

What's in a name? A look at genealogies...

1. Study Matthew 1:1-18 and Luke 3:23-38. What do you know about the authors?

Matthew was financially well off and had his own house. He was educated and knew how to read and write. As a Jewish publican, a tax collector, fellow Jews despised him. Luke was a physician and companion of Paul. As a Gentile, he recorded as a historian and did careful research.

2. Make a table of the names of each genealogy. What do you notice?

Matthew 1:1-18

Abraham-David		David-Exile		Exile-Jesus	
1. Abraham	8. Amminadab	1. David (Bathsheba)	8. Uzziah	1. Jeconiah	8. Achim
2. Isaac	9. Nahshon	2. Solomon	9. Jotham	2. Shealtiel	9. Eliud
3. Jacob	10. Salmon (Rahab)	3. Rehoboam	10. Ahaz	3. Zerubbabel	10. Eleazar
4. Judah (Tamar)	11. Boaz (Ruth)	4. Abijah	11. Hezekiah	4. Abihud	11. Matthan
5. Perez	12. Obed	5. Asa	12. Manasseh	5. Eliakim	12. Jacob
6. Hezron	13. Jesse	6. Jehoshaphat	13. Amon	6. Azor	13. <i>Joseph (Mary)</i>
7. Ram	14. David the king	7. Joram	14. Josiah	7. Zadok	14. Jesus

Observations of Matthew:

Matthew's accounting of Israel's kings was for the Jewish audience and presented Jesus' royal-legal lineage in partial fulfillment of the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7:8-13). In beginning with Abraham and listing in descending order (father of...) a limited genealogy from Abraham to Jesus, Matthew stresses Jesus' Jewish ancestry.

The genealogical list is short, because Matthew does not list a number of generations. The Jewish concept of "son" is not in a limited sense as in English; the concept of "son" can be understood as any descendant whether as a grandson or a son of a distant generation.

In counting David twice (Matt 1:17), Matthew reveals a pattern in his list. The list is broken down into 3 time periods: a) Abraham and David, b) David and the Exile, and c) the Exile and Jesus. During each period, Matthew lists only 14 generations.

The numerical value of "David" in Hebrew is fourteen. In the ancient world letters serve not only as building blocks of words but also as symbols of numbers. The use of such symbolism is called "gematria." Through this symbolism, Matthew indicates that the promised "son of David", the Messiah, has come.

Five women are mentioned in the genealogy:

Tamar (Gen 38:6-29) and Rahab (Josh 2:1-21; 6:17-25) were prostitutes, Ruth (Ruth 1:4-16; 4:10-22) was a Moabitess, and Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:3-5, 14-24; 12:24) was an adulteress.

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Mary had a pattern break in the phraseology of the genealogy: "...the husband of Mary, by whom was born Jesus,...." The Greek term "by whom" here is a feminine relative pronoun which indicates that Jesus was the physical child of Mary and not of Joseph.

Listed in Matthew's genealogy, first of the fourteen names in the Exile – Jesus section, is the last Jewish king Jeconiah. Jeconiah was an evil king who led the divided monarchy Judah to disobey God. In pronouncing judgment of his sins, Jeremiah prophesied, "record this man as if childless" (Jer 22:30). God's judgment ends the royal line of Jewish kingship at Jeconiah (whom Jeremiah calls Coniah) and denies the occupation of the throne by any descendant and thus deny future blessings (2 Chron 36:9-10 Jehoaichin is equivalent to Jechoniah).

If Jesus was a physical descendant of Jeconiah, God's curse on Jeconiah would have prevented Him from sitting on David's throne. Yet Matthew recorded the ancestors of Joseph, the legal father of Jesus, in accordance to Jewish tradition.

Luke 3:23-38 (in comparison to Matthew's list, Luke's order starts with Jesus and ends with God)

1. Jesus	14. Maath	27. Elmadam	40. Menna	53. Perez	66. Arphaxad
2. Joseph	15. Mattathias	28. Er	41. Mattatha	54. Judah	67. Shem
3. Eli	16. Semein	29. Joshua	42. Nathan	55. Jacob	68. Noah
4. Matthat	17. Josech	30. Eliezer	43. David	56. Isaac	69. Lamech
5. Levi	18. Joda	31. Jorim	44. Jesse	57. Abraham	70. Methuselah
6. Melchi	19. Joanan	32. Matthat	45. Obed	58. Terah	71. Enoch
7. Jannai	20. Rhesa	33. Levi	46. Boaz	59. Nahor	72. Jared
8. Joseph	21. Zerubbabel	34. Simeon	47. Salmon	60. Serug	73. Mahalaleel
9. Mattathias	22. Shealtiel	35. Judah	48. Nahshon	61. Reu	74. Cainan
10. Amos	23. Neri	36. Joseph	49. Amminadab	62. Peleg	75. Enosh
11. Nahum	24. Melchi	37. Jonam	50. Admin	63. Heber	76. Seth
12. Hesli	25. Addi	38. Eliakim	51. Ram	64. Shelah	77. Adam
13. Naggai	26. Cosam	39. Melea	52. Hezron	65. Cainan	78. God

Observations of Luke:

Luke lists Jesus' genealogy in ascending order: "...son of ..."

There is a pattern break with Joseph in the beginning of the list, "Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph,..."

The range of genealogy: Jesus-God.

In comparison to Matthew's list, Luke's genealogy is very different. The two apostles, Matthew and Luke, traced two different family genealogies. Matthew recorded the ancestors of Joseph, the legal father of Jesus. Luke is believed to record the ancestors of Mary, the biological mother of Jesus.

3. In Deuteronomy 21:16, Jewish birthrights are only passed through the father, and God promises David that His kingdom will be established forever with David's descendant on its throne (2 Sam 7:12-16; Ps 132:11-12; Jer 33:17). With Jesus' virgin birth, is Jesus entitled to receive the kingly rights of the Davidic bloodline?

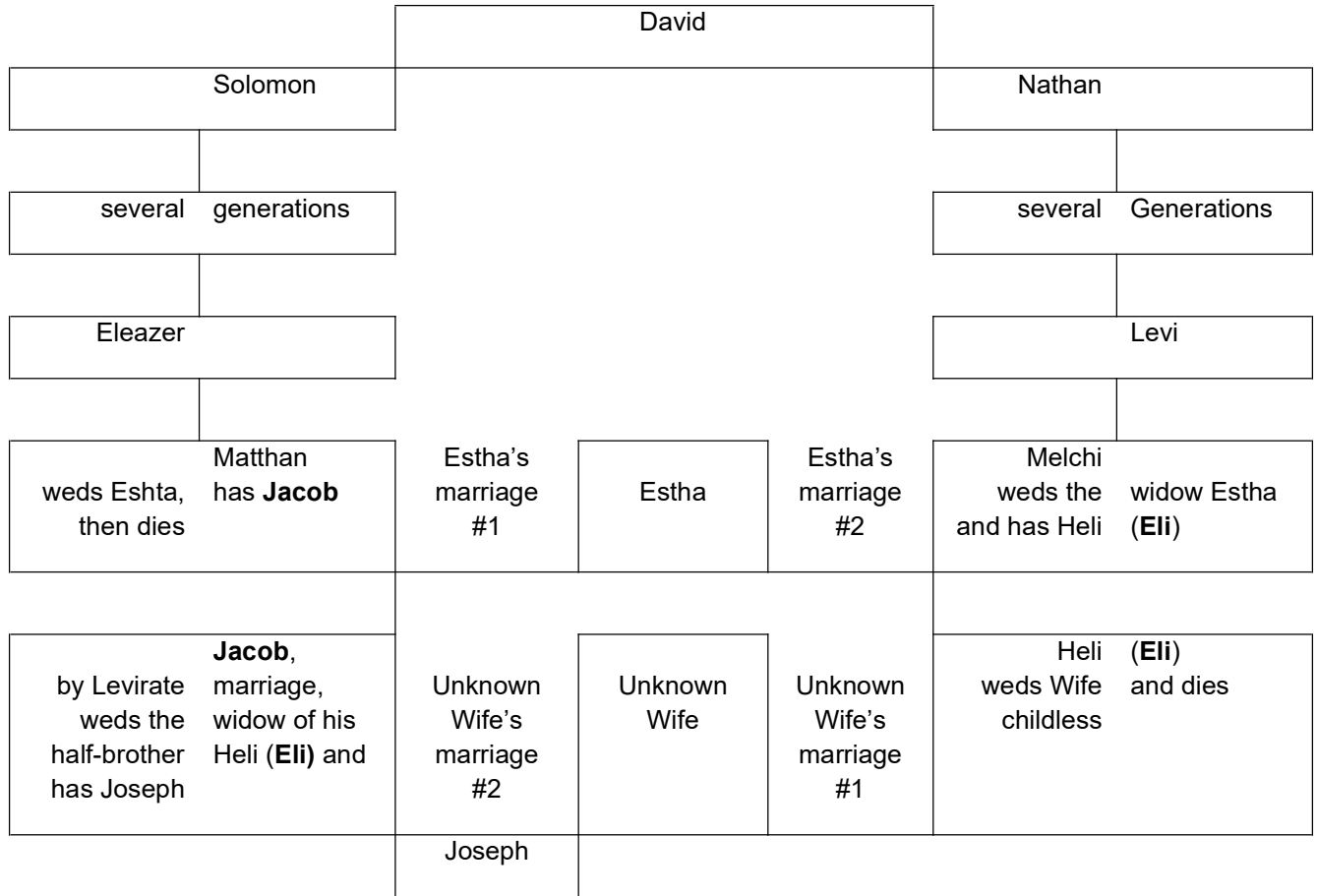
This issue has been contentious and the main reason why contemporary Jews deny Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

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While both Matthew and Luke do not list Joseph as the biological father of Jesus, Joseph is recognized as Jesus' legal parent and father. There are two approaches to this problem.

#1: The birthright to the Davidic throne passes through Joseph. This argument takes the position that Matthew lists the legal genealogy for succession to the throne, and Luke lists Joseph's real genealogy.

Julius Africanus (160-240 A.D.), a Christian traveler and historian, using records of the Desposyni (alleged blood relatives of Jesus [i.e. Matt 13:55-56; Mark 6:3]) reconstructed the genealogy of Joseph. His writings influenced Eusebius who cited Africanus' genealogical work in 325 A.D (Eusebius Pamphilius: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine, Chapter VII).



Observe with Africanus' theory:

Jacob and Eli are half-brothers, with the same mother but fathers of different names. There is some question whether Levirate marriage was practiced in the case of half-brothers.

Joseph is listed as the son of Jacob in Matthew but as the son of Eli in Luke. In a genealogy, the child could be listed under his legal or his natural father, which, in the case of Joseph, Eli is the legal father but Jacob is the natural father.

While Joseph would be a biological descendant of David and avoided God's curse on the house of Jeconiah (Jer 22:30), he still was not the biological father of Jesus who was born to a virgin. This violates the promise God made with David (2 Sam 7:12-16).

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#2: The birthright to the Davidic throne passes through Mary. This argument takes the position that Matthew lists the legal genealogy for succession to the throne, and Luke lists Mary's biological genealogy.

Romans 1:3 supports the notion that Jesus was of the seed of David through his mother Mary ("... born of a descendant of David according to the flesh").

There are a couple possibilities of how the birthright was passed to Jesus:

A) The Jerusalem Talmud indicated that Mary was the daughter of Eli (Heli) (Haggigah, Book 77, 4). Through Mary, Jesus was a biological descendant of Nathan son of David. Through Joseph, Jesus was the legal heir of the kingly birthright from the line of Solomon son of David. However, Jesus was not affected by the curse on Jeconiah (Jer 22:30) because of His virgin birth!

B) In Numbers 26 and 27, there is a story of Zelophehad who had only daughters. Moses prayed to God, and the Lord told Moses that the inheritance can flow to the female only if a) there were no male offspring (Num 27:8), **and** b) if there is marriage, the daughter must marry within their own tribe (Num 36:6). Mary had no brothers and married within her own tribe to Joseph.

While this possibility provides the biological seed from David, it does not account for the legal inheritance of the kingly birthright.

Matthew's genealogy establishes the royal lineage of Jesus and as legal heir to the kingly birthright through Joseph. Luke's genealogy establishes Jesus as the biological descendant of David through Mary. The virgin birth establishes the deity of Jesus Christ and avoids the curse on the house of Jeconiah. These two genealogies testify to the promise that God made with David, that his seed would reign forever in the kingdom of God.

References:

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