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The Genealogy of Jesus



The Life and Teachings of Christ - Steve Gregg

In the New Testament, both Matthew and Luke present the genealogy of Jesus, although there are discrepancies between the two. Matthew's genealogy includes four women, including Tamar, who posed as a prostitute, and Rahab, who was a prostitute, which underscores Jesus' inclusive message of salvation. Matthew also intentionally made the genealogy symmetrical and concise. Luke, on the other hand, traces Jesus' lineage back to Adam, emphasizing Jesus as the second Adam and a new beginning for humanity. The genealogies presented in both Matthew and Luke serve different purposes and illustrate Jesus' connection to Jewish tradition and his message of inclusion for all.

Transcript

One of the most unfavorite kinds of material to cover. When I say the most unfavorite, what is the most unfavorite kind of material in the Bible for you to read? What do you like least reading? The genealogies, right? The genealogies, so-and-so begat so-and-so who begat so-and-so, and so forth. Well, that's the material we're going to be looking at today, the genealogies of Jesus.

They are more interesting than you might think, but that's not immediately apparent until you do a little digging in them. But there are two passages in the New Testament that give us genealogies of Christ. One is in Matthew and one is in Luke, the same two books that give us birth stories of Christ.

So we'll be looking today at Matthew and at Luke. Look with me first, if you would, at Matthew chapter 1, verses 1 through 17. Now bear with me, I'm going to read this.

Please read along, it'll keep you awake. And pay attention, you may see a few things even before I point them out to you. Matthew 1, verses 1 through 17.

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Excuse me, the Son of David. So used to saying Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Let's start over again. The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his

brothers.

Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar. Perez begot Hezron and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab and Amminadab begot Nashon.

And Nashon begot Salmon. And Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab. Boaz begot Obed by Ruth.

Obed begot Jesse. And Jesse begot David the king. And David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

Solomon begot Rehoboam. Rehoboam begot Abijah. And Abijah begot Azah.

Azah begot Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat begot Joram. And Joram begot Uzziah.

Uzziah begot Jotham. Jotham begot Ahaz. And Ahaz begot Hezekiah.

Hezekiah begot Manasseh. Manasseh begot Ammon. And Ammon begot Josiah.

Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers. About the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel.

And Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud. Abiud begot Eliakim.

Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok. Zadok begot Ahim.

And Ahim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar. And Eleazar begot Methan.

Methan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of the king. And Joseph married.

Of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. 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, actually, this summary in verse 17 is a bit surprising, because it doesn't really work quite like Matthew says. In order to have fourteen generations from Abraham to David, and from David to the carrying away into captivity, requires a couple of manipulations.

First of all, David has to be in both lists. Secondly, it has to leave out some of the kings. Now, there's no question about it.

The list from David to Jeconiah leaves out some of the known kings of Israel. There were twenty kings of Judah, I should say. There were twenty of them, and there's not twenty of them listed here.

And, therefore, we have to say that Matthew has deliberately abbreviated this genealogy

in order to make it neatly fourteen plus fourteen plus fourteen generations. Now, some people might think that that's a dishonest thing to do. Obviously, Matthew didn't think so.

Any one of his readers could have looked at the Old Testament to see which names he had left out. In fact, it's very likely that the Jews were familiar enough with the kings in their history that they would recognize immediately that he left three or four of them out of the list. Matthew could hardly hope to fool his readers, nor is it likely that Matthew made a mistake.

I think we should understand that Matthew has deliberately taken the high points of the genealogy, and this is apparently done elsewhere in Scripture in the Old Testament as well. Genealogies are not always comprehensive. They don't give every name of every generation.

That's not necessary to do, because many times there are names that are in a genealogy or left out of a genealogy because they're not all that important. And simply by picking the high points and jumping perhaps from a great-grandfather to his great-grandson is enough to document the family line. Now, Matthew, in arranging it fourteen and fourteen and fourteen and pointing out that he's done so, is no doubt making it symmetrical for the purpose of easy memorization.

If somebody wants to memorize the basic family line of Jesus, they can remember that there's fourteen names and fourteen names and fourteen names. And by making it symmetrical, one can easily tell if he's leaving something out of his recitation of the genealogy. Now, we may not see any value in that.

In fact, we might even object to a historian doing something like this. But one thing we can say is Matthew apparently was doing something that he thought was acceptable and would be acceptable to his readers, apparently something that Jewish genealogists would do, occasionally leaving out names and making the list symmetrical for the sake of easy remembrance. After all, in Genesis chapter five, where we find the first genealogy in the Bible, there are exactly ten names from Adam to Noah.

The next genealogy in the Bible is that of Abraham, found in Genesis chapter eleven, there's exactly ten names from Noah to Abraham. Now, it is possible, of course, that that's exactly the number of generations from Adam to Noah and from Noah to Abraham, ten generations and ten generations. It's also possible that Genesis was written with the mind to do something very similar to what Matthew has done here, and that is to take the high points of the genealogy, leaving out perhaps less significant parties, less significant names, and only showing, you know, basically the broader outline.

of the genealogy and deliberately making it symmetrical, ten names in one list from Adam to Noah, ten names from Noah to Abraham. It's, like I said, we don't know for sure.

There's no way to tell in those lists whether those are comprehensive lists or fragmentary lists.

But Matthew's list would give us the impression that the Jews thought it not improper to leave out names if that would create a symmetry that would perhaps make it easier to remember whether, you know, you've got all the names in the list or not when you're memorizing it. At least most commentators believe that that's what Matthew has intended to do here is to make it easier to memorize the names. Now, you may not care to memorize these names.

In fact, the Apostle Paul told Timothy not to be bothered about endless genealogies. Of course, he was talking probably about a different kind of genealogies in that passage, the kind where the Gnostics postulated ranks, endless ranks, between the divine essence and mankind, and Jesus was one of those lower ranks according to Gnosticism. It would seem that that's what Paul was against.

There's nothing wrong with genealogies except they're a little boring in some cases. In this case, however, there's some interesting features. First of all, whose genealogy is this? Well, that becomes evident in verse 16.

Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary. Now, Jacob was the name of Joseph, the stepfather of Jesus, the foster father of Jesus, who adopted Jesus. He was not the biological father of Jesus, but he was the legal father, the legal parent.

Therefore, we have here the legal genealogy of Jesus. His standing in society would be traced through the genealogy of his presumed father. Joseph was presumed to be his father, and therefore Jesus would hold a standing in community as if he were the son of Joseph.

We have here the legal standing, the legal genealogy and pedigree of Jesus, though of course we know, since Joseph was not his biological father, that this is not his biological pedigree. Now, Joseph's father's name was Jacob. There's a parallel to that in the Old Testament, isn't there? The famous Jacob had a son named Joseph also, the famous Joseph, and it's probably no accident that Jacob, the father of Joseph, named his son Joseph in order to mimic that of the Old Testament, the Jacob and the Joseph relationship.

Joseph, in the Old Testament, was the favorite son of his father Jacob, and therefore in naming this man Joseph, his father Jacob probably was trying to reflect that as Jacob in the Old Testament had so named his favorite son, that that's how perhaps this man who married Mary was his own father's favorite son. We can't say, we can't deduce too much from this, but one thing we can see is Matthew has broken all tradition in writing this genealogy by introducing the names of women. You will not find another genealogy among the Jews or in Scripture that gives the names of women.

And the reason for that is that a woman's name was not particularly important for tracing the bloodline. When a woman marries a man, she gives up her family name and takes on her husband's name. Her children, therefore, carry on the husband's family name and the husband's inheritance, and generally does not carry on the mother's family name.

Therefore, it was never important or significant to include a woman's name in a genealogy. However, Matthew has broken with tradition and has four times mentioned not only the father but the mother of somebody. In verse 3, he says that Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar.

Tamar is a woman. Tamar actually was Judah's daughter-in-law. He never married her.

She had married his oldest son, who died childless, and so she married the next son-in-line, according to the customs of the time. He died childless also. Judah was afraid to give her his third son because he thought maybe there was a curse on her, and so he withheld his third son from her, thus violating her rights to be married to the next son-in-line and to bear children, and therefore she was made an old maiden widow.

She wore the garments of widowhood most of the time. However, after Judah's wife died, he was going to shear his sheep on a certain occasion, and Tamar heard about it. She happened to be at that part of her cycle where she was fertile, and she went out and dressed herself as a harlot prostitute and stood by the side of the road where Judah would be passing.

She managed to allure him, and he slept with her, and she became pregnant with twins, and one of those twins was the ancestor of Jesus. Now, Tamar obviously was a woman whose name is not remembered with pride in the family line. These children were illegitimate.

They were born out of wedlock, but they were of the bloodline of Judah, and interestingly, the kings of Judah, including David, were of the bloodline of Judah. David and his successors came from this particular act of prostitution. Strange that her name would be mentioned here.

Then down in verse 5, Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab. Now, Boaz we know from the story of Ruth. We do not know from the story of Ruth, however, that Boaz was the son of Rahab, the harlot, and a man otherwise unknown to us of the tribe of Judah named Salmon.

Apparently, when Jericho fell and Rahab was rescued, she married a man of the tribe of Judah. She must have become a proselyte to Judaism, like Ruth later did, and so she married him, and she had a child, and that child became an ancestor of David. That child was Boaz.

Boaz, in turn, also married a Gentile woman, Ruth, and she is mentioned in the same verse. Verse 5, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, and of course Ruth and Boaz were the great grandparents of David. Then it says in verse 6, David the king begot Salmon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

Bathsheba is frequently made reference to in this way, rather than by her name, although her name is given in the Old Testament records. More often, or frequently at least, she is called the wife of Uriah, or she who had been the wife of Uriah. The Bible says David was perfect before the Lord in all matters except the matter of Uriah's wife.

Even after she was widowed, and her husband Uriah was dead, and she remarried David and had legitimate children by David, she was still remembered in the record as one who had been Uriah's wife. The shame of David's adultery never was completely wiped away from the record. It was from his conscience, because God forgave him of the sin, but sometimes the shame of sin continues to be remembered against a man.

And it doesn't say David begot Salmon by Bathsheba, but by her who had been the wife of Uriah, calling to mind David's criminal act in causing her husband to be put to death in his own adultery with the man's wife. Now, what I would point out here is that there are four women in this record. An unusual feature in genealogies.

What makes it additionally unusual is that they are all apparently Gentile women. Tamar certainly was. She couldn't have been a Jew because there were no Jews yet.

Her children became the Jews. The Jews are named after Judah. Obviously, Judah would have to be the first Jew then, and his children would become the ones later known as the Jews, the tribe of Judah.

Tamar couldn't have been of the tribe of Judah since she was the mother of Judah's children. Therefore, she was a Gentile, not a Jew. Likewise, Rahab was a Gentile.

She was a Canaanite of the cursed race. She was the only survivor of Jericho who was kept alive because she believed in the God of Israel. The New Testament twice mentions her as a woman of faith, outstanding in her nation.

Hebrews 11 mentions her faith, and also James chapter 2 mentions her faith. She was a Canaanite, however, and had she not converted to Judaism, she would have been exterminated with the rest of her people. Ruth, we know, was a Gentile.

She was a Moabite. There was actually a curse on the Moabites stated in the book of Deuteronomy that a Moabite could not enter into the tabernacle of the Lord and the congregation of the Lord until the tenth generation. It's interesting, David was only three generations removed from Moabite ancestry, and yet he not only entered into the tabernacle, but his son built the temple, and Solomon was only four generations removed from a Moabite, though the law said that a person who was Moabite going back

ten generations could not enter the congregation of the Lord.

But here's a third Gentile. Now Bathsheba, we don't know what her actual ancestry was. She might have been Jewish.

Her grandfather, I believe, was a Hithophel, one of David's counselors. But her husband was a Hittite, that's a Canaanite. Uriah the Hittite was her husband.

The Hittites were a Canaanite tribe. Bathsheba was either a Jewish girl who married a Canaanite man, or else she was herself of the same race as her husband. She may have been a Canaanite herself.

She may have been a Hittite. We are not told specifically, although we are told that a Hithophel was her grandfather. And he may or may not have been Jewish.

We don't know. Obviously if David had a mighty man in his armies who was a Hittite, he may have had a counselor who was a Hittite also, a Hithophel. In any case, three of the four, and possibly all four of the women, are non-Jewish.

Now most of the generations that are given here probably were born of Jewish mothers. The ones that are singled out, very clearly, were not born of Jewish mothers. Then again, there is something else to be said about these women.

Besides being Gentiles, all of them except Ruth, and possibly including Ruth, have something of a scandal associated with their past. Tamar begot her children through, or Judah begot the children in Tamar through an illicit act of prostitution and fornication. The children were not legitimate.

Rahab, in her former years, had been a harlot also. Tamar and Rahab both had played the harlot, had been involved in prostitution at one time or another. Bathsheba, obviously, is best known to us by her adultery with David.

Ruth, of course, was a virtuous girl and we have no reason to believe that she ever did anything immoral. Although it was somewhat scandalous that she came into the threshing floor and laid down at the feet of Boaz when she intended to inform him of his duty to redeem her in marriage. We don't have time to talk about that Jewish custom.

But apparently there was something scandalous about her even being there at the foot of his bed, or of his sleeping bag or whatever it was, because he told her in the morning, sneak away and don't let anyone know that a woman has been here in the threshing floor. So even though she didn't do anything immoral, she pretty much risked the scandal of being perceived as immoral. In any case, three of the four women were known for sexual immorality.

Now here we have an interesting thing. Matthew has chosen to break custom by

including women's names. He could have included the women of every generation, but he didn't.

He selected four to include. The four he selected are largely noted for their predominantly Gentile character and sinful past. In three out of the four cases there was a sinful past, and in three out of the four, or maybe all four of the cases, the women were Gentiles.

That is no accident. And it is almost certain that Matthew included these names for the very purpose of illustrating that Jesus was not in the least embarrassed to be associated with the down and out, the outcasts, the women who had no standing in society generally, the Gentiles and sinners. All of these were categories that the Jews themselves looked down upon.

Jewish men gave very little value to women. A man could divorce his wife, although the wife could not divorce her husband. And according to some rabbis, a man could divorce his wife for trivial causes.

If she burned the food or if she just got old and ugly and he met someone cuter, he could just divorce her. That was the way that some interpreted the law. Jewish men, it is said, would daily in their prayers of Thanksgiving thank God that they were not created a Gentile or a woman or a dog, which shows you something of the Jewish disrespect for womanhood at that time.

Jesus, however, amazed everybody, even his own disciples, when he spoke to the woman at the well in Samaria. It says in John chapter 4 that his disciples marveled that he spoke to a woman, because that was not customary. Even today in many Middle Eastern countries and those that preserve the customs of the Middle East, the Muslim culture, women do not speak to men in public.

In fact, in some places they are not even allowed to show their faces in public at all. That was no doubt somewhat the same in Jewish culture in ancient times, but Jesus scandalized his disciples and who knows how many more people by being willing to converse freely with a woman as if she was a human being. And as far as Gentiles go, Jesus scandalized the Jews of his time by treating them like they were human beings and suggesting that if they had faith, they too could enter into the inheritance of the Jews, something that the Jews hardly had any room in their thinking for.

It was Gentiles who could be as acceptable to God as Jews are, without becoming Jews. Everybody knew that a Gentile could become a Jew. A Gentile male could become circumcised and become a proselyte to Judaism, but then he was no longer a Gentile, he was a Jew.

But there were uncircumcised Gentiles whom Jesus accepted and even commended as

being more acceptable than some Jews. The centurion was a Roman, not a Jew. And Jesus, when he saw the man's faith, he marveled and said, I have not found this kind of faith, not in all of Israel.

And then he went on to say, and I say to you that men shall come from the east and the west and the north and the south, meaning the countries outside of Israel, the Gentile nations, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the ancestors of the Jewish race. Here these Gentiles would come from every place and sit down in the kingdom with the ancestors of the Jews. And he said, but the children of the kingdom, meaning the natural Jews, would be cast out.

This is in Matthew chapter 8 also. It's also found in Luke chapter 13. Jesus was saying that in the church there would be many Gentiles included and many Jews excluded, all on the basis of faith.

And of course the New Testament goes on to make it clear, especially in the Epistles of Paul, that that came to be common knowledge, that Gentiles could be saved without being circumcised, without becoming Jews, just by faith. These women, of course, were not circumcised, since women cannot be circumcised. And yet they were accepted into the line of the Messiah.

That's what Matthew is pointing out. The Messiah was not ashamed to be associated with a bloodline that included some Gentile blood in it. By the way, by today's definition of a Jew, which requires that a man have a Jewish mother, quite a few people in Jesus' genealogy were not Jews.

Judah's children were not Jews, because they didn't have a Jewish mother. Obed, the grandfather of David, was not a Jew, because he had a Moabite mother. And the generation before that.

I'm sorry, let me get this right. It was Boaz, excuse me, it was Obed that had a Moabite mother, and it was Boaz who had a Canaanite mother, Rahab. So some of these guys, by today's definition of a Jew, would not be Jews at all.

They had Gentile mothers, not Jewish mothers. So Jesus came from a line that included Gentiles. And yet he was Jewish.

Jewish enough to be the Messiah. So obviously to be Jewish doesn't require that a person have 100% Jewish blood. And of course, Paul said in Romans 2, in verse 28, he is not a Jew who is one outwardly.

Neither is that a circumcision which is outward of the flesh, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly. When Jesus saw Nathanael coming, he said, here comes an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. Guile means dishonesty.

This is John chapter 1. Jesus said that about Nathanael. Here's what makes a man a true Israelite, that he was a man of integrity. He doesn't say in whom is no Gentile blood, but he said in whom is no guile or deceit.

John 1.47. A true Israelite is a man in whom is no deceit. He was not a hypocrite. He was a genuine, honest lover of truth.

And that's why he came to Jesus. That made him a true Israelite. So Jesus associated with Gentiles in his genealogy as well as in his life.

And with women. Obviously everyone associates with women in their genealogy, because everyone comes from women. But in most cases the women's names were not preserved in the genealogies.

And then of course there was the sinner aspect. Most of these women are notorious for their sins. In fact, almost all that we know about them has to do with their sinful past.

We know very little about Rahab, except that she was a harlot who came to believe. Or about Tamar, except that she was a harlot. And yet, Jesus was not ashamed to come from a bloodline that had such sinners in it.

Now, how do I know that he wasn't ashamed? Well, Matthew at least assumes this to be the case. Jesus, of course, could not help it, nor could anyone help it, if there were criminals in their past, if there were ancestors of theirs that were sinners and notorious sinners. But it wouldn't have to be advertised every time you gave your genealogy.

Matthew could have covered all that up. It was a bit scandalous, after all, the way that Judah got his daughter-in-law pregnant. It was a bit scandalous.

The marriage between David and Bathsheba was so scandalous that Nathan the prophet said it gave the enemies of God occasion to blaspheme. And yet, these scandals were not covered up by Matthew. He almost glories in the fact that Jesus was not ashamed to associate with people who had blots on their record.

Jesus, in his own lifetime, was frequently accused of being a friend of sinners, and he didn't deny it. Of course he was a friend of sinners. He feasted with them.

The people who came to him in large numbers were people who had sinful past. You remember the time that a woman came into the house of Simon the Pharisee when Jesus was feasting there? And, you know, even if you associate with sinners privately, the one time you don't want sinners coming and associating with you is when you're in the house of a Pharisee. And this woman, who was a known public sinner, came in and wept and washed Jesus' feet with their tears and wiped them with their hair, and it did scandalize the company present.

They said, if this man were a prophet, he'd know what a sinful woman this was, and he wouldn't let her touch him. And Jesus knew their thoughts. Either by supernatural knowledge or just being able to deduce what they'd think, it wouldn't be too hard to figure out how they'd be thinking.

And he said, well, this woman has been forgiven much, she loves much. He showed no embarrassment whatsoever about this contact and association with a sinful woman. Matthew, who observed all of this as one of the twelve apostles, felt like this was one of the major things, one of the major ways in which Jesus broke away from Jewish tradition, and no doubt in giving his genealogy, wanted to emphasize this by the inclusion of names that would show that there's no distinction between Jew or Gentile, male or female, or even between notorious sinners or just run-of-the-mill garden variety sinners.

Everybody's a sinner. And therefore, Matthew includes these names as if to underscore Jesus' association, his free and willing association with people of these classes, which Judaism would have held at arm's length or worse. Would have stoned him in some cases.

Of course, they wanted to stone Jesus too. He associated with them in that respect as well. So here we have in Matthew something of a message, even in the way he writes the genealogy.

Something about the all-inclusiveness of Jesus, how he included people of every race, every gender, or both genders, there's only two, and even of a checkered past, which is for all of us, I think, to rejoice in. There's something else about Matthew's genealogy that's of interest, but we'll look at it in a moment. We have to come over to Luke first of all, and then we'll come back to it.

In Luke chapter 3, we have the other genealogy of Jesus. Luke chapter 3, beginning at verse 23. Now this we will not read in detail.

It has more names. For one thing, because Matthew's genealogy only traces Jesus' genealogy back as far as Abraham. Matthew is writing for a Jewish readership, and he knows that Jesus' descent from Abraham would be the most important issue to them.

Luke, however, is writing to a Gentile reader, Theophilus, and he traces Jesus' genealogy all the way back to Adam, which involves 20 more names than Matthew's genealogy, because there were 10 generations from Adam to Noah and 10 from Noah to Abraham. Matthew just starts at Abraham. Luke traces it back to Adam.

Another difference is that Matthew's genealogy starts with Abraham and traces forward to Joseph. Luke's genealogy starts forward and works backward to Adam. Now these are not points of great significance.

These are just initial observations. The principal difference, however, between Matthew's

genealogy and Luke's genealogy is that they have different names in them. In fact, there's very few of the same names, which has caused a bit of a stumbling block to many.

Let's start reading at verse 23. Now, already we don't have to read any further than this to see a problem. Who is Joseph the son of? According to Matthew's genealogy, Jacob begot Joseph.

Joseph's father was named Jacob, therefore. Here, however, it would appear to say that Joseph was the son of someone named Heli, and if you'd follow it on, it's all different. It's all different from Matthew.

Matthew and Luke give entirely different genealogies. The principal point at which they both connect is in David. We saw that in Matthew chapter 1 and verse 6, it said, And Jesse begot David the king, and David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

Matthew 1.6. So, Matthew's genealogy traces through David, especially through Solomon, particularly. However, in Luke 3 and verse 31, Luke 3.31 says, The son of Malia, the son of Manan, the son of Mattathah, the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse. Here, the son of David through which this genealogy is traced is not Solomon, but Nathan.

David had many sons. Nathan and Solomon were two different sons of David. Matthew's genealogy traces from David through Solomon.

Luke traces it from David through Nathan, another son of David. So, we have an entirely different genealogy. Now, the problem here comes with trying to discover who Heli is.

In Luke 3.23, it says, The son of Heli. Several explanations have been suggested. Some have felt that maybe Joseph was the product of what was called a Leverite marriage.

The Leverite marriage comes, I think, from the Latin word lever, which means brother-in-law. And a woman who married a man who died childless, if he had a younger brother, was required by law to marry his younger brother. If they had a child, the firstborn son of that marriage would be named after the deceased brother.

All other subsequent children of the marriage would belong to the present husband who had married the widow. But the deceased brother, it was considered a tragedy for a man to die without an heir. Therefore, it was the duty of a younger brother to marry the widow of his older brother if his older brother had died childless without an heir.

And the first son of that second marriage would belong legally to the deceased and would therefore have the inheritance of the deceased. Some have felt that Joseph's real father was a guy named Jacob. Because Matthew chapter 1 says that Jacob begot Joseph.

That would clearly say that Jacob was the biological father of Joseph. But where it says here Joseph was the son of Heli, they have suggested maybe Heli was the older brother of Jacob. And if so, then possibly Heli died childless, his widow married Jacob, and Jacob begat Joseph.

But Joseph was considered the son of Heli, the deceased older brother. So that it could be said that Jacob begat Joseph, but that Joseph was the son of Heli, that would be legally. That is an elaborate and an ingenious explanation, but it probably doesn't work.

For one thing, if Heli was the older brother of Jacob, they would have the same father themselves. However, the father of Jacob in Matthew is said to be named Methan. Whereas here, Heli's father is Methat.

Some would see this as a textual error and suggest that Methat and Methan are really the same person. However, Methat in Luke 3.24 is said to have a father named Levi, whereas Methan in Matthew, his father is named Eleazar. Interestingly, Eleazar and Levi are both Levitical names.

They are both priestly names. There was a priest named Eleazar and a priest named Levi, who is the founder of the priestly tribe. If Methat and Methan are the same guy, then they are given different fathers, but some might say, well, there's another Levite marriage there.

Levi and Eleazar are both priestly names. Perhaps they were both sons of one man, and one was the older brother, etc., etc. But this gets into an elaborate system of conjecture and guesswork.

There must be a better solution to the apparent problem of reconciling Matthew's genealogy of Jesus and Luke's. It should further be noted that Matthew and Luke would have had to look at the same sources in order to write down the genealogies of Joseph. Neither of them would know them instinctively, and neither of them would make them up from whole cloth.

I mean, why bother? If you don't know the real ancestors, why pretend like you do? Somebody might be able to prove you wrong. It's clear that when Matthew wanted to write the genealogy and when Luke wanted to write the genealogy, they would have gone to the same place to get the information where it was recorded in the temple records in Jerusalem. Now, if Matthew went and got the temple records of the genealogy of Joseph, and if Luke went to Jerusalem and got the temple records of the genealogy of Joseph, you know what? They would have gotten the same records and would have written down the same names, unless one of them was very negligent and accidentally pulled the wrong file, which isn't likely.

It's more likely that Matthew and Luke are not intending at all to give the same person's

genealogy. Let's look at Luke more carefully. Luke 3.23 says, Now, Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Heli.

Now, I want you to look at where it says, the son of Heli. The words the son are in italics. Likewise, throughout the remainder of the genealogy, in every place after that, the words the son, the son, the son are always in italics.

This is not for emphasis. When the Bible puts words in italics, well, the New King James actually puts all Old Testament quotations in italics. For instance, you see that, for example, in Luke 3, verses 5 and 6, where those are in italics.

But that's unusual, the New King James does that. But, for the most part, when you find in the middle of a sentence some words in italics in the Bible, it means those words are not in the Greek. That they are supplied by the translator because of a gap in the Greek text.

So, the Greek text really says, the son of Joseph, of Heli, of Methat, of Levi, of Melchi, etc., etc., etc. So, to say that Joseph was of Heli, some have said, maybe that means he was the son-in-law of Heli. That would make Heli Mary's father.

Now, we don't have Mary's father's name from any other place. And, therefore, her father might have been named Heli, for all we know. And, to say Joseph was of Heli, with the missing thing there, they say, could mean the son-in-law of Heli.

And, that would make Heli Mary's father. But, the problem with that, of course, is that the construction is the same all the way through the rest of the genealogy. And, if we're going to have it son-in-law here, then why not have it son-in-law wherever we want to throughout the rest of the genealogy? That would make the genealogy almost meaningless.

You'd never know whether you're reading of the parentage or the marriage parentage of a particular party. It's safer to just not take it as son-in-law, but say son of, is a pretty good one. Although, son of may not mean one generation removed.

To say that somebody was of somebody else does suggest that the male line of theirs goes through that person's name. But, it doesn't mean they're necessarily one generation removed. After all, in Matthew 1.1, it said, Jesus was the son of Abraham, the son of David.

Well, certainly there's more than one generation removed between Jesus and David, or between Jesus and Abraham. To say he was the son of Abraham, or the son of David, simply say he's the descendant of. Obviously, a great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandson.

Therefore, to say that somebody is of somebody else doesn't necessarily mean that the second party is their father. It might be their grandfather, or great-grandfather, or something else. Now, knowing that, anyone lost yet? Pay attention.

Knowing that, when we turn back to verse 23 of Luke 3, we find that part of it is in parentheses. Not in the Greek, but in the New King James, and the King James, and many other translations. Part of it is put in parentheses to show that it is set off from the main thought of the sentence.

In this case, it says, as was supposed. It says, Jesus was 30 years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph. Now, as was supposed tells us that Jesus wasn't really the son of Joseph.

He was just regarded to be such by the public. They thought of Joseph as his father. They thought he was the son of Joseph, but he wasn't.

That's why Luke says, as was supposed. But one could close that parentheses further into the sentence. The parentheses, as I said, are not in the Greek.

They are supplied, for the sake of clarity, by translators who could have put the end of the parentheses after the word Joseph. That would change the sense of the verse, and it would make perfectly good sense. It would say, Jesus was, as was supposed, the son of Joseph.

Of Heli. Jesus was of Heli. He was supposed or thought to be of Joseph, but not so.

He was really of Heli. I don't know if you find that confusing, but if you could just picture the parentheses closing after the word Joseph, instead of where it does in the particular text, if you're looking at the New King James. What do you got there? No, the manuscripts don't have any punctuation at all.

No periods or commas or quotation marks or parentheses. Those punctuation marks are all put in by the translators as they see fit. Well, that's where we're going with it.

The idea is that the whole clause that says, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, is an aside that could go in parentheses. And when something's in parentheses, it means the sentence would make as much sense if you omitted that which was in parentheses. And the flow of thought would be uninterrupted by omitting the material in parentheses.

Which means that you could read the sentence without the parentheses that Jesus was 30 years of age being of Heli. Now, would that mean that Heli was his father? Of course not. Luke has already told us earlier that Jesus didn't have an earthly father.

Heli was not his father. Well, then in what sense would Jesus be of Heli? Well, it would mean, very possibly, that he was, in fact, biologically descended from Heli, whom we

would have to regard to be his nearest male ancestor. Now, your nearest male ancestor is who? Your father.

Your father is your nearest male ancestor. Jesus didn't have one. So who was his nearest male ancestor? His maternal grandfather.

The male through whose bloodline Jesus came to earth was that of his mother's father. Not so with you. You came through your father.

And your father's father, and father's father's father, and so forth. That's how your genealogy is reckoned. That's how your name has been passed down.

But Jesus didn't have an earthly father, and therefore his nearest male ancestor in the bloodline of his ancestor would trace to his mother's father, and it would make perfectly good sense to say that Jesus was of Heli, meaning that Heli was Mary's father. Now, let me give you reasons for accepting this particular explanation. First of all, it's not absolutely necessary to accept it.

There are other possibilities. But this is the best, in my opinion. I've weighed the various possibilities, and in my judgment, which may be flawed, but, unless it's the best I've got, in my judgment, this is the best explanation of the discrepancy between Matthew 1 and Luke 3. Namely, that we have in Luke Mary's genealogy for this proposition.

Luke, in the birth narratives, always follows Mary's story. Matthew, in his birth narratives, always follows Joseph's story. Matthew is concerned with Joseph's side of the story, always.

As you can tell by reading the birth narratives in Matthew, it's always Joseph who's getting the revelations from the angels, never Mary. Luke always tells it from Mary's side of the story. He tells of the angels appearing to Mary, and her movements, and her travels, and so forth, but never speaks of such happening to Joseph.

It's clear that we have two sides of the same story here. Mary's side and Joseph's side. The appearances to Joseph and the appearances to Mary and her family.

Luke is concerned with Mary's side. Matthew with Joseph's side. Therefore, it would be natural.

We find that Matthew does give Joseph's genealogy, but it would be natural enough for Luke, with his general orientation, to give Mary's genealogy. Another argument in favor of this is that if Luke does not give Mary's genealogy, then nobody does. Matthew certainly doesn't.

Matthew says, Jacob begat Joseph. That's very clear. Joseph's genealogy is what is given in Matthew.

If Luke does not give us Mary's, nobody does. And if nobody does, then we have no record and no way of knowing whether Jesus was descended from David or not, as the Messiah must necessarily have been. One of the principal prophetic themes in the Old Testament was that the Messiah would be of the seed of David.

Descended from David. If we do not have Mary's genealogy in Luke, we have no idea whether Jesus was related to David at all. Legally, of course, through Joseph, he would have a legal standing, but that wouldn't make him the seed of David.

And the emphasis in the promise made to David in 2 Samuel 7 is that a child who will come from your own bowels, a child who will come from you, will sit on your throne forever, and I'll establish his kingdom forever. It's a reference to the Messiah. The Messiah had to be biologically descended from David.

If we have Mary's genealogy here, we find that Jesus was biologically descended from David. Because Mary's genealogy here is seen to go back to David through David's son Nathan, according to Luke 3.31. That's another good reason to see this as Mary's genealogy. Without it, we would not have a genealogy of Jesus' actual bloodline.

Now there's another point to make of interest. According to this genealogy, if this is Mary's, Jesus' actual biological parentage goes back to David through Nathan. Nathan was not a king.

He happened to not be the right son to take David's throne. Solomon took it. Therefore, Nathan's descendants did not become kings either.

Mary did not come down through the royal line. The last king in her parentage was David, a thousand years prior to her time, many generations removed. She did not come through the royal line, although she did come through David's family.

But if you look back at Matthew now, we find that Joseph did come through the kingly line. Joseph did descend through the royal line. Not only from Solomon, but in every generation following, all the way down to the last king of David's line that Israel had, that Judah had.

Jeconiah, the last king before the captivity. You see, Joseph's genealogy goes perfectly through the kingly line. He was of royal blood.

However, there is a problem. If you look at Matthew 1.12, it says, And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel, and so forth. Jeconiah, the last king of Judah, is in the bloodline and ancestry of Joseph.

Why is that anything to consider? Well, look at Jeremiah 22. Jeremiah wrote during the reign of Jeconiah and pronounced a curse upon the family of Jeconiah. He here calls him Keniah, which is a shorter form of the same name.

But in Jeremiah chapter 22, verses 28 through 30, Jeremiah 22, beginning at verse 28, the prophet says, Is this man Keniah, that is Jeconiah, a despised broken idol, 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 not prosper in his days, for none of his descendants shall prosper sitting on the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah. Now here is a curse upon the family, the descendants of Jeconiah.

One thing you could do to immediately disqualify yourself to ever be the king of Judah, the king of the Jews, or to ever sit on David's throne, one thing you could do to instantly disqualify yourself is be descended from Jeconiah. Because none of his descendants, according to God, would ever again sit on the throne of David, nor be the king of the Jews. That creates a little bit of a problem.

Because Jesus, the Messiah, has to fulfill the prophecies which say that the Messiah would sit on the throne of David and be the king of the Jews. How is this worked out? Well, Joseph was descended from Jeconiah. We see that in the genealogy in Matthew chapter 1. Joseph was descended from Jeconiah.

Joseph, therefore, would of course have been disqualified from ever being king if Israel had kings descended from David at the time when he lived. Joseph came from the right family, but it also happened to be the wrong family. It was right because all the kings of Judah had been in that family and anybody who wished to claim natural descent to the throne would have to somehow show that he came through the royal line consistently every generation.

But the problem is that coming through that royal line necessitates that you come through Jeconiah. And that would therefore disqualify you. Joseph could not be the king of the Jews, nor any biological son of his.

Because a biological son of Joseph would be a biological descendant of Jeconiah. Jesus, of course, was not a biological descendant of Jeconiah because he wasn't the son of Joseph. He was thought to be, and his legal standing in society was traced through there, but he did not come under the curse.

That would be upon the descendants of Jeconiah because Jesus was not a descendant of Jeconiah. He missed that somehow. He was still a son of David because Mary, his mother, was from David, but not through the kingly line.

Through Nathan and a totally different line which bypassed Jeconiah and only joined the line of Jeconiah by marriage when Mary and Joseph were married. You lost? You've got to use your brains in this religion. In Deuteronomy it says, Cursed is he that hangs on a tree.

That's a different kind of situation because actually it doesn't say what kind of curse comes upon them. Paul said in Galatians chapter 3 that Christ became cursed for us. He brought the curse of the law upon himself.

That didn't hinder him from being the Messiah. He said that he became a curse for us because it says, Cursed is he that hangs on a tree. But the specifics of the curse about Jeconiah was that none of his descendants could ever again be the king of the Jews.

That's a far more specific kind of a curse, and no one could come under that curse and be the Messiah. There's nothing that says that a man couldn't hang on a tree and still be the Messiah. It would involve him in a curse.

The curse of the law would be upon him, but he could still be the Messiah. But he couldn't be under the curse of Jeconiah's descendants and still be Messiah because he couldn't sit on David's throne or be king of the Jews if he was from Jeconiah. So it's the specifics of this particular curse that would have ruled it out.

So Jesus' actual bloodline was another way. Not through Joseph and not through the kingly line. Yet in society Jesus would have legal standing as a descendant of the kingly line.

Just as a man who adopts a son and makes him his firstborn, although the son is not his biological heir, he becomes his real heir. He becomes the heir to whatever estate belongs to the family. So Jesus, adopted by Joseph as the firstborn of a family, was the firstborn of a family that had kingly blood all the way through.

And therefore would legally be in the position, as few others, to claim that he could be the son of David who should sit on David's throne and be the king of the Jews. But he avoids what other sons of David could not necessarily avoid, namely, being really descended from Jeconiah. He was only adopted into that line by Joseph.

If he had been biologically brought forth through that line, he would have been rejected. But Mary, who was not descended from Jeconiah, was the only human parent that Jesus had. So he was descended from David, but he was not descended from Jeconiah.

Yet his legal status in society would be of the line of Jeconiah. But the curse was not on those who were legally of the line of Jeconiah, but on those who were biologically his descendants. So there's a sense in which when the wise men came from the east and came to Herod's house and said, Where is he who is born king of the Jews? That they may have been suggesting something very profound.

Jesus was born king of the Jews in a sense that perhaps no one else could possibly be. He was legally belonging to the kingly line, but biologically avoided the kingly line, which had a curse upon it which would have forbade him from being king of the Jews. It's possible that Jesus was the only human being of his generation that had the genealogical

requirements to be the king of the Jews.

We don't know how many other sons... We don't know whether Joseph was the firstborn son of his father, for example. We're not told. It may have been not.

But from the record we have, it could be deduced as a possibility that Jesus was one who was born king of the Jews not only in the sense of his deity, not only in the sense of the supernatural origin, but through his natural parentage, as well as his legal parentage, that he stood as few others or maybe no others could as the one who could by natural rights claim the throne and claim to be the true king of the Jews. Now, looking back at Luke chapter 3, I would point out to you that Luke's genealogy traces the genealogy of Jesus back to Adam, and further back than that too. Further back than Adam.

Because verse 38 says, The son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. This is the only place in the Bible that Adam is called the son of God. And it's questionable whether son of God is the best way to describe Adam.

Adam was created, not begotten by God. However, so were we, but we were later begotten by the Father. And now that we've been begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, as a concession, one could say that Adam was the son of God simply because he had no other father.

He was the unborn. He was created. And the only person who brought him into existence was God.

And therefore, in a manner of speaking, he was the son of God. Why does Luke say it that way though? It would have seemed very natural for Luke simply to take it back to Adam and leave it at that. But he traces it back further.

Adam himself was the son of God. Now see, in going back as far as Adam, Luke was doing what the Old Testament does. The Old Testament goes back as far as Adam.

The first genealogy in the Old Testament in Genesis chapter 5 starts with Adam. And so Luke could have considered that the starting point, but he doesn't. Adam was the son of God.

Now Luke has earlier affirmed that Jesus was the son of God. In Luke 1, verse 35, it says, And the angel answered and said to her, Mary, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the highest will overshadow you. Therefore also that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

Jesus, Luke has pointed out, was the son of God. And Adam was the son of God. I'd like to suggest to you a possibility.

We know that Luke was a close companion of Paul. In fact, Paul was the apostle with

whom Luke had the most familiarity. And the distinctives of Paul's preaching and teaching, no doubt, were extremely familiar to Luke.

He was probably intimately acquainted with Paul's thinking. It is Paul, and only Paul, in the New Testament, who refers to Jesus as the second Adam. Let me show you, in Paul's writings, where this comes up.

Particularly in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, where Paul is talking about the resurrection of the dead. It says, 1 Corinthians 15, verse 21, It says, For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

So here Jesus is likened to, and contrasted with, Adam. But then, in verse 45, the same chapter, it says, As it is written, the first man Adam became a living being. Then Paul says, the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man, meaning Adam, was of the earth, made of dust. The second man is the Lord from heaven.

As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust, us. And as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, meaning Adam, we also shall bear the image of the heavenly man, that is Jesus.

Now, it's interesting, in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 45, it talks about the first man Adam, but it also talks about the last Adam. And Jesus is therefore referred to in verse 45 as the last Adam. And in verse 47, he's called the second man.

The first man was of the earth, the second man is the Lord from heaven. Jesus is called the last Adam, and the second man. And as death came through Adam and through man, so life came through Christ, another man.

Look at Romans chapter 5 now, for Paul's other discussion of this subject. Romans chapter 5, beginning with verse 12. Romans 5, 12 says, Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.

For until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned, according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of him who is to come. But the free gift is not like the offense.

For if by one man's, that's Adam's, offense, many died, much more the grace of God and the gift of the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not

like that which came through the one who sinned. For judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.

For if by one man's offense, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as through one man's offense, judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one man's righteous act, the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Now, the point here is there is one man and one man. By one man this and by one man that. The one man in the one case, of course, is Adam.

The other is Christ. Adam and Christ. Now, it's interesting when it says of Adam in this passage, in verse 14, it says, Adam who is a type of him who was to come, meaning of Jesus.

Adam is a type of Christ, Paul says. How is he a type of Christ? In this respect, that Adam was the founder of a race of humans. Christ is also the founder of a race of humans.

Adam's moral choices affected for evil the entire race that was in him. Christ's choices of righteousness affected for good the entire race that was in him. In Paul's thinking, in Paul's writing, we find that everyone is either in Adam or in Christ.

Either in the old man, which is Adam, or in Christ, which is the new man. And if you are in Christ, then Christ's decisions, Christ's behavior, Christ's righteousness is yours because you are in him. But if you are in Adam, then his sin is yours.

And what Paul is saying here is that there's a comparison, really one of contrast more than of likeness, between Adam and Christ. Both of them were the beginners of a new human race or of a new humanity. Adam and his family were the new humanity at one time.

Now they're the old humanity replaced by a newer one in Christ. You are either in Adam or in Christ by Paul's way of thinking. Now, Luke, who is without question strongly influenced by Paul's way of thinking, doesn't just trace the genealogy back to Adam, but emphasizes about Adam what he has already said about Christ.

Namely, that Adam was the son of God. He's already said that Jesus was the son of God also. But why does he point out here that Adam was the son of God? In my opinion, Luke is trying to say there have been two sons of God.

A first Adam and a second Adam. One man and then one other man. From Adam to Heli, we have the generations of the first humanity.

But after Heli, we have Jesus, who is the beginner of the new humanity, the new son of God, who stands in a position very much like Adam. Adam was the son of God. Christ was the son of God.

Adam was sinless at one point. Christ was sinless at one point. They both stood as representative heads or what theologians call federal heads of the entirety of the race that would become associated with them.

And the choice of the federal head dooms or saves the entirety of those who are under that headship. Both started out with the same privilege as it were. Both were sons of God.

Both were righteous. Adam was the son of God, Luke tells us, though we are well enough familiar with the problems that he brought. He failed.

The first Adam failed and brought sin and death. Jesus, however, Luke also tells us, is the son of God. And he came to undo the damage done by the first Adam, to create a new man, a new humanity, a new mankind in himself.

And so I think that in speaking of Adam as the son of God, he is deliberately trying to point out a parallel between Adam and Jesus. Both of them are the son of God. And in that respect, they are parallel to each other in terms of their ability to affect for good or for ill a race of men.

And no doubt Paul's own elaboration on these themes in Romans 5 and in 1 Corinthians 15 would be in Luke's mind. Maybe not those actual passages. I don't know whether Luke had read those passages.

But he might have. He probably wrote this after those passages were written. But one thing is for certain, he must have heard Paul preach or teach on those subjects since he traveled with Paul continually in the latter part of the book of Acts.

And therefore, Luke has a message also in his genealogy. Matthew's message is that Jesus was associated with women and sinners and Gentiles unashamedly. Luke's message is that Jesus is a second Adam.

He descended from the first Adam who was the son of God. But he had no human father and in his own sense, in a very different sense, was also a son of God. And as Luke's friend Paul used to point out, Jesus was like a second Adam.

He managed by his mother's descent going through Nathan, David's son, to avoid the curse that was on the family and descendants of Jeconiah. But by getting married to a man who was legally descended from the kingly line, that assured that Jesus would have the legal status of being in the royal family. Therefore, he avoided this catch-22.

He was in the royal family without being in the royal family. He was in the royal family in the sense that it mattered. That is, he stood as the legal heir of the line of royalty.

But he was not in the legal family in the sense that it mattered, that he was not physically descended from Jeconiah. Therefore, all things conspired in Jesus' genealogy to make him one who was, as the wise men said, born king of the Jews. And that is some of what can be extracted from these two passages of genealogy.

Now, we're going to break there, and when we come back, we're going to talk about the earliest chapters of Luke. We've looked at Luke chapter 3, which gives the genealogy, but it doesn't introduce Jesus' genealogy until Jesus reaches adult life. When he's 30 years old, it decides to give his genealogy.

We will look at the earlier years, and the earliest chronological, historical information about Jesus comes from Luke. And Matthew has some, too. We'll have a chance to look at that another time.

But we'll break here. Our next session, we will look at Luke's opening chapter, Luke chapter 1, and start moving through the chronological material.