

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS

Luke 3:23-38 & Mt. 1:1-17

Intro: One of the challenges that appears to those who begin to read the Bible for the first time are the many genealogies found in its pages. Most readers are puzzled as to why there appear these lengthy lists of “begats”. However, as we continue our study we come to see that genealogies in Scripture are very important. First they give us a sense of chronology and continuity between the main Biblical characters. Second, genealogies were especially important to the Jewish people as evidence of tribal claims in the land of Canaan and the right to occupy various roles among the people, such as the priesthood.

Tonight I want to show how genealogies help build our faith in Jesus as the Son of God. In Luke 3:23-38 we have a genealogy of Jesus. Why would Luke with a huge resource of stories about Jesus’ life feel the need to give this chain of family connections? Tonight we will try to answer that question by taking a look at the genealogy of Jesus.

Throughout the centuries there have been many people who claimed to be from God, to have a special relationship to man, to be a Savior or Christ. Let's suppose that we are on a panel whose job it is to determine who the Christ is on the basis of the prophecies concerning his family line. And with our Scriptures in hand we begin to question the various aspirants who claim to be the Christ.

PROMISES OF THE MESSIAH

We have in the Scriptures the information we need to determine who the Christ is by his ancestry. For God revealed by His prophets the genealogy of the Messiah.

Gen. 3:15 The Messiah must be of the seed of woman. The Messiah must be born as a man.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.” (Genesis 3:15)

The Messiah must be of the seed of Abraham.

and said, “By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. “And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” (Genesis 22:16-18)

This eliminates all who are not children of Abraham. But which son?

But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named. (Genesis 21:12)

The Messiah must be of the seed of Isaac. Cf. 26:3-4 But which son? To Jacob God gives the Abrahamic blessing:

“Your descendants shall also be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. (Genesis 28:14)

The Messiah could only be an Israelite. But what tribe? Which son?

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. (Genesis 49:10)

God promised that the scepter would belong to Judah! Now, most Jews are eliminated! But there were many families in the tribe of Judah? Which family?

The Lord has sworn to David, a truth from which He will not turn back; “Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne. (Psalm 132:11)

God promised to raise a descendant from David's seed to be the Messiah. And we begin to trace his ancestry: Was the Messiah Solomon? Rehoboam? Abijah? Asa? Jehoshaphat? Joram? Uzziah? Jotham? Ahaz? Hezekiah? Manasseh? Amon? Josiah? Jeconiah? No! And he was the last king of Israel. Since him there has been no king. We should expect the next king God places to be of his family? ***But this raises a problem:***

“As I live,” declares the Lord, “even though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet ring on My right hand, yet I would pull you off; and I shall give you over into the hand of those who are seeking your life, yes, into the hand of those whom you dread, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. “I shall hurl you and your mother who bore you into another country where you were not born, and there you will die. “But as for the land to which they desire to return, they will not return to it. “Is this man Coniah 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 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.’” (Jeremiah 22:24-30)

It appears that our selection process is completely wrecked by this decree of God. Only a descendant of Jeconiah would have legal right to the throne of David; yet God pronounces that no descendant of Jeconiah could rule. It appears we can't solve this problem! No one could satisfy the requirements of all these passages.

ONLY JESUS FULFILLS THE REQUIREMENTS

But wait! One person steps forward to claim that he fulfills the requirements of the prophets--Jesus of Nazareth.

Are you seed of woman? Abraham? Isaac? Jacob? Judah? David?
So far so good.

But are you legal heir to the throne? Yes, Mt. 1:11.

But God says that no descendant of Jeconiah can rule on David's throne!

Jesus answers: I am the legal heir to the throne because my earthly father Joseph is an heir of Jeconiah. But I have avoided the curse on Jeconiah's house because I am not really of Jeconiah's seed! I was born of a virgin. Joseph is not my real father. I do not have a human father. But then are you truly a descendant of the family of David? Through my mother I am a descendant of David (Lk. 3:31). Through my father I am legal heir to the throne. So then, Jesus fulfills the prophecies. In fact, he is the only person who has ever lived who could fulfill the requirements of the OT

Conclusion: So then, I believe that Jesus is the Christ because God told from whose descent the Christ would come. And only Jesus can fulfill it!