

The Genealogies of Joseph and Mary

Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23b-38

DIG: What is the need for two genealogies? What line does **Matthew** trace? What line does **Luke** trace? Why? What was the requirement for kingship in the northern kingdom of Israel? What was the requirement for kingship in the southern kingdom of Judah? What problem did **Mattityahu's** genealogy present? How did he solve it? What people do you recognize in these two genealogies? What do you remember about them? What can you conclude about **Yeshua's** "earthly ancestry" from what you know about these people?

REFLECT: What does it mean to you that **ADONAI's** promises are trustworthy over the generations? At what point in your life have you felt **Jesus'** presence the most? Who are the significant people in your spiritual upbringing? What has been passed on to you spiritually from your parents or family members? If nothing was passed on, what spiritual mentors have helped you grow spiritually?

The vast majority of information in this file came from Arnold Fruchtenbaum's tape series on **the Life of Christ**. Of the four Gospels, only **Mattityahu** and **Luke** actually deal with the birth of **Jesus**. But while both **Matthew** and **Luke** tell the story of **His** birth, they tell it from two different points of view. **Mattityahu** tells the story of the birth of **Yeshua** from **Joseph's** perspective. In the Gospel of **Matthew**, **Joseph** plays the active role while **Mary** plays a passive role; angels appear to **Yosef**, but there is no record of angels appearing to **Miryam**. The text reveals what **Joseph** is thinking, but nothing is said of what **Mary** is thinking. On the other hand, **Luke** tells the same story from **Mary's** perspective. In the Gospel of **Luke**, **Mary** plays the active role while **Joseph** plays the passive role; angels appear to **Mary**, but there is no record of angels appearing to **Yosef**. The text reveals what **Miryam** is thinking, but nothing is said of what **Joseph** is thinking.

The question arises, "Why is there a need for two genealogies? Especially since **Jesus** was not the "real" son of **Joseph** anyway?" The answer usually goes something like this, "**Matthew's** genealogy gives the royal line, while **Luke's** genealogy gives the legal line." What people mean by this is that, according to **Mattityahu's** account, **Joseph** was the heir-apparent to **David's** throne. Since **Yeshua** was the "adopted" son of **Yosef**, **He** could claim the right to sit upon the throne of **David** by virtue of that adoption. But the exact opposite is true. On the other hand, **Luke** traces his genealogy through **Mary**, which qualifies **Jesus** as the legal representative of the human race. People who support this view believe that what man forfeited in the garden of Eden, **Yeshua**, the man-God, had to gain back. But once again, this was not why **Luke's** genealogy showed why **Jesus** could be **King Messiah**.

To understand the real need for two genealogies, you must first understand that there were two requirements for kingship in the TaNaKh. One was applied to the southern Kingdom of Judah, with its capitol in Jerusalem, while the other requirement was applied to the northern Kingdom of Isra'el, with its capitol in Samaria.

1. The Requirement for Kingship in the southern Kingdom of Judah:

The first requirement was that of **Davidic** descent. Unless you were a member of the house of **David**, you could not sit upon the throne in Yerushalayim. When there was a conspiracy to do away with the house of **David** and set up a completely new dynasty as in **Isaiah 7**, **Isaiah** warned that any such plan was doomed to failure because no one outside the house of **David** could sit upon the throne in Jerusalem.

2. The Requirement for Kingship in the northern Kingdom of Isra'el:

The second requirement was that of divine appointment or prophetic sanction. Unless you had divine appointment or prophetic sanction, you could not sit upon the throne in Samaria. If anyone tried to do so, he would end up being assassinated. For example, **God** told Jehu that his line would be allowed to sit upon the throne of Samaria for four generations, and they did. When the fifth generation tried to gain the throne, he was assassinated because he did not have divine appointment. Both **Davidic** descent and divine appointment will be seen in the need for two genealogies, leading to a legitimate **king**.

The Genealogy in Matthew 1:1-17:

Looking at **Matthew's** account of **Joseph's** line, **Mattityahu** broke with Jewish tradition and custom in two ways: first, **he** skipped names; and secondly, **he** mentioned the names of women. The four women **he** mentioned were **Tamar (Matthew 1:3)**, **Rahab (Matthew 1:5a)**, **Ruth (Matthew 1:5b)**, and the phrase: **whose mother had been Uriah's wife** refers to Bathsheba (**Matthew 1:6**). Not only that, the women **he** named were not the most significant in the line of **the Messiah**. For example, **he** left out a woman like Sarah, who was far more significant. Yet there is a reason for naming these four and not others. First, all four of these women were *Gentiles*. Early in **his Gospel**, **Mattityahu** hinted at a theme that **he** developed in greater detail later: although the main purpose of **Jesus'** coming was for the lost sheep of Isra'el, the *Gentiles* would also benefit from **His** coming. The second thing about the women is that three of them were involved in sexual sin: **Tamar** was guilty of having sex with her father-in-law **Judah (Genesis 1-30)**; **Rahab** was guilty of prostitution (**Joshua 2:1b**); and Bathsheba was guilty of adultery (**Second Samuel 11:1-27**). Again, **Matthew** foreshadowed a theme that **he** would bring out more clearly later: that **Yeshua** came for the purpose of saving sinners. But, these are not the main points of **his** genealogy.

In tracing his genealogy, **Matthew** went back in time and began with **Abraham (Matthew 1:2)**, and traced the line to **King David (Mattityahu 1:6)**. From **David's** many sons, **he** showed

that the line went through **Solomon (Matthew 1:6)**. From **Solomon** the genealogy came to **Jeconiah (Mattityahu 1:11-12)**. This was a critical turning point, as **Matthew** traced **Jeconiah** down to **Joseph (Matthew 1:16)**, who was the stepfather of **Jesus**. According to **Matthew**, **Yosef** was a descendant of **David** through **Solomon**, but also through **Jeconiah**. This meant that **Joseph** could not be the heir-apparent to **David's** throne.

We learn this from **Jeremiah 22:24-30**, where we read: "As surely as I live," declares **ADONAI**, "even if you, **Coniah** son of **Jehoiakim** king of **Judah**, were a signet ring on My right hand, I would still pull you off. I will hand you over to those who seek your life, those you fear - to **Nebuchadnezzar** king of **Babylon** and to the **Babylonians**. I will hurl you and the mother who gave you birth into another country, where neither of you was born, and there you both will die. You will never come back to the Land of **Judah** that you long to return to. Is this man **Coniah** a despised broken pot, an object no one wants? Why will he and his children be hurled out, cast into the land they do not know? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of **ADONAI**" (**Jeremiah 22:29**)! This is what **ADONAI** says: Record this man as if childless, a man who will not prosper in his lifetime, for none of his offspring will prosper, none will sit on the throne of **David** or rule anymore in **Judah** (**Jeremiah 22:20**).

The name **Coniah** is a shortened form of **Jeconiah**. Also called **Jehoiachin** (see my commentary on **Jeremiah Du - Jehoiachin Ruled For 3 Months in 598 BC**), was one of the last kings of **Judah** before the **Babylonians** took **Judah** into captivity. The **LORD's** patience with the **Jews** had about run its course when **Jeconiah** became king at the age of 18 (**2 Kings 24:8-16a**). This young king did evil in the sight of **God** because he resisted **Babylonian** control of **Judah** that **ADONAI** had commanded (**Jeremiah 27:5-11**). For this, he was taken captive by **Nebuchadnezzar**, who carried him away to **Babylon** together with all the treasures of the **Temple**. There he remained in prison for 37 years before he was released and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table (**Jeremiah 52:33; 2 Kings 25:29**).

HaShem pronounced a curse upon him in the days of **Yirmeyahu**. The curse has several facets to it, but the last one is so significant that **God** called the whole earth three times over to hear it (**Jeremiah 22:29**). Then the curse is spelled out: No descendant of **Jeconiah** will ever have the right to sit upon the throne of **David** (**Jeremiah 22:30**). Until **Jeremiah**, the first requirement was membership in the house of **David**. But with **Yirmeyahu**, that requirement was limited even further. One still had to be a member of the house of **David**, but he had to be apart from **Jeconiah**. **Yosef** was a descendant of **David**, but in the line of **Jeconiah**; therefore, he was disqualified from the throne of **David**. If **Jesus** had been the real son of **Joseph**, He too would have been disqualified from ever sitting on the throne of **David**. If a Jew looked at **Matthew's** genealogy, he would have thought to himself, "If **Yeshua** really was **Joseph's** son, He couldn't be the **Mashiach**." That is why **Matthew** begins

his Gospel with the genealogy, addressed the "**Jeconiah** problem," and solved it by means of the Virgin Birth (**Mattityahu 1:18-24**).³⁴

The book of [origin] of Jesus the Messiah **the Son of David, the Son of Abraham** (**Matthew 1:1**). The first two words of Matthew's gospel are literally *book of genesis*. The effect on the Jewish reader would be comparable to that of John's opening phrase: **In the beginning . . .** The theme of the fulfillment of Scripture is signaled from the very start (**Genesis 1:1**), and these opening words suggest that a new creation was taking place.³⁵

Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers (**Matthew 1:2**),

Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, **whose mother was Tamar**, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram (**Matthew 1:3**),

Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon (**Matthew 1:4**),

Salmon the father of Boaz, **whose mother was Rahab**, Boaz the father of Obed, **whose mother was Ruth**, Obed the father of Jesse (**Matthew 1:5**),

and Jesse the father of King David, David was the father of Solomon, **whose mother had been Uriah's wife** (**Matthew 1:6**),

Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa (**Matthew 1:7**),

Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram, Jehoram the father of Uzziah (**Matthew 1:8**),

Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah (**Matthew 1:9**),

Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah (**Matthew 1:10**),

and Josiah the father of **Jeconiah** and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon (**Matthew 1:11**).

After the exile to Babylon: **Jeconiah** was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel (**Matthew 1:12**),

Zerubbabel the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor (**Matthew 1:13**),

Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Akim, Akim the father of Elihud (**Matthew 1:14**),

Elihud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob (**Matthew 1:15**),

and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of **Mary**, and **Mary was the mother of Jesus** who is called the Messiah (**Matthew 1:16**).

Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah (Mt 1:17).

The Genealogy in Luke 3:23b-38:

Turning to Luke's genealogy we see that Luke, unlike Matthew, had no problem with **Jeconiah**, so he begins his Gospel with the virgin birth and gave his genealogy later in Chapter 3. Luke followed strict Jewish custom and procedure in that he mentions no women and he skipped no names. The rule against naming women in a Jewish genealogy would raise a question: "If you wished to trace a woman's line but could not use her name, how would you do it?" Jewish custom said, "You would use the name of her husband."

The Talmud states: "A mother's family is not to be called a family." In the TaNaKh, there were two cases where a woman's line was traced by the name of her husband: **Ezra 2:61** and **Nehemiah 7:63**. Likewise, Luke was following the strict Jewish practice of not mentioning the names of women. He wanted to trace **Mary's** line but couldn't mention her name, so he mentions **Yosef (Luke 3:23b)**. But to show he doesn't mean **Yosef**, he excludes the Greek definite article from **Joseph's** name and adds it to all the other names.

Unlike Matthew, Luke began his genealogy during his own day and worked backward into history. He started with the name **Yosef** as a substitute for **Mary** and traced it to **Nathan, the Son of David (Luke 3:31)**. According to this verse, **Miryam**, like **Joseph**, was a descendant of **David**. However, unlike **Joseph**, **Mary** did not have the blood of **Jeconiah** running through her veins. She was a descendant of **David**, apart from **Jeconiah**, through **Nathan**, not **Solomon**. This meant that **Jesus** fulfilled the first requirement in the TaNaKh for kingship: He was a member of the house of **David**, apart from **Jeconiah**.

However, that would not solve the whole problem. At this point in Jewish history, there were a great number of other Jews who were descendants of **David**, apart from **Jeconiah**. So **Yeshua** was not the only one to fulfill the first requirement. Why should He be the king and none of the others? The answer lies in the second requirement in the TaNaKh, which was that of divine appointment in **Luke 1:30-35**, especially **verse 32**. But **Jesus** alone fulfilled the second requirement of the TaNaKh. By virtue of **His** resurrection the Lord now lives forever, and He will have no successors. If a Jew looked at **Luke's** genealogy, he would have thought to himself, "This genealogy follows strict Jewish custom and procedure. It mentions no women, skips no names, and is apart from **Jeconiah**." Luke's genealogy showed why **Jesus** could be King Messiah.

He was the son, so it was thought, of **Joseph**,

the son of **Heli**, also spelled **Eli (Luke 3:23b)**, the son of **Matthat**: Because Luke has to mention **Yosef** instead of **Mary** to maintain the integrity of a proper Jewish genealogy, he says the son of **Heli**, who was **Miriam's** father. This implies that **Yosef** was the son-in-law of

Heli. It is no accident that the Jewish writings of the first and second century mention Jesus as the son of Heli because they recognized that the line was really being traced through Mary and not Joseph.

the son of Levi, the son of Melki,
the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph (Luke 3:24),
the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos,
the son of Nahum, the son of Esli,
the son of Naggai (Luke 3:25), the son of Maath,
the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein,
the son of Josech, the son of Joda (Luke 3:26),
the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa,
the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,
the son of Neri (Luke 3:27), the son of Melki,
the son of Addi, the son of Cosam,
the son of Elmadam, the son of Er (Luke 3:28),
the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer,
the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat,
the son of Levi (Luke 3:29), the son of Simeon,
the son of Judah, the son of Joseph,
the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim (Luke 3:30),
the son of Melea, the son of Menna,
the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan,
the son of David (Luke 3:31), **the son of Jesse**,
the son of Obed, the son of Boaz,
the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon (Luke 3:32),
the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram,
the son of Hezron, the son of Perez,
the son of Judah (Luke 3:33), the son of Jacob,
the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham,
the son of Terah, the son of Nahor (Luke 3:34),
the son of Serug, the son of Reu,
the son of Peleg, the son of Eber,
the son of Shelah (Luke 3:35), the son of Cainan,
the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem,
the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, (Luke 3:36),
the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch,
the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel,
the son of Kenan (Luke 3:37), the son of Enosh,
the son of Seth, **the Son of Adam**,
the Son of God (Luke 3:38).

Lastly, these two genealogies contain four of the many titles of **the Meshiach**. In **Matthew 1:1**, He is called **the Son of David and the Son of Abraham**, it means that **Yeshua** is a Jew. In **Luke 3:38**, He is called **the Son of Adam and the Son of God**. Each title emphasizes a different aspect of His personality.

Calling Him **the Son of David** means that **Yeshua** is a King, and calling Him **the son of Abraham** means that **Yeshua** is a Jew. Not coincidentally, these are the same two themes that **Matthew** emphasizes - the Jewishness and kingship of **Jesus**: **He is the King of the Jews**. That is why **Mattityahu** alone records the coming of the Magi (see **Av - The Visit of the Magi**), asking the question: **Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?**

His third title is **the Son of Adam**. This title emphasizes that fact that **Yeshua** was a man. Once again, it is no accident that this happens to be the theme of **Luke's Gospel**, who emphasizes that **Messiah is the Son of Man** (see **Co - Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man**). That is why **Luke**, not **Matthew**, **Mark** or **John**, records His human development in much more detail. **Luke** describes how He grew up; how He gained His knowledge; and His subjection to parental authority. **Luke**, more than the others, emphasized how He was hungry and how He was tired, all of which are trademarks of humanity. **Yeshua is the Son of Adam**, which means that He is a Man.

His fourth title is **the Son of God**. This means that **Jesus is God**. Being **the Son of God**, the righteous of the TaNaKh believed that He was **God Himself**. That happens to be the theme of the Gospel of **John**, who emphasized that **Yeshua is the Meshiach, the Son of God**. This is why **John** began his Gospel with the words: **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God**. At the end of his Gospel, **John** noted the incident with "doubting" Thomas who finally saw the truth and declared to **Yeshua**, **My Lord and my God (John 20:28)**. Between those two passages, **John** emphasized the deity of **Christ** again and again - the fact that **Jesus is God**.

These four titles picture **the Messiah, the Jewish God-Man, and King**.³⁶