

There is reasonable confusion over the separate recorded genealogies of Jesus found in Matthew and Luke. And there are real debates as to the definitive answer. However, I have studied and I am thoroughly convinced both by the facts and the resulting power and clarity of the conclusion that Mathew follows the legal line of Jesus through his adopted father Joseph and Luke follows the bloodline of his mother Mary right back to Adam and Eve. Not only does this fit the text and its strange introduction of Joseph in Luke, but also:

1. Perfectly fits Luke's agenda, focus on Mary and context
2. Fits the cultural expectation of a precise Greek genealogy not including any women
3. Allows Matthew's clearly edited genealogy in three segments of exactly 14 to be exactly what it is – a normative Hebrew genealogy focused on key individuals including women
4. Avoids the curse on Jeconiah
5. And fulfills the legal and bloodline promises of the Messiah!

For those who are interested I have included good scholarship below in increasing levels of detail. I know that you will find scholars who disagree with this assessment. This position is on very footing and provides a much more satisfactory and I would say obvious answer to the genealogy of our savior.

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Simply said, "The genealogy in Matthew 1:1–17 is that of Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, and traces his legal right to the throne of David. Luke gives us the genealogy of Mary, which proves Jesus' natural rights to the throne. Heli (Eli) was thus Mary's father. Verse 23 should read, "And Jesus ... being (as was supposed, the son of Joseph) of Eli" (i.e., born of Mary, the daughter of Eli). Jesus was generally thought to be the son of Joseph (4:22; John 6:42, 45). The mother's name would not be put into the genealogy, so Mary is not named. Keeping with his focus on Jesus the Son of Man, Luke takes the genealogy all the way back to Adam (1 Cor. 15:45)." - Dr. Warren Wiersbe

From "The Life of Christ" by MS Mills, "Luke 3:23–38 (LC:SGGR): In order to understand Luke's genealogy we must remind ourselves of the original addressees of this Gospel. Luke, a Greek, was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write a gospel for the Greek churches (just as Matthew wrote to Jews and Mark to Romans; thus all major centers of Christianity attested in Acts were provided with a gospel particularly suited to their individuality). Now, Greek thinking on genealogies was much like our own; a genealogy was a full list and, unlike the Hebrews, who on occasion would move outside a strict father/son relationship, the Greek concept centered on physical procreation. The genealogy of Luke is therefore likely to list a strict father/son relationship.

Luke's genealogy from David to Jesus clearly differs from that given in Matthew, for it is immediately evident that it goes through Nathan and not Solomon, thus indicating that a different person's genealogy is being traced. But does not v. 24 suggest that Joseph's line is being traced? The original Greek is without punctuation, so if the parenthesis in v. 24 is moved to read "Jesus (being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph) the son of Heli ..." the whole question resolves itself very accurately and logically. Ancient Greek genealogies traced the father's lineage not the mother's—but what do you do with the unique virgin-born Jesus? Certainly, Joseph was not his father, so the only logical male name available was that of Jesus' maternal grandfather-viz., Heli, for he was the last man involved in the genealogical process which led to Jesus. So Heli was the father of Mary, who was the mother of Jesus.

This explanation also resolves the riddle of Jer 22:30, for God enigmatically prophesied that none of Jeconiah's descendants would ever sit on the throne of David, yet He had promised David, Jeconiah's forefather, that his Descendent would sit on his throne forever! This was literally fulfilled in Jesus' birth, for, though He inherited David's throne through Jeconiah's line, He was not Jeconiah's physical descendent! Jeconiah descended from Solomon but Jesus descended from Solomon's brother Nathan, so fulfilled the prophecy!

Luke 1:3 claims that its genealogy is accurate, and as far as we can confirm, it is a full one. This Gospel traces the lineage of Mary, so presents the physical descent of Jesus which shows that He is entitled to David's throne by birth, and that He is entitled to sacrifice His own life, for His life, uniquely, emanated from Him. Both genealogies then are right: Matthew establishes Jesus' legal right to the Davidic throne, and Luke establishes His blood right to the throne. He was doubly qualified to be the Messiah!"

And finally from Hebrew Biblical scholars at Jews for Jesus,

### **"Matthew's Genealogy**

In his genealogy, Matthew breaks with Jewish tradition and custom. He mentions the names of four women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba (who is the one to whom the pronoun "her" in verse six refers). It was contrary to Jewish practice to name women in a genealogy. The Talmud states, "A mother's family is not to be called a family." Even the few women Luke does mention were not the most prominent women in the genealogy of Y'shua. He could have mentioned Sarah, but did not. However, Matthew has a reason for naming these four and no others.

First, they were all Gentiles. This is obvious with Tamar, Rahab and Ruth. It was probably true of Bathsheba, since her first husband, Uriah, was a Hittite. Here Matthew hints at something he makes clear later: that while the main purpose of the coming of Jesus was to save the lost sheep of the

house of Israel, the Gentiles would also benefit from his coming. Second, three of these women were guilty of sexual sins. Bathsheba was guilty of adultery, Rahab was guilty of prostitution and Tamar was guilty of incest. Again, Matthew only hints at a point he later clarifies: that the purpose of the Messiah's coming was to save sinners. While this fits into the format of Old Testament genealogy, it is not Matthew's main point.

Matthew's genealogy also breaks with tradition in that he skips names. He traces the line of Joseph, the step-father of Jesus, by going back into history and working toward his own time. He starts tracing the line with Abraham (verse 2) and continues to David (verse 6). Out of David's many sons, Solomon is chosen (verse 6), and the line is then traced to King Jeconiah (verse 11), one of the last kings before the Babylonian captivity. From Jeconiah (verse 12), the line is traced to Joseph (verse 16). Joseph was a direct descendant of David through Solomon, but also through Jeconiah. The "Jeconiah link" is significant in Matthew's genealogy because of the special curse pronounced on Jeconiah in Jeremiah 22:24-30:

As I live," declares the LORD,  
"even though Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim  
king of Judah were a signet ring on my right  
hand, yet I would pull you off...  
"Is this man Jeconiah a despised, shattered jar?  
Or is he an undesirable vessel?  
Why have he and his descendants been hurled out  
and cast into a land that they had not known?  
"O land, land, land, Hear the word of the LORD!!  
"Thus says the LORD, 'Write this man [Jeconiah] down childless,  
A man who will not prosper in his days;  
For no man of his descendants will prosper  
Sitting on the throne of David, Or ruling again in Judah.'

No descendant of Jeconiah would have the right to the throne of David. Until Jeremiah, the first requirement for messianic lineage was to be of the house of David. With Jeremiah, it was limited still further. Now one had to be not only of the house of David, but apart from Jeconiah.

According to Matthew's genealogy, Joseph had the blood of Jeconiah in his veins. He was not qualified to sit on David's throne. He was not the heir apparent. This would also mean that no real son of Joseph would have the right to claim the throne of David. Therefore if Jesus were the real son of Joseph, he would have been disqualified from sitting on David's throne. Neither could he claim the right to David's throne by virtue of his adoption by Joseph, since Joseph was not the heir apparent.

The purpose of Matthew's genealogy, then, is to show why Y'shua could not be king if he were really Joseph's son. The purpose was not to show the royal line. For this reason, Matthew starts his Gospel with the genealogy, presents the Jeconiah problem, and then proceeds with the account of the virgin birth which, from Matthew's viewpoint, is the solution to the Jeconiah problem. In summary, Matthew deduces that if Jesus were really Joseph's son, he could not claim to sit on David's throne because of the Jeconiah curse; but Jesus was not Joseph's son, for he was born of the virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18-25).

## **Luke's Genealogy**

Unlike Matthew, Luke follows strict Jewish procedure and custom in that he omits no names and mentions no women. However, if by Jewish custom one could not mention the name of a woman, but wished to trace her line, how would one do so? He would use the name of her husband. (Possible Old Testament precedents for this practice are Ezra 2:61 and Nehemiah 7:63.) That would raise a second question: If someone studied a genealogy, how would he know whether the genealogy were that of the husband or that of the wife, since in either case the husband's name would be used? The answer is not difficult; the problem lies with the English language.

In English it is not good grammar to use a definite article ("the") before a proper name ("the" Matthew, "the" Luke, "the" Mary): however, it is quite permissible in Greek grammar. In the Greek text of Luke's genealogy, every single name mentioned has the Greek definite article "the" with one exception: the name of Joseph (Luke 3:23). Someone reading the original would understand by the missing definite article from Joseph's name that this was not really Joseph's genealogy, but his wife Mary's.

Furthermore, although many translations of Luke 3:23 read: "...being supposedly the son of Joseph, the son of Eli...", because of the missing Greek definite article before the name of Joseph, that same verse could be translated as follows: "Being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph the son of Heli...".<sup>1</sup> In other words, the final parenthesis could be expanded so that the verse reads that although Y'shua was "supposed" or assumed to be the descendant of Joseph, he was really the descendant of Heli. Heli was the father of Mary. The absence of Mary's name is quite in keeping with the Jewish practices on genealogies. The Jerusalem Talmud recognized this genealogy to be that of Mary and not Joseph and refers to Mary as the daughter of Heli (Hagigah 2:2).

Also in contrast to Matthew, Luke begins his genealogy with his own time and goes back into history all the way to Adam. It comes to the family of David in verses 31-32. However, the son of David involved in this genealogy is not Solomon but Nathan. So, like Joseph, Mary was a member of the house of David. But unlike Joseph, she came from David's son, Nathan, not Solomon. Mary was a member of the house of David apart from Jeconiah. Since Jesus was Mary's son, he too was a member of the house of David, apart from Jeconiah.

In this way Jesus fulfilled the biblical requirement for kingship. Since Luke's genealogy did not include Jeconiah's line, he began his Gospel with the virgin birth, and only later, in describing Y'shua's public ministry, recorded his genealogy.

However, Jesus was not the only member of the house of David apart from Jeconiah. There were a other descendants who could claim equality with Y'shua to the throne of David, for they too did not have Jeconiah's blood in their veins. Why Jesus and not one of the others? At this point the second biblical requirement for kingship, that of divine appointment, comes into the picture. Of all the members of the house of David apart from Jeconiah, only one received divine appointment. Luke 1:30-33 states:

And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Y'shua. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.'

On what grounds then could Jesus claim the throne of David? He was a member of the house of David apart from Jeconiah. He alone received divine appointment to that throne: "The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David."

While Matthew's genealogy showed why Y'shua could **not** be king if he really were Joseph's son, Luke's genealogy shows why Y'shua **could** be king. When he returns, he **will** be king.

Two things may be noted by way of conclusion. First, many rabbinic objections to the messiahship of Jesus are based on his genealogy. The argument goes, "Since Jesus was not a descendant of David through his father, he cannot be Messiah and King." But the Messiah was supposed to be different. As early as Genesis 3:15, it was proposed that the Messiah would be reckoned after the "seed of the woman," although this went contrary to the biblical norm. The necessity for this exception to the rule became apparent when Isaiah 7:14 prophesied that the Messiah would be born of a virgin: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel." Whereas all others receive their humanity from both father and mother, the Messiah would receive his humanity entirely from his mother. Whereas Jewish nationality and tribal identity were normally determined by the father, with the Messiah it would be different. Since he was to have no human father, his nationality and his tribal identity would come entirely from his mother. True, this is contrary to the norm, but so is a virgin birth. With the Messiah, things would be different.

In addition, these genealogies present a fourfold portrait of the messianic person through four titles. In Matthew 1:1 he is called the Son of David and the Son of Abraham. In Luke 3:38 he is called the Son of Adam and the Son of God. As the Son of David, it means that Jesus is king. As the Son of Abraham, it means that Jesus is a Jew. As the Son of Adam, it means that Jesus is a man. As the

Son of God, it means that Jesus is God. This fourfold portrait of the messianic person as presented by the genealogies is that of the Jewish God-Man King. Could the Messiah be anyone less?!"