

The Genealogy of Christ Matthew 1 & Luke 3 13th June 2024

The Lord Jesus Christ has an unbroken record of his genealogy given in the Bible. This traces his ancestry right back to the very beginning. As all Jewish records were subsequently destroyed it is not possible for anyone else to prove their ancestry and links to the line of David. That there are two lines given is not a confusion but a confirmation of historical accuracy. One line is his physical line as a natural descendant of Mary through the flesh. The other is the line of his adopted father Joseph according to Law. Which is which?

In Luke the record states that Jesus.....*being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, which was the son of.....*Does that mean that Joseph was the son of Heli or that it is Jesus who was the son (grandson) of Heli? If Joseph's line is here in Luke's gospel, then he was a physical descendant of David but was not in the Royal line. Matthew is more emphatic, there it states that – *Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.* Begetting is a physical generation, being the son can be legal, by adoption. Someone who is begotten is not usually adopted as there is already a blood link by that physical begetting. As Matthew uses the term begat then the line of Joseph must be this one.

The term "*as was supposed*" in Luke 3v23 is better translated – according to law – this refers to his status as the son of Joseph. He was legally adopted by Joseph and became his stepfather. As he was conceived without a human father by the power of the Holy Spirit, he inherited a claim to the Davidic throne by Law not blood. Both his mother and his stepfather were descendants of David and therefore Abraham. However, their lines split there. Matthew has Solomon the son of David in the line whereas Luke has Nathan. This is where the lines diverge. Joseph's line is the royal line through Solomon. Mary's line is the physical line through Nathan.

There are some missing generations in the line recorded in Matthew. This is not an error but a deliberate omission. Verse 8 has "*Joram begat Uzziah*". He was actually the great great grandfather of Uzziah. Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah are all missed out. This is in keeping with the Law of Moses where the effects of iniquity are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation, Exodus 34v7. Joram married his son to the daughter of Jezebel that infamous charlatan. That pollution of the bloodline defiled it. That Jesus was not a physical descendant from Jezebel is significant.

There are four women highlighted by the Holy Spirit in the divine genealogy in Matthew. Tamar, Ruth the Moabite, her of Uriah, and Mary. Bathsheba is not even named. These faithful women had different experiences, but all submitted to their place in the divine order and embraced the opportunities to serve in whatever way they could and were used by God in the divine plan. As already noted, Bathsheba being Solomon's mother is not in the physical line of Jesus, but the others demonstrate the unlikely participation from areas not necessarily appreciated. Even when dead she is defined by her husband.

Tamar was accused of being a harlot. She was denied her ongoing relationship within the house of Truth and was falsely accused by the very man who had not ensured her place was honoured. To her, being a faithful mother in Israel was paramount. Ruth was an alien, a Moabite, and was only brought into the divine line because of her faith in the God of Israel and her rejection of her natural circumstance. Mary was an inheritor in her own right. Under the law regarding the daughters of Zelophehad she was taxed as an unmarried pregnant woman who was espoused but not yet married to Joseph.

The two lines in Matthew and Luke also converge later after David. Salathiel and Zerubbabel are both mentioned in each, then the lines diverge again with Abiud and Rhesa. Again, this is not a mistake but an acceptance of a strange reality. Jewish genealogies were officially

recorded by the male line. How can Salathiel be both the son of Neri and begotten by Jeconiah? The only way to reconcile these two facts, is to accept that the lines converged by the female, that is that Jeconiah married the daughter of Neri and that she claimed his son Salathiel as her own, who is mentioned in both lines. She adopted him.

Jeconiah was carried away into captivity. That he managed to find a descendant of David to marry whilst in Babylon was obviously overruled in the providence of God. He is said to have begat Salathiel so there must be a physical link between the two. In the KJV Luke has "*son of*" in italics, "*of Neri*" can therefore be understood as in a wider sense. An important element to bear in mind in this context is the curse of Jeconiah, otherwise called Coniah. Jeremiah 22v28-30 *"Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?" O earth, earth, earth. Hear the Word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah".* Jews reject Jesus on this basis today. However, if the convergence implies an adoptive element this impasse is sidestepped by the reconstructed facts. This solution has been proposed by many who are concerned.

Salathiel then begat Zerubbabel, so there is a second generation to reconcile. Again, this is possible to understand by the inclusion of a second adoption by another unnamed female descendant of Neri. As she married this great man after giving birth to her son Rhesa, she would have been a widow. Together they sired Abiud who was a physical son of Jeconiah unlike his half-brother. This clears that difficulty if accepted.

There is however, an err to be accepted in these genealogies. In Luke 3v36 Cainan is included in the line of Christ for the second time. He appears between Maleleel and Enos as he does all in the other three genealogies found in the Bible. However, it is also found between Salah

and Arphaxad which is not confirmed anywhere else. The inclusion of a second Cainan is not a total imposition of corruption which distracts from divine inspiration, but an error of transmission which have always been admitted.

The record of Matthew has three-fold division of fourteen generations. These are from Abraham to David a period of some 840 years, from David to Babylon some 450 years, and then from Babylon to Christ some 520 years. What this shows is that the length of a biblical generation is not a set amount of time but literally a matter of conception and renewal. During David to Babylon in Luke there are some 21 generations, from Babylon to Christ there are also 21 generations so the age of reproduction in the Royal line was much higher than the line of Nathan, 50% higher so 37 rather than 25. During the first period there is more accurate individual information and the variation within those 14 generations is large. The average over the total period is 60 years but from Naasson to David is about 100 years!

Matthew sets out the genealogy before any other personal details are given about Jesus. It is at the forefront of his introduction. As the legal heir (by adoption) to the throne of David, he was not only a Son of David of his day and generation, but THE Son of David of that time and indeed all time. Luke however provides the genealogy at the time of his baptism, when his physical descent as the seed of the woman was so important to be stressed. He was made of a woman made under the Law.

That Jesus is said to be Son of God, as Adam was, in Luke 3v28, shows that the notion of him being "God the Son" is an invented title which would naturally have been expected to be included in such a passage as this if it were true.