

The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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~ All articles are written by Terry Carter unless otherwise stated ~

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The Genealogy of Jesus Matthew 1:1-17

INTRODUCTION:

- A. It is rather common for people to kind of skip over genealogies in the Bible.
- B. This is even true of the genealogy of Jesus.
- C. They often see it as just a list of largely unfamiliar names with no apparent purpose.
- D. But they are recorded for a reason, and we can learn a number of important lessons from them if we take the time to examine them carefully.
- E. I want to look at the genealogy of Jesus and see what lessons we can learn.
- F. But first we need to consider the difference between Luke and Matthew's accounts of His genealogy.

LUKE VERSUS MATTHEW

- A. It is obvious with just a bit of comparison that Matthew and Luke give different accounts of the genealogy of Jesus, **Luke 3:23-38**.
 - 1. Matthew works forward from Abraham to Jesus.
 - 2. Luke works backwards from Jesus all the way to Adam.
 - 3. But the list of names is completely different.
- B. Atheists have tried to claim that there is a contradiction here - was Jacob or Heli the father of Joseph?
 - 1. Certainly Luke would not contradict Matthew's account, **Luke 1:1-4**.

- 2. He knew that Matthew's account was true, but he also knew that what he was saying was true.
- 3. This is not a problem at all as Joseph is the son-in-law of Heli.
- 4. That is, Heli was the father of Mary.
- 5. Notice that Jesus is not the son of Joseph in the normal sense, nor is Adam the son of God in the normal sense.
- 6. Also, when a Hebrew genealogy ended with a daughter, they would name her husband instead.
- 7. Even today, we often refer to a man's son-in-law as his son and he may call his father-in-law, dad.
- 8. This argument is strengthened when we consider that the nativity story is told in **Matthew** from Joseph's perspective but in **Luke** it is told from Mary's.
 - a. Matthew records Joseph's hesitation in marrying her and the angel's visit to him, but not the angel's visit to Mary.
 - b. Luke records the pregnancy of Elisabeth, Mary's relative.
 - c. Luke also records the angel's visit to Mary, her visit to Elisabeth, Simeon's statement to Mary in the temple, etc.
 - d. It is Luke that tells of Mary keeping all these things in her heart after

- 9. Jesus was found in the temple at the age of 12.
- 9. Jesus' lineage after the flesh is told by Luke, His legal lineage is told by Matthew.
- 10. Both are important for different reasons.
- C. Matthew and Luke were recording their genealogies for different purposes.
 - 1. **Matthew**, written to the Jews, is primarily showing that Jesus has a legal right to the throne through Joseph going back to David and Abraham.
 - a. The Jewish Old Testament ends with **Chronicles**, which contains a lot of genealogies.
 - b. **Matthew** is intended for a Jewish audience.
 - c. It is really a continuation of the Old Testament, so it begins with genealogies.
 - d. Matthew shows that Jesus succeeded as the Son of God where Israel failed as His son.
 - 2. **Luke**, written to the Greeks, is showing the universal impact of Jesus' birth as a son of Adam who is the son of God Himself.
- D. Both show His Divinity and the miraculous nature of His conception, **Matthew 1:18-25**, **Luke 1:26-38**.

MATTHEW IS NOT MAKING UP THIS STORY

- A. Imagine you are Matthew, and you are trying to write a book to

convince the Jews that Jesus is their Messiah and King.

- B. You already have one strike against you in that you are a tax collector who the Jews distrust to begin with.
- C. You decide that the best way to begin is to show that Jesus has a legal claim to the throne of David.
- D. But you have a problem – some of His genealogy is not very pretty.
 1. To tell the story honestly, you must include women in your account.
 2. Not only that, but there is a problem with every woman that you are going to mention.
 3. It includes Gentiles like Rahab and Ruth.
 4. Not only that, but it also includes Tamar who played the harlot and thus got pregnant by her own father-in-law.
 5. Bathsheba, the adulteress, is not named but she is mentioned through her husband, Uriah.
 6. So, right up front, you have a number of things to deal with which the Jews are going to frown upon.
 - a. Women
 - b. Gentiles
 - c. Prostitution
 - d. Incest
 - e. Adultery
 - f. Murder
- E. Here you have some choices:
 1. You can leave out the embarrassing stuff.
 2. Or you can include it and be completely honest.
 3. Matthew included it because it is instructive for us all.
 4. He doesn't even try to sugar coat it like the following:
 - a. A wealthy person who had their family tree done and discovered one of their ancestors was given the electric chair in the state prison.
 - b. They insisted that it be left out or they would refuse to pay.
 - c. So, the report said that 'he

sat in the chair of applied electricity in one of the state's finest institutions; his death was quite a shock'.

- F. But he surely would not have made this up if it weren't true.
- G. Likewise, he probably wouldn't have included it if it weren't important.
- H. It might be worth noting that Matthew's account does leave some well-known gaps in his list.
 1. The reason he does this is obvious from verse 17.
 2. It is a memory device to help us remember.
 3. The gaps are easily filled in from **Ezra Chapter 7** and his readers would be familiar with them.
 4. But notice that he doesn't skip over the embarrassing details.
 5. Instead, he skips the benign details.
 6. This is instructive for us.

JESUS HAD SKELETONS IN HIS FAMILY CLOSET, TOO

- A. I've never spent much time researching my family tree.
- B. I've always been afraid of what I might find.
- C. Just based on what I know of my living relatives, I imagine that a lot of it is not too pretty.
- D. I have an aunt, who I rarely see, that spends a great deal of time doing that research.
 1. Evidently, she finds her dead relatives more interesting than the living ones.
 2. I'm not sure what that says about me, I'll leave that for you to decide.
- E. It's easy to think that you can never measure up because your family's got problems.
 1. But you are not bound to repeat their mistakes.
 2. Your value is not determined by how your ancestors acted.
 3. Your value is determined by the choices you make and the life you live.
- F. Jesus' ancestors were sinners, but He was without sin Himself.

JESUS IS FULLY HUMAN – HE IS THE SON OF ADAM

- A. It is Luke that records this for us.

- B. He also records much of what happened to Mary – Jesus' only human parent (biologically speaking).
- C. It's easy to imagine Jesus as too Divine to sympathize with our problems.
- D. But He left the glories of Heaven to become God in the flesh.
- E. Not only that, but He was created in all points like us, **Hebrews 2:17-18**.
- F. Jesus knows what it is to be tired, poor, hungry, thirsty, despised and rejected, to cry, and even to experience pain and death.
- G. Rest assured, Jesus understands your weaknesses and He sympathizes with them.

JESUS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS

- A. That is the main point of the whole book of **Matthew**.
- B. He clues us in to this right at the start by saying that Jesus is the son of David.
- C. This shows that Jesus can be the fulfillment of the promises about "David's seed sitting on His throne forever".
- D. In the second chapter of Matthew, the magi come seeking the King of the Jews.
- E. Every chapter of **Matthew** continues to show Jesus as the King of the Jews.
- F. Right up to the accusation placed on top of His cross to the Great Commission where He claims all authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to Him.
- G. The main point of Matthew's genealogy is to show His legal right to the throne.

JESUS IS THE SEED OF ABRAHAM

- A. Matthew doesn't just present Jesus as the son of David, but also the son of Abraham.
- B. This is designed to show that he can be the promised Seed of Abraham.
- C. God had promised Abraham that by his seed all the nations would be blessed, **Genesis 22:18**.
- D. This was the one promise to Abraham that had not yet been fulfilled.

- E. It was fulfilled in Jesus as Paul makes plain, **Galatians 3:16**.
- F. The blessing of Abraham for the world is not the nation of Israel, it is Christ Jesus.

JESUS CAME FOR THE GENTILES, TOO

- A. We just mentioned that through Jesus all nations are blessed.
- B. While Matthew is written to the Jews to show Jesus as their King, he also shows that the Gentiles will benefit from Jesus' coming as well.
- C. We see it in the genealogies which include the Gentiles - Ruth and Rahab.
- D. We see it in **Chapter 2** when the Gentile magi come to worship Him and bring Him gifts.
- E. We see it in the Great Commission when He says to make disciples of all nations.
- F. I am thankful that through Jesus, salvation is available for all men, not just Jews.
- G. He is not just the Jewish King, He is our King, He is the King of Kings.

CONCLUSION:

- A. I'm sure that there are many more lessons to be learned from the genealogies.
- B. I hope next time you read them you don't just skip over them.
- C. I hope you appreciate the lessons we can learn from them.
- D. Jesus is not a myth, He lived in history; His family tree is documented.
- E. His is not a cleverly invented story.
- F. He lived, died, was buried, rose again, and ascended to Heaven where He sits on His throne forever.
- G. He is our King and our Savior.