

§ 003

APPARENTLY JOSEPH'S GENEALOGY IN MATTHEW AND MARY'S IN LUKE

Matthew 1:1-17

¹ *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

² *Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³ and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴ and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵ and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse the father of David the king.*

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, ⁷ and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, ⁸ and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, ⁹ and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, ¹⁰ and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, ¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

¹² *And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³ and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of*

Luke 3:23-38

²³ *Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, ²⁴ the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, ²⁵ the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, ²⁶ the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, ²⁷ the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, ²⁸ the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, ²⁹ the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, ³⁰ the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, ³¹ the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, ³² the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, ³³ the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, ³⁴ the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, ³⁵ the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, ³⁶ the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, ³⁷ the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of*

Matthew 1:1-17

Azor, ¹⁴ and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, ¹⁵ and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.¹

Luke 3:23-38

Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, ³⁸ the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.²

See
The Genealogy of Jesus Christ
Page 29

Introduction

1. The question often arises as to why there are only two genealogies of Jesus recorded in the Gospels and not four—one in each Gospel.
2. The answer becomes obvious when one considers the nature of each Gospel account:
 - Matthew writes in the style of a teacher and portrays Jesus as _____³—and a king must have a genealogy.
 - Mark writes in the style of a preacher and portrays Jesus as a Servant—and a servant does not need a genealogy.
 - Luke writes in the style of an historian and portrays Jesus as the _____⁴—and a perfect man should have a genealogy.
 - John writes in the style of a theologian and portrays Jesus as the Mighty God—and God has not genealogy.
3. Luke's genealogy differs greatly from that in Matthew.
 - He gives the line from Adam to Abraham as Matthew does not; they are practically the same from Abraham to David, and they diverge from that point on.
4. There are three chief explanations of all this:

¹ *The Holy Bible: English standard version*. 2001 (Mt 1:1-17). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

² *The Holy Bible: English standard version*. 2001 (Lk 3:23-38). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

³ King of Kings

⁴ Perfect Man

- a. Some suggest that Matthew gives us the genealogy of Joseph, the legal father of Jesus, while Luke gives that of Mary, the actual line of Jesus.
 - This understands *Joseph, the son of Heli* as ‘Joseph, the son of Heli by marriage’.
 - Against this it is urged that it is not what Luke says, that he does not mention Mary, and that in any case genealogies were not traced through the female line.
 - Luke, however, is speaking of a virgin birth, and we have no information as to how a genealogy would be reckoned when there was no human father.
 - The case is unique.
 - b. Africanus (c. AD 220) suggested that there was a levirate marriage.
 - He thought that when Heli died childless, Jacob, who had the same mother but a different father, married the widow and Joseph was born.
 - On this view Matthew gives us Joseph’s genealogy through Jacob, his actual father, while Luke gives it through Heli, his legal father.⁵
 - c. J. Gresham Machen argued Lord Hervey’s view that Matthew gives us ‘the *legal* descendants of David—the men who would have been legally the heir to the Davidic throne if that throne had been continued—while Luke gives us the descendants of David in that particular line to which, finally, Joseph, the husband of Mary, belonged’.⁶
 - On this view Jacob, the father of Joseph in Matthew, and the heir to David’s throne, died without issue.
 - The succession then passed to the line represented by Eli.⁷
5. The best explanation is that Matthew traces the regal line of David through his son Solomon while Luke traces the physical line of David through another son, Nathan.

Commentary

1. The opening verse of Matthew’s Gospel introduces its main character and describes his identity in very Jewish terms.⁸

⁵ ANF 6, p. 126.

⁶ J. Gresham Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ* (London, 1958), 204.

⁷ Morris, L. (1988). *Vol. 3: Luke: An introduction and commentary*. Originally published: Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press; Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1988, in series: The Tyndale New Testament commentaries. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (118). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. Morris suggests: In the present state of our knowledge it is impossible to say which of these is to be preferred, or whether there is a better explanation.

⁸ Blomberg, C. (2001, c1992). *Vol. 22: Matthew* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (52). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

2. The first two words of Matthew, *biblos geneeseōs*, may be translated “record of the genealogy” (NIV), “record of the origins,” or “record of the history.”⁹
3. In Jewish history the most natural and essential way to begin the story of a man’s life is to give his genealogy.
 - This passage, which might appear uninteresting, is of great importance in Jewish history.
 - Josephus, the great Jewish historian, writing his own autobiography, began with his personal pedigree.
 - King Herod the Great was despised by the pure-blooded Jews because he was half Edomite.
 - As a consequence, Herod destroyed official registers so that others could not prove a more authentic pedigree than his own!
 - Thus, Matthew begins by calling this “The Book of the Genealogy of Jesus Christ,” a common phrase among the Jews when giving reference to the record of a man’s lineage.¹⁰
4. The designation “Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham” resonates with biblical nuances.
 - “Christ” is roughly the Greek equivalent to “_____”¹¹ or “Anointed.”¹²

NIV The New International Version

⁹ NIV limits this title to the genealogy (1:1–17), the second could serve as a heading for the prologue (1:1–2:23), and the third as a heading for the entire Gospel. The expression is found only twice in the LXX: in Genesis 2:4 it refers to the creation account (Gen 2:4–25) and in Genesis 5:1 to the ensuing genealogy. From the latter it appears possible to follow NIV (so also Hendriksen; Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*; McNeile); but because the noun *genesis* (NIV, “birth”) reappears in Mt 1:18 (one of only four NT occurrences), it seems likely that the heading in 1:1 extends beyond the genealogy. No occurrence of the expression as a heading for a book-length document has come to light. Therefore we must discount the increasingly popular view (Davies, *Setting*; Gaechter, *Matthäus*; Hill, *Matthew*; Maier; Zahn) that Matthew means to refer to his entire Gospel, “A record of the history of Jesus Christ.” Matthew rather intends his first two chapters to be a coherent and unified “record of the origins of Jesus Christ.”

¹⁰ Augsburg, M.S., & Ogilvie, L.J. (1982). *Vol. 24: The Preacher’s Commentary Series, Volume 24 : Matthew*. Formerly The Communicator’s Commentary. The Preacher’s Commentary series (18). Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc.

¹¹ **Messiah**

¹² In the OT the term could refer to a variety of people anointed for some special function: priests (Lev 4:3; 6:22), kings (1 Sam 16:13; 24:10; 2 Sam 19:21; Lam 4:20), and, metaphorically, the patriarchs (Ps 105:15) and the pagan king Cyrus (Isa 45:1). Already in Hannah’s prayer “Messiah” parallels “king”: the Lord “will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed” (1 Sam 2:10). With the rising number of OT prophecies concerning King David’s line (e.g., 2 Sam 7:12–16; cf. Ps 2:2; 105:15), “Messiah, or “Christ,” became the designation of a figure representing the people of God and bringing in the promised eschatological reign.

5. In Jesus' day Palestine was rife with messianic expectation.
 - Not all of it was coherent, and many Jews expected two different "Messiahs."
 - But Matthew's linking of "Christ" and "son of David" leaves no doubt of what he is claiming for Jesus.¹³

6. Unlike Matthew, who placed his genealogy at the very beginning of his Gospel (1:1–17), Luke placed his genealogy between the accounts of Jesus' baptism and temptation.
 - There is OT precedent for this in Moses' genealogy (Exod 6:14–25), which is not recorded at the beginning of his life but just before he started his ministry.¹⁴

Conclusion

1. It is to Luke that we owe the information that Jesus *was about thirty years of age* [3:23] at the beginning of his ministry.
 - This was the age when the Levites began their service (Num. 4:47) and was evidently regarded as the age at which a man was fully mature.
 - The Greek is a trifle difficult, for the verb *began* has no object.
 - AV translated 'Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age', but this is most unlikely.
 - We should accept RSV's *when he began his ministry*.
 - The parenthesis *as was supposed* shows that Luke is bearing in mind that Jesus was really the son of Mary, not of Joseph.¹⁵

2. Women are not usually named in Near Eastern genealogies, but they are intrinsic to God's purpose in sending Christ.

¹³Carson, D. A. (1984). Matthew. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 8: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (F. E. Gaebelin, Ed.) (61). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

¹⁴The existence of such extensive genealogies in Jesus' day is well established. The rabbi Hillel was able to trace his genealogy back to David, and Josephus (*Life* 1.3) also gave his own extensive genealogy. Stein, R. H. (2001, c1992). *Vol. 24: Luke* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (140). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

AV Authorized (King James) Version, 1611.

RSV Revised Standard Version: Old Testament, 1952; New Testament, 1971.

¹⁵Morris, L. (1988). *Vol. 3: Luke: An introduction and commentary*. Originally published: Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press; Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1988, in series: The Tyndale New Testament commentaries. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (120). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

- The five women named in Jesus' genealogy [Matthew 1:3-16] all remind us that God often does the unexpected and chooses the unlikely.
- Tamar (v. 3) reminds us of Judah's failures (Gen. 38:6-30);
- Rahab (v. 5) was a harlot (Josh. 2);
- Ruth was a Moabite (Ruth 1:4) and thus subject to a special curse (Deut. 23:3-5);
- Uriah's wife Bathsheba (v. 6) was David's downfall (2 Sam. 11).
- Mary fulfills Is. 7:14 (v. 23), and the even more important promise of Gen. 3:15 (Gal. 4:4).¹⁶

¹⁶ Whitlock, L.G., Sproul, R.C., Waltke, B.K., & Silva, M. (1995). *Reformation study Bible, the: Bringing the light of the Reformation to Scripture: New King James Version*. Includes index. (Mt 1:3). Nashville: T. Nelson.