

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Messiah's Royal Lineage

Scripture: Luke 3:23-38

Code: 42-48

Luke chapter 3 verses 23 to 38, the downside is it's a genealogy, the upside is we're going to cover all those verses in one day. This is the genealogy of the Messiah, this is the family tree of Jesus. This is His ancestry, His lineage. And it's very important to Luke to give it. He gives it with a great amount of detail listing 77 names in the line of the Messiah, all the way back to Adam and even back to God who is the last name in verse 38.

Before we look specifically at the genealogy or even generally at the genealogy, we need to kind of get the perspective here. There is today a rising interest in ancestry, in genealogical records, in going back to your roots, looking up the family tree to locate the famous and the infamous in our genealogies. My Dad was recently with us and he had found the records of our family and he was rehearsing and reciting for me all the interesting elements of our family tree, going back through all of the branches, finally back to the source years and years ago in Scotland. And it is interesting, it is somewhat of a curiosity to hear about who is in your family tree, whether they have made a positive or negative contribution. But it is really little more than a curiosity, it is to us, for the most part, purely recreational, I suppose. For some people, it's sort of a psychological thing that they feel they need, they find themselves living somewhat disconnected lives. And in trying to build their quote/unquote self-esteem, they need to sort of pack their past with meaningful people, which somehow has a trickle-down effect to give some meaning to them. And, of course, we can all sort of enjoy the...the, I guess, recreational bearing that some of our ancestors have on our lives by association, either bringing to us a measure of guilt or a measure of glory.

But at best, it really is nothing more than a curiosity, something of an emotional bump, if you will, to help us feel a little bit better about ourselves because at least if we're insignificant, somebody, somewhere, some time wasn't and we're connected to them.

Now, people travel all across the country to go back to home towns. They go back to looking up records, obituaries. They travel to Europe, back to the town of their forefathers and they look up all the records. It's an expensive form of recreation and curiosity, to be sure.

The Mormons take it a bit further. And when we think about genealogical records, or ancestry, we immediately think of the Mormons, don't we? Salt Lake City is where a lot of people go to track their genealogy because they have such extensive records. For them it's a step beyond recreation and curiosity. They are confessedly involved in genealogies for the sake of religious solidarity. It plays a

role in tying Mormons together and keeping them together. It's part of the system that keeps Mormons Mormons by continually retelling all of the tribal stories about the past and about Joseph Smith and about Moroni, the angel, and about Brigham Young and about the early middle western settlements and about the persecution and the killing of Mormons and the trek to Utah and the establishing of life there. And all of that being told and retold repeatedly year after year after year leads to the increased glue in the bond of Mormonism, the solidarity that ties them all to each other as a part of the same kind of flow of history. It works to keep Mormons in the system. And so it has a little more than a recreational or curiosity factor.

But beyond that, beyond even the idea of emotional solidarity, beyond the idea of somewhat of a family identity or a religious identity, genealogies to the Jews were extremely important. They were not just curiosities, they were not a form of recreation. They were not just a matter of solidarity, they were not just for emotional up-building and to give you a sense of belonging to something bigger than yourself that had significance. To the Jews, genealogies were critical. And I'll tell you a number of reasons why.

First of all, ancestry determined one's claim on land. And that was based on the original tribal allocation of the land of Palestine. When the children of Israel went in to Palestine, God divided up the land and it was allocated according to tribal parcels. Ancestry was very critical in determining anyone's claim on a piece of land.

Also, secondly, ancestry determined claims to the right of inheritance. Should a person come along and claim they had a right to a property, they had a right to servants, they had a right to an estate, they had a right to crops, they had a right to material possessions, the determination of the validity of that claim would be placed upon the genealogy and could the genealogy verify that claim that was critical for that.

We find in the book of Ruth, for example, in chapters 3 and 4 that ancestry provided for the transfer of property. In order to transfer property, to sell property, to pass property, you had to prove that you had the right to do that and that there was some ancestry linkage in the transfer.

Also, ancestry established the basis of taxation. That's why when Joseph and Mary went to be taxed, they went to Bethlehem because they were of the house and line of David. And that was the birthplace of that family and that's where they went because that's where their genealogical records were kept. And on the basis of those records, taxation was assessed.

Beyond that, and even more particularly, any claim to the priesthood had to be verified by genealogy. Any time somebody made a claim to priesthood, it had to be proven that they were in fact in the priestly line.

And most importantly in my little list, any claim to royalty, any claim to being king, Messiah, would have to be verified, would have to have been proven that this one claiming to be King had lineage directly from the great king who was David himself. So if you claimed a royal pedigree, you had to prove it by your genealogy.

So in the theocracy of Israel...theocracy meaning a theocratic kingdom, a kingdom under the rule of God described by Scripture and led by God-ordained priests and kings, in the theocracy of Israel, genealogies became very critical. As I said, they weren't recreational. They weren't matters of curiosity. They weren't for the sake of emotion or some kind of religious sense of solidarity. They had to do with important matters. And that is why the Jews kept very careful genealogical records. I mean, fastidious genealogical records, and, of course, the genealogy of Luke is indicative of that...he had obviously found access to the genealogy that he records here because it was likely a matter of the public record, as is the genealogy of Matthew chapter 1. Yes, the Scripture is inspired by God, but inspiration from God does not mean that Luke or Matthew didn't have access to an actual record that was available in the public office and could be verified as the true and accurate genealogy of Jesus Christ.

The Jews kept these accurate genealogies even after the Babylonian captivity. You remember in 586 B.C. Judah and Jerusalem was destroyed, the people were taken into captivity for seventy years and the nation really disintegrated at that point. But when they came back at the end of that 70 years, one of the things they did along with rebuilding the temple and rebuilding the city and rebuilding the wall and constituting the nation was to get back together all the genealogical records and they kept those records very accurately from those ancient times through the captivity all the way until all the records were destroyed in 70 A.D. when the Roman general Titus Vespasian destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. All of the records were destroyed. And today, much to the chagrin and sadness of the Jewish people, nobody knows their lineage, none of them know their lineage because all the records have been destroyed. They can trace their lineage back into New Testament times, perhaps, but they cannot go beyond that because all the records were destroyed in the destruction of Jerusalem. And that by the design of God because the system was done with at that point, there was no reason to keep genealogies anymore because the Messiah had already arrived. And the purpose for which genealogies were kept was primarily for the Messiah, secondarily for the priesthood. But with the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, the priesthood came to an end as well. And so God through the Romans brought a judgment which caused the destruction of those records.

But the time Luke wrote his gospel, of course, and at the time Jesus came, the record was still intact. And it's very important as part of the credentials of the Messiah. If He is to be verified as the King, David's greater Son who will rule, then He must have Davidic lineage.

Now when you study the Old Testament it isn't long getting into the book of Genesis before you run into genealogies. Again indicating their importance. Genesis 4, Genesis 5, Genesis 10, Genesis 11, they all contain very careful genealogical records because those were very, very important in the purposes of God and the purposes of Israel...1 Chronicles chapter 1 to 9, another great section of genealogical records.

The historian Josephus also writes that the Jews kept these genealogical records as a matter of public availability, that people could go in to the public record and search out their genealogies. In fact, Josephus tells us that Jews who were caught up in the diaspora, the dispersion, scattered from Palestine all over the world, those Jews that were scattered around would when they had a child sent the record of the birth of that child back to Jerusalem, or back to the place where the record for their family was kept in order that that child even though outside the land would be entered into the genealogical record. They wanted an official record to be maintained and it was.

There was a famous rabbi around the time of Jesus by the name of Rabbi Hillel. Rabbi Hillel was probably as famous as any rabbi known to us today because of his impact on the theology of Judaism. But Hillel claimed to be a descendant of David and could prove it by the public record. He had genealogy as a matter of public record that traced his lineage back to David. And so records were remarkably accurate and well kept by the Jews, even after they returned from the Babylonian captivity.

Another thought about that. Joseph and Mary, they knew their family records. They knew their family records went back to David that's why they went to Bethlehem to be taxed because that was the city of David. And they knew therefore their lineage. Certainly their parents and grandparents and relatives had talked about their heritage and their lineage and how it went back all the way to David. They were, of course, devout lovers of the Old Testament Scripture, though they were young they were devout lovers of God and lovers of Scripture. And they were surely aware of the fact that the prophets had said that the Messiah, the great King, Christ would come to the house of David. And so there was for them just a greater sense of anticipation and a greater sense of privilege because they, waiting for the Messiah like everybody else, knew that the Messiah would come to someone in their family, someone who in their extended family descended from David. There were admittedly many descendants from David. David had a number of sons and through those sons came many lines and, of course, they multiplied down from David all the way to the time of Christ so that there were many people who could trace their lineage back to David. But still it was a great privilege and a great hope that somebody in their family would be the mother of the great King and the Messiah.

Some historians tell us that many of the Jews kept private genealogies. There was the matter of the public record and some of them liked to keep their own private genealogies. So they were a matter of life and people were very much aware of them. And that's a very important point to make. It is also true, and I just note this because Luke has universal intent in writing his gospel, that many of the

Greeks also kept their genealogical records. So they too would understand the role that a genealogy would play, especially when someone claimed to be royal blood and a right to be the king.

So the people to whom Luke writes, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, would understand why he includes this ancestry. For us, we look at ancestry as a matter of going back to your roots for emotional, psychological recreational or curiosity reasons, not them. There was more to it in the ancient world and they would have understood it as an important component, and particularly for someone claiming royalty, claiming to be a blue-blood, if you will, to have royal blood, to have a right to the throne of Israel. Genealogy then becomes absolutely critical. It isn't the only credential of the Messiah because there were many who could trace their lineage back. As I said, even the Rabbi Hillel was of the line of David, that doesn't make him the Messiah. There were many others in the line of David. That isn't the only credential but it is one that is essential because while it can't affirm you as the Messiah, the absence of it could discredit you as the Messiah. And so it's important for Luke to include the credentials of the Messiah. And he does so here.

He's given us a lot of the Messiah's credentials already. And here in verse 23 through 38 he gives us the credential of his genealogy. And, in fact, the baptism we read about in verses 21 and 22, you remember, John baptized Jesus and the Father said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, those were pretty stirring credentials. Those were divine proof that this in fact the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the world. So His baptism was an affirmation from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

In chapter 4 you have the temptation of Jesus...the record of Jesus being taken up into the devastation and tempted by the devil after 40 days of fasting. And Satan throws his best at Jesus and Jesus thwarts his temptation at every point, comes through the assault by Satan unscathed, without sin, answers every temptation, that is an element of the credentials of the Messiah. Jesus is the Messiah because God said so, because the Holy Spirit came down upon Him, because He conquered Satan when Satan came at Him with all that he could throw...and in the middle, He is the Messiah because He has Davidic blood. He comes from the Davidic line. So this fits in the credential section of Luke's gospel which really includes the baptism, the genealogy and the temptation...those three great credentials. The affirmation of heaven, the victory over hell and royal credentials right in the middle. Ancestry then is a credential not to be left out. As I said, alone it doesn't make you the Messiah, but apart from that you can't be the Messiah. It is a credential of great importance.

Now as I said, I know your greatest fear was that I would preach on the genealogy and somebody said you have to be a fool to preach on a genealogy...you also have to be a bigger fool to preach on a genealogy on the Sunday morning when people have lost an hour of sleep. That compounds...that compounds the folly of the whole thing. Now, folks, all I can tell you is just hang in there a while and it will be over. And maybe somewhere along the way you might even be surprised by something. There are some surprises in here, I'm just telling you. I can't tell you when they'll come but don't miss

them. How is that for a ploy?

Now the ancestry of Jesus is important, as I said, because it proves that He is not merely a self-appointed Messiah, like Hugh Schonfield in *The Passover Plot* and all their ilk would want us to believe. He is not a misguided reformer. He is not a self-appointed Savior. He is not a would-be, want-to-be Savior of the nation Israel from their terrible stress under their Roman occupation. He is not a man caught up in a popular acclaim. He is not a sort of magician who drew crowds after Himself and developed a Messiah illusion or a Messiah complex. The genealogy goes back to David and then it goes back to Abraham and then it goes back to Adam and then it goes back to God finally. This is the culmination of all redemptive history in this person Jesus. It starts with God through Adam, through Abraham, through David and right down to Jesus Himself. He is not just a good teacher, He is not just a great man, He is not an isolated prophet, He is not an isolated preacher, this is the culmination of all the history of humanity from God, from Adam, through Abraham, through David down to Jesus. He is the culmination of human history as well as Israel's history. He is the fulfillment of God's redemptive purpose. He is the culmination of all who ever lived. He is the hope of all humanity and all humanity is inseparably and eternally connected to Him. The fate of everyone who ever lives is linked to Jesus.

Now before we look at the specific genealogy, let me give you some general thoughts about it. Claiming to be the Messiah, claiming to be the King, claiming to be the Savior of the world is one thing...proving it is something else. And Luke is very, very good at amassing historical proof that Jesus is truly the Messiah. For example, we go all the way back to chapter 1 where Luke tells us the story of an angel who comes to Zacharias and tells him he and his barren wife, Elizabeth, who were in their seventies or eighties by then and have never been able to have children are going to have a miracle happen in their lives and they're going to have a child and that child will be named John and he'll be the forerunner of Messiah who will follow immediately after John. So that the Messiah is the one that John points to. The first credential then is you have a prophet born miraculously born to an old couple who will tell us who the Messiah is...his name, the prophet's name is John and you know the story how that John pointed to Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

And then divine revelation in chapter 1 tells us about the angel Gabriel who comes to visit a virgin, Mary. A young girl of maybe 13 or 14 years of age and tells her that she as a virgin will literally be impregnated by the Holy Spirit. She will conceive miraculously in her womb without a man and she will give birth to the Messiah, the King, the Son of David who will rule forever and ever. And so divine revelation from God to Zacharias and Elizabeth, divine revelation from God to Mary indicating the Messiah is going to be this child, Jesus.

Then these four people give testimony. Zacharias gives testimony. Elizabeth gives testimony. Joseph, the earthly and legal father of Jesus, gives testimony. Mary, the mother of Jesus, gives

wonderful testimony in what is called her Magnificat to the supernatural birth of the Savior.

And then you have more proof that Jesus is the Messiah, not just Zacharias and Elizabeth and Joseph and Mary giving testimony, and angels testimony to them, then you have the whole of the angelic group show up in the field outside of Bethlehem and give testimony to the shepherds of the child that has been born in Bethlehem. Then you have the presence of the glory of God as if God Himself shows up to attest to this child's nature as the Messiah. Then a little later when the baby is being dedicated you have the testimony of two godly saints in the temple, Simeon and Anna who identify the baby Jesus as the Messiah. Then you have the testimony of Jesus Himself at the age of twelve in the temple saying, "I have to be in My Father's house doing My Father's work." And He knows that He is God at that point and that God the Father is His true Father. Then you have the testimony of John the Baptist which Luke records in chapter 3 and says, "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." The testimony of John who is reluctant to baptize Jesus because he knows He is sinless...again affirming that He is indeed the sinless, perfect, anointed Messiah and Savior.

Then you have the testimony of God at His baptism, "My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The testimony of the Holy Spirit who descends upon Him. And now you have the testimony of the genealogy.

So what Luke has been doing is really just amassing all of this evidence as to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah. And it's irrefutable evidence. And as I said, the final piece of that evidence is His triumphant over Satan in the temptation in chapter 4 which we'll look at next time. He is indeed the promised Messiah. And His genealogy shows that He has a right to that because He comes through the royal line that goes back to David. And it's very important in verse 31, the last name is David. Jesus' lineage comes through the line of David...from Adam down to Abraham down to David down to Jesus. This is critically important. It is critically important also to emphasize that Matthew gives a genealogy in chapter 1 of his gospel. There are two genealogies, that shouldn't shock you too much since there are two parents involved. And I'll say a little bit more about that as I give you a look at these genealogies. I'm not going to take you to Matthew because I don't need to do that. Matthew has a genealogy of Jesus and so does Luke, Matthew 1, Luke 3.

Let me talk about those two genealogies together for a moment. Luke's is in the third chapter of his gospel, Matthew's is in the first. The reason is Matthew is chronological. He just starts out with a chronological account of the genealogy of Jesus, then Jesus is born and then it goes from there.

Luke puts the genealogy in the third chapter because he sticks it in the credential section. He feels it fits well between the baptism and the temptation as an element of those final credentials of the Messiah. Luke in his genealogy, mark this, goes from the present to the past. He starts with the grandfather of Jesus and goes all the way back to Adam and God. Matthew does it the other way.

He starts with Abraham and comes to the present. So Luke goes from the present to the past. Matthew goes from the past to the present. They are in reverse. Luke's genealogy therefore is more dramatic because as you read you wonder where it's going to go and when it's going to end. It has a certain element of drama to it. Luke goes all the way back to Adam and then God. Matthew goes only back to Abraham. He starts at Abraham. Matthew traces the line only to Abraham because Matthew is writing primarily to Jews and he wants to satisfy the legality issue with them. Judaism begins with Abraham, he is the father of the nation Israel. And so all you have to do to prove messianic credentials to the Jew is to go back to Abraham through David, and that's what Matthew does because he's dealing with the legal aspect of it. But Luke has a more universal approach in his gospel and he wants to show how the Messiah links with all of humanity. He goes back through David, back through Abraham all the way to Adam and finally to God taking that universal approach connecting the Messiah to all humanity.

Luke's genealogy has 77 names...77 names. There are eleven times seven...eleven lists of seven names. Matthew has 42 names, three lists of 14. According to Matthew 1:17 it says, "Fourteen generations...fourteen generations...fourteen generations." So they had a kind of systematic way to break them down and I think they probably did it for memory sake because they would be able to memorize more easily their genealogy if they...if they had eleven times seven, or three times fourteen lists of names.

Now Luke's list is a lot longer because he goes past Abraham all the way to Adam. Neither of the genealogy lists give all the names. Not every name is there. When it says in Matthew so-and-so begot so-and-so begot so-and-so begot, it doesn't always mean father/son...it could be father, grandson, great grandson. You can skip some generations in there. Not all the names are there. We know that by comparing some of the genealogy records of Genesis. But they don't have to be there...as long as you can track back through you can skip a few folks on the way.

Also, the word "son" you notice, will you please, look at verse 23, the last statement, "The son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melki, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph," you see the word "son" is in italics, you see that? That means it's not in the original, it's not in the original..."son" isn't there. It's not...it is added to help us but it could be grandson. It's the one of so-and-so, then the one of so-and-so, then the one born of so-and-so. But it leaves us a little bit of leeway to allow for grandsons and great grandsons and to expand the genealogy a little bit. Some names are skipped in the genealogies.

Now there are some differences in the names in the two records. Now this is where I want you to listen very carefully. This is fascinating. In Matthew's genealogy and in Luke's genealogy we have different names in the records. Now let me...let me help you to see what I'm saying. Luke traces Jesus' line back to David through Nathan. Look at verse 31, "Son of Nathan, son of David." Now Nathan was David's third son born to Bathsheba. You remember Bathsheba? Okay, Nathan was her

third son...David's third son, I should say, born to Bathsheba. So this line in Luke goes back to David through his son, Nathan. But the first son born to Bathsheba was whom? Solomon. And the genealogy in Matthew goes back through Solomon. So in Matthew's genealogy you go back through Solomon to David. In Luke's genealogy you go back through Nathan to David. So you have two different lines. You have one being all the people who came out of Solomon..other, all the people who came out of Nathan.

Secondly, Matthew identifies Jesus' grandfather as Jacob, a man named Jacob. It says Jesus' earthly father was Joseph and his father was Jacob. But Luke says, look at it at the end of verse 23, that Jesus' grandfather's name is Eli, or Heli. So Luke says Jesus' grandfather is Heli, or Eli. Matthew says his grandfather is Jacob. Now this is a difference. So you've got two sons of David, that's different and you've got two grandfathers of Jesus, one being Jacob in the genealogy of Matthew, one being Eli in the genealogy of Luke. Both are royal lines because both come out of David. Solomon comes out of David, Nathan comes out of David, you have both those royal lines.

Interestingly...from David to Abraham the genealogy of Matthew and Luke are identical. From David back to Abraham, the names are the same. But from David down, the names are completely different. When you read the genealogy in Matthew 1 and you go Joseph, Jacob...you go through a list of names back to Solomon. Then you come here, you read Eli, you go through a list of names back to Nathan, those lists are completely different names. So what you have then is two genealogies, right? They have two grandfathers, going back to two sons of David with different names. Very simple, you have two genealogies.

You'd be amazed how people struggle to try to explain that. I don't know what the struggle is all about. Everybody has two genealogies like that. One is maternal and one is paternal. In Matthew you have the genealogy of Joseph through his father Jacob back to David through Solomon. In Luke you have the genealogy of Mary through her father, Eli. So Jesus, like everybody, had two grandfathers...he had a paternal grandfather through his father named Jacob, he had a grandfather through his mother named Eli. Now it's very important to note this. What you have then in Matthew is the genealogy of Jesus back through Joseph. In Luke is the genealogy of Jesus back through Mary.

Now that is the simplest explanation of the differences in the names. The names are the same once you hit David because all you have to do is go back to David to prove the royal blood. That's where it starts. The names are the same from David to Abraham, they're different because they come through Solomon on Joseph's side, through Nathan on Mary's side. It's that simple.

Now was this important? Absolutely important because anybody who ascended to the throne got the legal right to the throne through his father...through his father. Even if there was an adoption the father still made that son a legal son by adoption. And Jesus could only receive the right to rule through His father. Genealogical records were traced through the males. That's why there are no

females listed in Luke's genealogy. There are no females listed in the entire 77 names because they come through the males. Even though it's Mary's genealogy, no female is mentioned, not even Mary is mentioned...and I'll explain that in a moment because that was not the form in a classic genealogy.

So you received the legal right to rule through your father, therefore it was important for Matthew to prove that Jesus came from a line that proceeded from David through Solomon. And Jesus, though He was not the human son of Joseph, received His legal right to the throne from His adopted father, Joseph. Joseph was considered the true father of Jesus when he was the husband of Mary, even though Jesus was not His son physically. Because he married Mary whose Son Jesus was, he became the legal father of Jesus. Therefore, from Joseph Jesus receives the legal right to the throne.

It's interesting, just as a footnote. In that line from Solomon there's a name of a man, Jeconiah. Jeconiah was cursed and the curse on Jeconiah is in Jeremiah 22:24 to 30 and it says, "Jeconiah is cursed and no son of his will ever sit on the throne of Israel, ever." That's interesting because that's Joseph's line. Isn't that amazing? No son of his ever did sit on the throne, Jesus was not the son of Joseph. He did receive the legal right but he was not the natural child. So the curse was intact.

Now, Luke then gives the genealogy of Mary back through Nathan, Solomon's brother. Matthew gives the paternal, Luke the maternal. Matthew goes Joseph, Jacob, Solomon, David and Luke goes Mary, Eli, Nathan, David. And again, the legal right comes from the father but somebody might want to argue that, somebody might want to say...Yeah, yeah, that's the way we've done it, yeah we agree, adoption, etc., etc. But in the case of the Messiah, it's got to be the son of David, it's got to be blue-blood, it's got to be the real stuff.

And so, here is the genealogy of Mary which Luke gives under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to prove not only does he have the legal right to rule through his father, but he has the blood of David in his veins because of his mother. So either way, He is a descendant of David. He can be King legally through Joseph. He can be King naturally through Mary. The credentials are clear, they are detailed and they are refutable.

Now this also fits Luke's whole approach because when you study the gospel of Luke, you are struck by the birth narrative's exclusion of Joseph. Joseph is mentioned in chapter 1, I think it's verse 27, chapter 2 verse 4. He's mentioned in passing. He never steps on the scene, never does anything, says anything, shows up, has a conversation. He's not there. He's just mentioned in passing. Luke's story is about Mary. Matthew's story is about Joseph...remember that? How the angel comes to Joseph and says, "I know you're concerned about your wife because she's going to have a baby but that which has come upon her is the Holy Spirit," and da-da-da. And Joseph is the player, the main player in Matthew's account. And therefore, his genealogy ties into his role. In Luke, Mary's experience is the...is the realm in which the whole birth narrative takes place. The angel comes to

Mary, Elizabeth comes to Mary, Mary meets with Elizabeth, Mary brings forth a child, Mary praises God in the Magnificat. All of that is in Luke because Mary is the main player in the whole unfolding experience of the nativity. And so consequently it is clear that Luke's point is to tie Mary into the story in every way he can in terms of messianic credentials. That leads us from another angle to assume this genealogy is the genealogy of Mary. He is not concerned with Joseph in the writing of his gospel. He is only incidental because, in fact, he was incidental since the Messiah was born of strictly, solely and only His mother Mary, humanly speaking.

But for Matthew, the issue is to take Jesus' line through Joseph because of legalities, because the Jews were fastidious about law and it had to be through the father that you were traced back to David. Because, as I said, Joseph was married to Mary, by law he was considered the legal father of Jesus. You can check that in chapter 2 verse 4 where it indicates that.

So Matthew carries the genealogy of Joseph back and through David to Abraham. For Luke the concern was to emphasize that Jesus was actually, truly and humanly only the Son of Mary and so he traces back the bloodline through Mary back to David, back to Abraham, back to Adam and back to God.

Now I took a little time with this because you'll notice something. This is the genealogy of Mary but she's not mentioned. And I think that's what trips up some people. They say, "Is this the genealogy of Mary? She's not mentioned." No, Luke takes the classic form of genealogical record and he keeps it male. There aren't any women named in the entire genealogy, not even Mary. So he has to skip...now a virgin birth is a one-time deal so there's no formula for how you do this, right? How do you do a genealogy when there was no father? So Luke has to invent a way to do that. He doesn't mention Mary, he wants to stick to the male approach so the first male in the line would be Jesus' grandfather on the maternal side, right? The first male would be Mary's father...and that's Eli, or Heli, so he jumps immediately to that and then traces the line all the way back through Nathan. And he sticks with the typical classic form of genealogical recording through only the male.

Now Matthew, however, this I find fascinating...Matthew gives the genealogy for the Jews. You say, "Well that's bound to be legalistic, that's bound to be careful and fastidious about the expectations of the Jews." But you know what Matthew does that's really amazing? He puts four women in his genealogy...four women. Now if Matthew is the one giving the legal genealogy to satisfy the Jews, what in the world does he put four women in there? I'll tell you why he put them in there, you should see the women he put. I mean, he picked four of the all-time losers...two prostitutes, an adulteress and an outcast, Gentile. He picked Tamar whose story would make a black mark on a piece of coal. He picked...he picked Rahab who was a professional prostitute. He picked Ruth who was a cursed Moabitess. And he picked Bathsheba. And those are the four women. Of all the women that could have been put in the genealogy, he put those four in there. Why would Matthew do...I think he smiled as he wrote it. I think it was just an amazing thing to say to those Jews while he's giving them this

legal line...he just scatters a few prostitutes and adulteresses and Gentiles. What's he doing that for?

He's doing that to demonstrate that in the midst of the law there is...what?...there is grace. And he's giving them a case for grace, is what he's doing. This introduces the law-loving Jews to the reality of divine grace, that prostitutes and adulteresses and cursed outcasts are in the line of the Messiah.

Now Luke doesn't repeat the genealogy of Joseph. There wouldn't be any point in doing that. He doesn't tell the story from Joseph's side. Luke clearly tells the story from Mary's side and gives Mary's genealogy.

Now let me give you another thought. As I was going through this, it struck me as an interesting thing. There were all kinds of people who wanted to discredit Jesus, right? The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the high priests, everybody...they would do anything to discredit Jesus as their Messiah. They wanted...in fact that thought was horrifying to them, that's why they ultimately had Him killed. So they would have wanted to find any possible way that they could eliminate Him from His messianic claim. You can be certain of one thing. It didn't take long after Jesus made that claim before they were scrambling around to find the scroll that had the genealogy of Jesus. And they would have only had to go just a short walk south of Jerusalem to the town of Bethlehem where the tax records were kept and the lineages were kept and they could have gone in there and got a hold of those records and they could have determined rather readily whether in fact Joseph and Mary's ancestry was Davidic, right? And I'll tell you this, that would have been one of the first things they would have done because that's all it would take to discredit the Messiah, all the miracles aside, all the teaching aside, all the claims aside...sorry, folks, He doesn't come from the line of David. He is an imposter. That's all it would have taken.

What strikes me as curious is, you study the entire New Testament, you never, ever, ever find anyone making the claim that Jesus didn't come from David...never. They never brought it up. It was never an issue. And believe me, they would have wanted it to become an issue but the records indicated that He was in fact as He claimed to be a Son of David and they couldn't bring it up because it was the truth. Certainly in all their evil imaginations against Jesus, in all their attempts to discredit Him and do away with Him, they would have looked at those genealogical records and, I'm sure they did, and it only was verified that He did indeed descend from David through the line of His father, Joseph, his legal father and through the bloodline of His mother, Mary, His true human mother.

Maybe they would have said..."Well, you know, those believers in Jesus, they claim He was virgin born, that He was virgin born. So maybe that disqualifies the Joseph side of the thing, we'll check on Mary." Well, Mary was from David, too. There never was a denial of that. In fact, in Matthew 21:9 a famous day, we call it Palm Sunday, Jesus came into the city of Jerusalem and the whole population was there. And you know, it was the time of the great feast. They were all gathered there. You remember what happened as He came in, this is what they said, "The multitudes...Matthew 21:9...and

those following after crying out, 'Hosanna to the Son of David.'" Never a question...never a question. Through His father legally, through His mother naturally.

Well, that's just some preliminary stuff. Let's look at the genealogy just for a brief time. I'll just give you three things. First, the introduction. This is very important, very interesting. Verse 23, "When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age." Well that's pretty straightforward. He began His ministry about the age of 30. He had been living in obscurity in the town of Nazareth with His family, working in His father's business. He had only made one public appearance in terms of the text of Scripture, that at the age of twelve at the Passover when left by His parents. They had to go back and find Him. They found Him in the temple talking with the doctors and declaring Himself to be the Son of God. But apart from that one incident, He spent 30 years in obscurity and didn't have a public ministry.

His public ministry was launched by His baptism. Verses 21 and 22 are His baptism, verse 23 talks about He began His ministry. That's verified, by the way, in Acts 1:22 and Acts 10:37 where it says He began His ministry at His baptism. So up until His baptism at the age of 30, He had no ministry.

Why the age of 30? Well that was a recognized age when people would acknowledge someone in a position of authority. For example, when Ezekiel the prophet, according to Ezekiel 1:1, entered into his prophetic ministry, it says he was 30 years of age. When Joseph entered into his prime ministership, his rulership of Egypt, according to Genesis 41 I think it's about verse 46, it says that Joseph was 30 years of age. And when David ascended to the throne of Israel, according to 2 Samuel 5:4, it says he was 30 years of age and he ruled for 40 years. And according to Numbers chapter 4, when somebody entered into priestly service, they needed to be 30 years of age. So it was a...it was a common age in the mind of a Jew for a prophet, for a priest, for a ruler and for a king, namely the King David, isn't that an interesting parallel? David himself was 30 when he entered in to his royal rulership. So Jesus waited until an age when I think there would be an acceptance of his maturity. Had He...certainly He would have been capable at the age of 18, or 19 or 20 to engage Himself in the way He did in His ministry, but He waited until an appropriate age which the people would acknowledge as an appropriate age, the age of 30. And He began His ministry.

And before we get into that ministry, Luke gives us this genealogy as part of the credentials. Look at the record, verses 23 down to verse 38. Starts with Eli and ends with God. Goes backwards from Jesus back to Adam back to God.

Now there are some fascinating elements. Hang on, I'm going to give them to you in just a few minutes. You'll notice this, this is the key to everything...verse 23, it says, "Being supposedly the Son of Joseph." Being supposedly the Son of Joseph. Which is another way of saying...He is not the Son of Joseph, which is another way of saying...He is the Son of Mary. He says "being supposedly the Son of Joseph" because that's the formal classic way to do a genealogy. But he puts the word

"supposed" in there because that wasn't the fact. He actually is truly only the Son humanly of Mary. Supposedly the Son of Joseph, this again is an affirmation of His virgin conception and His virgin birth.

Now Luke had already established the virgin conception back in chapter 1 verses 34 and 35 with the announcement to Mary. But most people didn't know that. I mean, most people supposed that Jesus was the Son of Joseph. They knew Mary and Joseph were husband and wife, and there were other children in the family and for 30 years He lived in Nazareth and had no public ministry. And they assumed He was just a son of Joseph like the other children in the family. They supposed He was the Son of Joseph...not a Roman soldier, by the way, as some modern critics have tried to say.

Now that is a reasonable supposition. I've never met anybody who was born of a virgin, have you? I mean, that doesn't happen. So you assume that when somebody is part of a family, there's a mother and a father and that they're normally born and that's the normal supposition. They didn't know about a Holy Spirit, virgin conception without a human father, so they supposed that Jesus was the Son of Joseph. The supposition, however, was wrong, it was not correct, it was incorrect. He was actually only and solely the Son of Mary humanly speaking.

Now how is Luke going to put Mary's genealogy in here without just including Mary's name which was not done in the classic form? Well he does it in a wonderful way here. He does it in such a way to emphasize Mary without mentioning Mary by saying "supposed" about Joseph. He was supposedly...about Jesus, rather, "supposedly being the Son of Joseph."

Let me tell you what I mean by that. Luke wants to counter the erroneous supposition that the genealogy of Jesus goes through His father only. He wants us to know it goes through His mother also. But as mentioned earlier, in the normal ancestor record, women aren't named. So rather than say "Mary," he stays with the men and says, "Supposedly Joseph." It's a back-handed reference to Mary. And then he goes to Mary's father, Heli, or Eli. We obviously know that because the father of Joseph in Matthew is Jacob.

Now there's a simple maternal, paternal line in these two distinct genealogies and Mary's goes through Heli back to Nathan, and Joseph's goes through his father Jacob back to Solomon. But there's more here. This is, I think, very important to mention. Look at verse 23. Catch this now. I'm going to tamper a little bit with your English text with some Greek.

"Jesus is about 30 years of age being supposedly," you see the word "the"? It's the Greek tou, t-o-u in Greek, it's not there. There is no "the" but the word "son" is there. Drop down to the next one, "Son of Eli," the word "the" is there and the word "son" is not. And through the whole genealogy you have the word "the" in its straightforward type, "The son of Matthat, Levi," all the way down to the very end, "the" is always in the Greek and that's indicated by the translation of it, the italic "son" is not

there. So the word "son" is not there from "son of Eli" on to the end, but the word "son" is there with reference to Joseph. The word "the" is there in the whole genealogy but not with Joseph.

Now why would that happen? Why would the writer if he's going to give an accurate genealogy and he's going to be consistent with his terms all the way down use "son", leave out "son" in every one except with Joseph use "the"...use "son" and leave out "the"? Why does he do that? Because he is separating Joseph from the genealogy. And if you want to organize the verse, let me suggest that this is how the verse should be read. And it gives you this latitude in the Greek language. The verse reads like this, "Jesus Himself, supposedly Joseph's Son, was about 30 years old when He began His ministry being a Son of Heli." That is the way you would read the verse. "Jesus Himself, supposedly Joseph's Son," just take that phrase because it's a completely different structure than all the rest of the phrases in the genealogy. "Jesus Himself, supposedly Joseph's Son, was about 30 years old when He began His ministry being a Son of Heli." You just jump to the grandfather which was very often done in genealogies, particularly in Luke's case where he wants to leave out the name of the women and keep the classic form. The actual genealogy then has to begin with the first male member and Luke has to decide how to do that under the leading of the Holy Spirit since there's never been anything like this before. But he jumps to the first male member behind Jesus which was His grandfather, the father of Mary. That's a very important note. So this is Mary's genealogy.

Now that is supported by the fact, verses 24 to 27, the names from Heli to Rhesa, see that in verse 27, they are nowhere in the Bible so they won't be on the quiz because I don't know what to tell you about them. There's nothing about them. They're common Jewish names of the time, ancient times, but we don't know anything about them.

Verse 27 has two names we do know, Zerubbabel and Shealtiel. Now Zerubbabel and Shealtiel were two leaders of post-Babylon exile Israel. When you study Israel coming back you see the name Zerubbabel and the name Shealtiel, his father. The question is, how...how do Zerubbabel and Shealtiel appear in Mary's genealogy, listen now, and they're also in Joseph's, okay? Now remember, Mary's genealogy going through Heli back to Nathan, Joseph's genealogy going through Jacob back through Solomon, how can you have Zerubbabel and Shealtiel over here and also over here in the other genealogy?

I don't know. Nobody knows. I've read more than I care to read and nobody knows. And when they've said all that they can say they say, "We don't know." But there are several possibilities. One, that that's a common names, those are common names and that there were a father and a son named Shealtiel and Zerubbabel in the line of Mary and there were Zerubbabel and Shealtiel in the line also of Joseph, that's a possibility, although maybe a remote one.

The other possibility and probably more likely possibility is what is called levirate marriage. If you want, you can follow some of the notes in the MacArthur Study Bible that will track that for you back

to Haggai chapter 2 and Matthew chapter 1. What happened was let's assume that Shealtiel and Zerubbabel are in the line of Joseph and that there...a wife dies, a wife dies and let's say in the other line a husband dies. Levirate marriage, lever in Latin means a husband's brother, provided by Deuteronomy 25, God gave a law that said if a man leaves his wife childless and there's no heir for his estate in his future, then a relative like, remember Boaz in Ruth, the kinsman redeemer kind of thing, a relative can marry that widow and raise up a child. Of course, obviously he has to be unmarried at the time, he can't take another wife. So perhaps the best explanation is that as you go further back the families get closer together, get closer to David, and at some point Shealtiel and Zerubbabel were involved in a levirate marriage where at one point they produced children in one line and then through the death of their wife and the death of a relative in the other line, they go to the other line to raise up seed and that's how they crossed the line. It's a very reasonable explanation.

Others have suggested adoption. In the end, we have no idea. You can get behind me in line when we get to heaven and we'll all find out how it happened.

Now there's another interesting note here in verse 27, the name Shealtiel is the common name given to the father of Zerubbabel. It's most often in the Bible when you see Zerubbabel's father it's Shealtiel. But in one place, 1 Chronicles 3:17 to 19, it says his father is Pedaiah. And Pedaiah was Shealtiel's brother. Well perhaps here you have another one of those levirate marriages in which there's a crossing of the line or you have an adoption...adopting one into the line so that it was true. He could be the son of Shealtiel but become the adopted son of the brother of Shealtiel, or the son of Shealtiel, adopted in through a levirate marriage.

Then there's another name, Neri...Neri at the end of verse 27, father of Shealtiel. Well in Matthew Jeconiah is the father of Shealtiel. And again, the best answer here is probably an adoption. There was a crossing of the line through an adoption. We don't know all of the workings because the Bible doesn't give us a record of those things. But it is very possible Shealtiel was the actual son of Neri in Mary's line and became adopted by Jeconiah because Jeconiah knew his children were cursed and could never sit on the throne. But Neri was in a different line. Mary comes through the non-cursed Neri side, not through the cursed Jeconiah side. So the best explanation is there were these marriages that were prescribed by Deuteronomy 25 in which people crossed the lines as relatives to raise up children when there were widowing situations.

Now you come to verse 28 and you start with Neri and you go down to verse 31 to Nathan. So Mary's line goes through the third son of David, Nathan. And then you come to David.

By the way, none of those names, except Shealtiel and Zerubbabel, appear in Matthew's genealogy. So that's the only place the lines crossed. They're two distinct lines. One back to Nathan, one back to Solomon. Once you hit David in verse 31, the names become the same in both genealogies from David all the way back to Abraham. Abraham is indicated in verse 34. So when you go from David to

Abraham, it's the same as Matthew's genealogy. And, of course, Matthew's genealogy stops at Abraham and so after Abraham you go back, Terah, Nahor, Serug, Reu, you go all the way back, verse 38, Enosh, Seth, Adam, God. And that's basically the flow of the genealogy.

From Neri to Nathan are names we don't know anything about. In fact, from Heli back the only names we know or recognize are Zerubbabel and Shealtiel all the way back. But when we hit David, the names are very familiar because the names from David to Abraham are recorded in the Bible so we know those names. They're very familiar Old Testament names. And when we get back to Abraham, from Abraham to Adam are names in the genealogies of Genesis. So those two are familiar names.

So, Mary's line goes back through all the essential components, all the way back to David, through David back to Abraham, through Abraham back to Adam and even back to God. Just a closing note. Why all of this? It's credentials. But can I just take four of the elements of it and sum up the person of Jesus?

Start at the end, verse 38. He is the Son of God...He is the Son of God. He goes all the way back to God. Adam was a son of God by creation. And when Adam was created he fully bore the image of God. He was a son of God, a real son of God like God designed men to be sons of God. He bore the image of God unmarred, unspoiled, unpolluted, uncorrupted until he fell into sin. And when Adam sinned, the original image of God was shattered, it was broken and no one has ever entered into the world a true son of God like Adam was, except Jesus. Everyone of Adam's descendants has been stained with the sin of Adam and the likeness of God has been corrupted. But Jesus came into the world fully pleasing God, as God said in verse 22, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." He as man was what Adam once was, sinless, perfect man bearing absolutely perfectly the image of God. He was the true Son of God, the truest Son of God that had ever come into the world since Adam. And more than the true Son of God humanly, He is the true Son of God divinely, isn't He?

But He's not only Son of God, He's Son of Adam. He is like us, tempted, troubled, suffering, persecuted, hated, reviled and killed. He is a Son of Adam come all the way down to the pit, not like Adam, He didn't descend into disobedience, He descended into obedience. But He is every bit of what Adam is. He is fully man in every sense, firmly anchored in heaven as a Son of God. He is also fully anchored to earth as Son of Man. God as to His deity, Man as to His humanity. He is Son of God, Son of Adam, deity and humanity.

Then He is Son of Abraham as to His nationality. That is He is the promised seed. When God made a promise to Abraham it was to a seed, Galatians 3:16 says, and He is the promised seed who will bring all Abrahamic blessing. And He is also Son of David as to royalty, the promised King who would usher in the glory of all the Davidic promise.

Son of God, Son of Adam, Son of Abraham, Son of David...He is deity, He is humanity, He is nationality, that is to say He is the One who brings to pass all of Abrahamic promise. He is royalty who will bring in the glory of His Kingdom promised to David.

The hymn writer put it this way. "O what a Savior is mine, in Him God's mercies combined. And...said the hymn writer...He loves me."

Father, we thank You for the insight that we gain through this genealogy, into the glory of Christ, into the control, the sovereign providential orchestration of human history that brings about the precise result that You desire. We thank You that it all began with You and through Adam and all the way down through David and then through Solomon and Nathan came the two lines and down through Jacob and Eli and down to Joseph and Mary and Jesus. And You brought not only the one who would bring the Kingdom to Israel and the covenant promises given to Abraham, but the one who would be the Savior of all humanity. We thank You for this great truth. Jesus Christ, the hope of all ages, the culmination of all redemptive history, Savior of sinners and every life, every life as to its eternity is connected to Him. Those who are in hell are in hell because they rejected the salvation He provided. Those in heaven because they received it. O Father, may this be the day when many would embrace Jesus Christ as Messiah and Savior and receive the forgiveness of sins and the hope of heaven. We pray in His name. Amen.

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