like this that occurs in the synoptic Gospels also, but they do not position it in the year of obscurity.

They position it at the end, in the final week of Jesus' life. This has been thought by some to be contradiction in the Bible. Here, the synoptic Gospels place the cleansing of the temple at the end of Jesus' life.

John puts it here almost at the beginning of his ministry. And some have thought that there's a bit of a conflict here. No conflict.

Jesus did it twice. John recorded the first time because the synoptic writers didn't record it the first time. The synoptic writers recorded only the second time.

There's no problem here. Now, how do I know he did it twice? Well, I've got the four Gospels to tell me. John tells us he did it at the beginning of his ministry.

The other Gospels tell us he did it at the end of his ministry. That's twice. I can count.

And apparently liberals can't count because they think he must have only done it once and that the Gospels can't get it straight among themselves as to when he did it. But the story is different. There are differences in the story of the first cleansing of the temple, which is here in John, and the story of the cleansing of the temple the second time, which is recorded in the synoptics, which happened much later.

We won't worry about those differences right now. But while Jesus was there in Jerusalem having cleansed the temple, he got a lot of attention. He actually did some signs.

They're not recorded, but he did some miraculous signs, apparently, and impressed a lot of people. One of the people he impressed was a Jewish leader named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was known as the teacher of Israel.

He was a member of the Sanhedrin. And he was sent to Jesus by night, apparently to represent a group of persons. We don't know who they were, but he said, we know that

you were sent from God.

No one could do these signs unless God was with him. Whoever we are is not clear. Certainly he wouldn't be speaking for the whole Sanhedrin, because the whole Sanhedrin was not necessarily believing these things about Jesus yet, and didn't ever.

Nicodemus may have represented a few people in the Sanhedrin, like himself and Joseph of Arimathea, who were believers in Jesus. Or he may have spoken for some other group of remnant Jews in Jerusalem. But he came as a spokesman to Jesus.

And we don't know what he intended to talk about, because Jesus took charge of the conversation and took it the direction he wanted it to go. Nicodemus no sooner made his introductory greetings, and Jesus began to preach about being born again, the need to be born again. If you're not born again, you can't see the kingdom of God, you can't enter the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus didn't quite grasp his meaning, so Jesus tried to clarify it. He talked about the need to be born of the Spirit. And that the Spirit is... There are many things about the Spirit that are hard to understand, just like the wind blows wherever it wills, and you don't know where it comes from, but you don't disbelieve it.

So also you have to believe in the work of the Spirit, but you can't see and understand everything about Him. And he went on to say that just as Moses lifted up a serpent in the wilderness so that those who looked on it were healed, so Jesus, the Son of Man, would be lifted up on a cross so that those who would believe in Him should be saved. And it's in that context we have John 3.16, famous gospel in a nutshell.

The remaining verses of John chapter 3 are commentary by the author, John himself, and a little bit about John the Baptist and his disciples' reaction to people's awareness that Jesus was around, and there were even people coming to be baptized now by Jesus, though he wasn't as famous as he would later be. John the Baptist gives his famous statement in verse 30, He must increase, I must decrease. John recognized he was there just to introduce Jesus.

He was now going to bow out for the most part, and Jesus would become prominent. And then in chapter 4 we have Jesus deciding to go to Galilee. This trip to Galilee included a trip through Samaria.

And we have in John the story of Jesus meeting a woman at the well and converting her, and she in turn converted her whole town, brought them to Jesus, and there was a great revival in that town. And that story is told only in John. And Samaria was the direct route from where Jesus was in Judea to Galilee.

But when he got to Galilee, that began the next part of his ministry, the year of popularity, and that's what we'll study next time. There are some things we will point out

in John chapter 4, because that's a transitional chapter from the year of obscurity to the year of popularity. In chapter 4 he's in Samaria initially, then he's in Galilee by the end of the chapter.

And Samaria was in route there. So we find that there's very little told about this obscure year. Jesus was baptized, tempted, called a few disciples, turned water into wine, cleansed the temple, had a private conversation with Nicodemus, had a private conversation with the woman at the well, and that's all we know of that whole year.

After that he started what's sometimes called the Great Galilean Ministry, which will be the subject of our next talk, and that begins the second major portion of his ministry, the year of popularity. At that we'll close.