

## The Authority of Scripture: The Puzzle of the Genealogies of Jesus

Mako A. Nagasawa, June 2005

### Four Main Differences in the Genealogies Provided by Matthew and Luke

1. Is Jesus descended through the line of Solomon (Mt) or the line of Nathan (Lk)? Or both?
2. Are there 27 people from David to Jesus (Mt) or 42 (Lk)?
3. Who was Joseph's father? Jacob (Mt) or Heli (Lk)?
4. What is the lineage of Shealtiel and Zerubbabel?
  - a. Are they the same father-son pair in Mt as in Lk? (Apparently popular father-son names were repeated across families – as with Jacob and Joseph in Matthew's genealogy) If not, then no problem. I will, for purposes of this discussion, assume that they are not the same father-son pair.
  - b. If so, then there is another problem:
    - i. Who was Shealtiel's father? Jeconiah (Mt) or Neri (Lk)?
    - ii. Who was Zerubbabel's son? Abihud (Mt) or Rhesa (Lk)? And where are these two in the list of 1 Chronicles 3:19-20 (<sup>19b</sup> the sons of Zerubbabel were Meshullam and Hananiah, and Shelomith was their sister; <sup>20</sup> and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah and Jushab-hesed, five)?

### Cultural Factors

1. Simple remarriage. It is likely that in most marriages, men were older and women were younger (e.g. Joseph and Mary). So it is also likely that when husbands died, many women remarried. This was true in ancient times: Boaz married the widow Ruth, David married the widow Bathsheba after Uriah was killed. It also seems likely to have been true in classical, 1<sup>st</sup> century times: Paul (in Rom.7:1-3) suggests that this is at least somewhat common in the Jewish community ('I speak to those under the Law' he says) in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.
2. Levirate marriage. In addition, in Israel, if a deceased man had no children, his brother would marry the widow (or simply father children through the widow) in order to produce children in his brother's legal name (e.g. shown by Judah in Gen.38, found in the Mosaic legislation, and still relevant in Mt.22:23-27 and parallels). However, I personally suspect that this is less of a factor than commonly attributed by Christian apologists attempting to reconcile the two genealogies. A Levirate marriage in one place would require many other Levirate marriages in others.
3. Multiple names. At least two people in Matthew's genealogy had two names: Azariah/Uzziah and Jeconiah/Jehoiachin.

The first two cultural factors alone would greatly complicate the recording of Jesus' ancestry, especially if Luke is discussing genetic/bloodline descent whereas Matthew is discussing Jesus' legal claim to the royal line of David.

Was a Levirate marriage involved? For instance, if Heli and Jacob were brothers, and if Jacob died without children, then Heli could have had children for Jacob through Jacob's widow. But this requires Heli and Jacob to have been brothers with the same father. This is only possible if Matthan (Mt) is really the same person as Matthat (Lk), but I am hesitant to introduce Multiple Names to explain this, and then to have to invent creative solutions for why Matthan/Matthat's father is not the same in both genealogies. Multiple Names attested in other parts of Scripture (Kings and Chronicles) is one thing; an unattested conjecture stretches the credibility of any theory.

### Theological Factors

1. Jesus, as Messiah, needs to legitimately be an heir of David, with title to the Davidic kingship. Paul attests to the importance of this Davidic claim in Romans 1:3 because it is the fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures concerning the Davidic dynasty (Rom.1:2).
2. God had cursed King Jeconiah and the entire royal line of the Davidic house at the beginning of the Babylonian Exile. Jeremiah cursed Jeconiah and all his descendants in Jer.22:24-30. 'For no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David, or ruling again in Judah.' This created a theological and historical puzzle: How was God going to get around his own curse? Jeconiah's descendant Zerubbabel was governor of Jerusalem (Hag.2:20-23), but he was not King.

3. Differences between Matthew and Luke need to be investigated. If Scripture is in error, then our epistemology is threatened.

It is likely that there is a precise solution to the two genealogies. I suggest this for historical and literary reasons. The *historical* reasons: Jesus started his Messianic movement in a time and place where his origins were considered important by his own peers (e.g. ‘The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem’; ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’; ‘Is this not the carpenter’s son?’; ‘Who is your father?’). Having the wrong credentials and pedigree would have disqualified Jesus. Furthermore, Messianic military movements revolved around particular families. They would start, and then, meeting failure, would transfer Messianic expectations to the leader’s younger brother or son, who would then become the new leader of the movement.<sup>1</sup> These historical factors point to an environment where family and origins were critically important, and thus it is likely that Jesus himself was able to make the case that he was an heir of David.

The *literary* reasons: Both Matthew and Luke appear to have written for a very public purpose, and not merely for Christians, so their material was very open to scrutiny. Given the attention to detail of these writers in other aspects, it seems likely that their research was grounded. We may not seem to be able to completely reconstruct their process of investigation. Yet it is significant that of all the anti-Christian literature we know about (especially from the Jewish community, e.g. Trypho the Jew in dialogue with Justin Martyr), Jesus’ claim to the Davidic throne was not contested. Either it could not be contested, or it was not worth contesting, or it could not be verified one way or the other. But I doubt that it really did not matter at all. To the contrary, such a thing mattered quite deeply.

#### **Literary Factors: Matthew**

1. Matthew stresses the royal line of David and how Jesus could make a claim to the title of David, whereas Luke stresses the humanity of Jesus stretching back to Adam.
2. Matthew does not list exhaustively the genealogy of David. His term ‘became the father of’ can also be understood ‘became the ancestor of.’ So Matthew’s reporting of three sets of 14 is not exhaustive. For example, King Joram fathered King Amaziah, who fathered King Azariah/Uzziah (see 2 Kings 15 – 16); but Matthew does not report Amaziah.

While the biblical narrators do not appear to invent historical events, the ability of a Hebrew biblical narrator to leave out elements of a story is both pragmatically demanded and literarily acceptable. In fact, it becomes part of a literary strategy.<sup>2</sup> Lack of complete narration/disclosure is used in *Genesis* (in that Adam and Eve had many other children besides Cain, Abel, and Seth). It is employed to great effect in *Samuel* concerning the characterization of King Saul, where key aspects of Saul’s inner life are not disclosed by the narrator. It is evidenced most clearly by *Kings* and *Chronicles* as they select what history to narrate. And the four Gospel writers choose varying levels of detail and disclosure: Mark does not disclose the disciples’ inner life to us using the same techniques Samuel’s narrator used to characterize Saul; etc.

Although Matthew could have simply narrated all the descendants from David through Solomon all the way to Jesus, he does so selectively, grouping Jesus’ ancestors in sets of number 14. The number 14 is necessary for Matthew to trace Jesus’ claim to the Davidic throne. It appears to be a literary flourish, a marker calling attention to Jeconiah and the culpability of David’s line leading up to the Babylonian Exile, but stressing the hope and promise of the Davidic line in Israel’s full recovery from Exile. The third set of 14 signals that the end of Israel’s Exile is at hand with Jesus, the heir of David. Matthew’s limited selection of Davidic kings organized around the number 14 (the numerical value of David’s name) would not have been perceived as false, forced, or manipulative, but as intentionally calling attention to the significance of the Davidic line relative to Israel’s Exile.

---

<sup>1</sup> See N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*.

<sup>2</sup> see especially Meir Sternberg’s chapter entitled ‘Between the Truth and the Whole Truth’ in *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*

Similarly, Matthew's inclusion of the 4 Gentile women in Jesus' line signifies to him (and to us) that God was foreshadowing the full inclusion of the Gentiles into Israel's covenant family even before Jesus, and that He was doing this not on the fringes of the Israelite community, but at the very center of it, in the Davidic line. For Matthew's purpose in writing, God's activity in Israel revolved around the Davidic line. Jesus as the final heir of David is now claiming God's promise to David's heirs to make the nations his possession.

**Literary Factors: Luke**

1. Luke's genealogy primarily makes the case that Jesus was in fact a new Adam.
2. Luke's genealogy would be helpful in making the case that Jesus was truly human, a point the Gnostics denied. But how Luke does this needs to be clarified.

*Option 1: Luke's genealogy is the genetic line of Joseph; Joseph's mother remarried*

Joseph could have been the genetic son of Heli but legally son of Jacob, if Jacob married Heli's young widow after Heli saw the birth of his son Joseph, and Jacob was not directly related to Heli. If Heli were descended from King David through his son Nathan, and not directly related to Jacob, this would elegantly solve the whole situation.

<b>Official Kings of Judah from David</b>	<b>Matthew's Genealogy from David</b>	<b>Luke's Genealogy from David</b>
Solomon	Solomon	Nathan
Rehoboam (931 BC)	Rehoboam	Mattatha
Abijah (913 BC)	Abijah	Menna
Asa (911 BC)	Asa	Melea
Jehoshaphat (873 BC)	Jehoshaphat	Eliakim
Jehoram (853 BC)		Jonam
Ahaziah (841 BC)		Joseph
Joash (835 BC)		Judah
Amaziah (796 BC)	Amaziah	Simeon
Uzziah/Ahaziah (767 BC)	Uzziah/Ahaziah	Levi
Jotham (739 BC)	Jotham	Matthat
Ahaz (735 BC)	Ahaz	Jorim
Hezekiah (715 BC)	Hezekiah	Eliezer
Manasseh (686 BC)	Manasseh	Joshua
Amon (642 BC)	Amon	Er
Josiah (640 BC)	Josiah	Elmadam
Jehoahaz (609 BC)	Jehoahaz	Cosam
Jehoiakim (609 BC)	Jehoiakim	Addi
Jeconiah/Jehoiachin (597 BC)	Jeconiah/Jehoiachin	Melchi
Zedekiah (uncle of Jehoiachin/Jeconiah – 2 Ki.24:17) (597 BC)		Neri
(Shealtiel, son of Jeconiah, and his brother Pedaiah, – 1 Chr.3:18; the language in Chr. suggests some differentiation between	Shealtiel <sup>3</sup>	Shealtiel <sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Matthew appears to regard the line of Zedekiah as unfit, since Zedekiah was installed by Nebuchadnezzar; Matthew instead follows the line of Jeconiah

<sup>4</sup> I am assuming that the Shealtiel and Zerubbabel mentioned in Luke are different from the two mentioned in Matthew. Of course, such an assumption merits a whole discussion by itself. But given that the two names may have occurred at about the same time, the names may have been expressions of hope for the exilic Israelites. Zerubbabel, for instance, means 'seed of Babylon.' The fact that these two names work out to be on the same horizontal lines on this table might mean that their timeframe was roughly close, but otherwise is coincidental.

these two sons, perhaps adoption or remarriage occurred)		
(Zerubbabel, son of Pedaiah – 1 Chr.3:18) <sup>5</sup>	Zerubbabel	Zerubbabel
?		Rhesa
?	Abihud <sup>6</sup>	Joanan
		Joda
		Josech
	Eliakim	Semein
	Azor	Mattathias
		Maath
		Naggai
	Zadok	Esli
	Achim	Nahum
		Amos
		Mattathias
	Eliud	Joseph
	Eleazar	Jannai
		Melchi
		Levi
	Matthan	Matthat
	Jacob	Heli
	Joseph	Joseph
Jesus the Messiah	Jesus the Messiah	Jesus the Messiah

It may be argued that this option does not make Jesus a real blood descendant of David, if that is a necessary criterion for him to inherit the throne of David. However, the significance of this criterion is unclear to me.

*Option 2: Luke's genealogy is that of Mary (Jewish name Miriam), who is a blood descendant of David*

Quoted from Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, November 1, 1987, in an article on the *Jews for Jesus* website, [http://www.jewsforjesus.org/publications/issues/5\\_6/genealogy](http://www.jewsforjesus.org/publications/issues/5_6/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" Miriam): 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"

<sup>5</sup> After Jehoiachin, there is no legitimately recognized King of Judah. Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, became governor of Jerusalem, but not King of Judah. The prophet Zechariah, surprisingly, crowned the high priest Joshua (Zec.3:1-10), but it is unclear what this meant for Zerubbabel and his descendants. Likely nothing immediate, as Zechariah was simply anticipating a Messianic figure who would be both priest and king.

<sup>6</sup> Due to lack of information, I have arbitrarily assigned Abihud, Eliakim, Azor, Zadok, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, and Jacob to their relationships (father-son, or otherwise) with one another. Again, I am assuming that Matthew is leaving out quite a few names.

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 Miriam'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..." (A.T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels*). 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 Miriam. The absence of Miriam's name is quite in keeping with the Jewish practices on genealogies. The Jerusalem Talmud recognized this genealogy to be that of Miriam and not Joseph and refers to Miriam as the daughter of Heli (Hagigah 2:4).

'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, Miriam was a member of the house of David. But unlike Joseph, she came from David's son, Nathan, not Solomon. Miriam was a member of the house of David apart from Jeconiah. Since Jesus was Miriam'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.'

*Evaluation of Fruchtenbaum's essay:*

Option 2 is certainly more complex to explain than Option 1. If Luke – a Gentile writing for a Gentile audience – was drawing on Jewish custom to write a genealogy involving Mary, would he not have explicitly said what he was doing? Perhaps not – as there are other places in Luke's writings where he does not explain cultural idioms and practices explicitly – but it does require significantly more explanation.

The supporting written evidence for Option 2 is significant. Ezra 2:61 and Nehemiah 7:63 refer to the same family. For this purpose, the data is important and establish the Jewish custom with clarity: 'Of the sons of the priests...the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and he was called by their name.'

However, the Jerusalem Talmud in Hagigah 2:4 is disputed. [I need to find the full rabbinic discussion of this to properly evaluate it].

*Evaluation of both options:*

Both options fit the basic theological concerns at stake: (1) Jesus being eligible to be the heir of David (2) without inheriting the curse on the house of David through Jeconiah. Both options preserve (3) the sense that Scripture is truthful and historically accurate. Thus, there are at least two viable options on how to treat the genealogies.

## Appendix A: The Genealogical Records in Matthew, Luke, and Chronicles

Mt.1:1 The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham: <sup>2</sup> Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. <sup>3</sup> Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram. <sup>4</sup> Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon. <sup>5</sup> Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. <sup>6</sup> Jesse was the father of David the king, David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah. <sup>7</sup> Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa. <sup>8</sup> Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah. <sup>9</sup> Uzziah was the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. <sup>10</sup> Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah. <sup>11</sup> Josiah became the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. <sup>12</sup> After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel. <sup>13</sup> Zerubbabel was the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor. <sup>14</sup> Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud. <sup>15</sup> Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob. <sup>16</sup> Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah. <sup>17</sup> So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

Abraham to David	David to Exile	Exile to Restoration
Abraham	Solomon	Jeconiah (repeated)
Isaac	Rehoboam	Shealtiel
Jacob	Abijah	Zerubbabel
Judah	Asa	Abihud
Perez	Jehoshaphat	Eliakim
Hezron	Joram	Azor
Ram	Uzziah	Zadok
Amminadab	Jotham	Achim
Nahshon	Ahaz	Eliud
Salmon	Hezekiah	Eleazar
Boaz	Manasseh	Matthan
Obed	Amon	Jacob
Jesse	Josiah	Joseph
David the king	Jeconiah	Jesus the Messiah

### Luke's Genealogy:

Adam	Methuselah	Eber	Isaac	Amminadab	Nathan	Judah	Er	Zerubbabel	Maath	Jannai
Seth	Lamech	Peleg	Jacob	Nahshon	Mattatha	Simeon	Elmadam	Rhesa	Naggai	Melchi
Enosh	Noah	Reu	Judah	Sala	Menna	Levi	Cosam	Joanan	Esli	Levi
Cainan	Shem	Serug	Perez	Boaz	Melea	Matthat	Addi	Joda	Nahum	Matthat
Mahalaleel	Arphaxad	Nahor	Hezron	Obed	Eliakim	Jorim	Melchi	Josech	Amos	Heli
Jared	Cainan	Terah	Arni	Jesse	Jonam	Eliezer	Neri	Semein	Mattathias	Joseph
Enoch	Shelah	Abraham	Admin	David	Joseph	Joshua	Shealtiel	Mattathias	Joseph	Jesus

**1 Chronicles 2** <sup>1</sup> These are the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, **Judah**, Issachar, Zebulun, <sup>2</sup> Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad and Asher. <sup>3</sup> The sons of Judah were Er, Onan and Shelah; these three were born to him by Bath-shua the Canaanitess. And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, so He put him to death. <sup>4</sup> Tamar his daughter-in-law bore him **Perez** and Zerah. Judah had five sons in all. <sup>5</sup> The sons of Perez were **Hezron** and Hamul. <sup>6</sup> The sons of Zerah were Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol and Dara; five of them in all. <sup>7</sup> The son of Carmi was Achar, the troubler of Israel, who violated the ban. <sup>8</sup> The son of Ethan was Azariah. <sup>9</sup> Now the sons of Hezron, who were born to him were Jerahmeel,

**Ram** and Chelubai. <sup>10</sup> Ram became the father of **Amminadab**, and Amminadab became the father of **Nahshon**, leader of the sons of Judah; <sup>11</sup> Nahshon became the father of **Salma**, Salma became the father of **Boaz**, <sup>12</sup> Boaz became the father of **Obed**, and Obed became the father of **Jesse**; <sup>13</sup> and Jesse became the father of Eliab his firstborn, then Abinadab the second, Shimea the third, <sup>14</sup> Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, <sup>15</sup> Ozem the sixth, **David** the seventh; <sup>16</sup> and their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail.

**1 Chronicles 3** <sup>1</sup> Now these were the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: the firstborn was Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; the second was Daniel, by Abigail the Carmelitess; <sup>2</sup> the third was Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; the fourth was Adonijah the son of Haggith; <sup>3</sup> the fifth was Shephatiah, by Abital; the sixth was Ithream, by his wife Eglah. <sup>4</sup> Six were born to him in Hebron, and there he reigned seven years and six months. And in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. <sup>5</sup> These were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan and **Solomon**, four, by Bath-shua the daughter of Ammiel; <sup>6</sup> and Ibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet, <sup>7</sup> Nogah, Nepheg and Japhia, <sup>8</sup> Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet, nine. <sup>9</sup> All these were the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines; and Tamar was their sister. <sup>10</sup> Now Solomon's son was **Rehoboam**, **Abijah** was his son, **Asa** his son, **Jehoshaphat** his son, <sup>11</sup> **Joram** his son, **Ahaziah** his son, **Joash** his son, <sup>12</sup> **Amaziah** his son, **Azariah** his son, **Jotham** his son, <sup>13</sup> **Ahaz** his son, **Hezekiah** his son, **Manasseh** his son, <sup>14</sup> **Amon** his son, **Josiah** his son. <sup>15</sup> The sons of Josiah were Johanan the firstborn, and the second was **Jehoiakim**, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum. <sup>16</sup> The sons of **Jehoiakim** were **Jeconiah** his son, Zedekiah his son. <sup>17</sup> The sons of **Jeconiah**, the prisoner, were **Shealtiel** his son, <sup>18</sup> and Malchiram, **Pedaiah**, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama and Nedabiah. <sup>19</sup> The sons of Pedaiah were **Zerubbabel** and Shimei.

And the sons of **Zerubbabel** were Meshullam and Hananiah, and Shelomith was their sister; <sup>20</sup> and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah and Jushab-hesed, five.

<sup>21</sup> The sons of Hananiah were Pelatiah and Jeshaiiah, the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shecaniah. <sup>22</sup> The descendants of Shecaniah were Shemaiah, and the sons of Shemaiah: Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah and Shaphat, six. <sup>23</sup> The sons of Neariah were Elioenai, Hizkiah and Azrikam, three. <sup>24</sup> The sons of Elioenai were Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pellaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah and Anani, seven.

## **Appendix B: 'The Genealogy of the Messiah'**

**by Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum**

**November 1, 1987**

[http://www.jewsforjesus.org/publications/issues/5\\_6/genealogy](http://www.jewsforjesus.org/publications/issues/5_6/genealogy)

In 1982, *Reader's Digest* decided to make the Bible easier to read. Translators, paraphrasers and a variety of religious entrepreneurs have been providing more and more modern versions of the Bible to keep pace with our rapidly deteriorating use of the English language. *Reader's Digest* went one step further, condensing the Bible—excising what they considered "extraneous"—providing an abridged version called *The Reader's Digest Bible*.

Among the passages deemed "unnecessary" were the many genealogies. Yet, the frequency with which genealogies appear in the Scriptures is evidence of their importance. Genealogies established one's Jewishness, one's tribal identity, one's right to the priesthood and one's right to kingship.

From all the genealogies in the Hebrew Scriptures, two observations become apparent. With very rare exceptions, only the male line is traced and only men's names appear. The descendancy of women is not given and their names are only mentioned in passing. Since biblically it was the father who determined both national and tribal identity, it was reasoned that only his line was necessary.

In addition, only one line is traced from the beginning to the end of the biblical history, the line of King David. The Scriptures reveal every name before David (Adam to David) and every name after David (David to Zerubbabel). Since the Messiah was to be of the house of David, this can also be labeled as the messianic line. In fact, the genealogies limit more and more the human origin of the Messiah. As the Seed of the woman, Messiah had to come out of humanity. As the Seed of Abraham, Messiah had to come from the nation of Israel. As the Seed of Judah, he had to be of the tribe of Judah. As the Seed of David, he had to be of the family of David.

### **The Jewish Scriptures as Background to the New Covenant**

The pattern of genealogy in the Hebrew Scriptures is followed by the New Testament pattern where two genealogies are found: Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38. Of the four gospel accounts, only those two deal with the birth and early life of Jesus. Both Mark and John begin their accounts with Jesus as an adult, so it is natural that only Matthew and Luke would have a genealogy. While they both provide an account of the birth and early life of Jesus, each tells the story from a different perspective.

In Matthew, Joseph plays an active role, but Miriam (Mary) plays a passive role. Matthew records angels appearing to Joseph, but there is no record of angels appearing to Miriam. Matthew records Joseph's thoughts but nothing is recorded about Miriam's thoughts. On the other hand, Luke's Gospel tells the same story from Miriam's perspective. From the context of each Gospel, it should be very evident that the genealogy of Matthew is that of Joseph, and the genealogy of Luke is that of Miriam.

The question then raised is: Why do we need two genealogies, especially since Y'shua (Jesus) was not the real son of Joseph? A popular and common answer is: Matthew's Gospel gives the royal line, whereas Luke's Gospel gives the real line. From this concept, another theory arises. Since seemingly Joseph was the heir apparent to David's throne, and Jesus was the adopted son of Joseph, Jesus could claim the right to David's throne. On the other hand, Luke's Gospel gives the real line, showing that Y'shua himself was a descendant of David. Through Miriam, he was a member of the house of David, but he could claim the right to sit on David's throne through Joseph, the heir apparent. Actually the exact opposite is true.

### **Kingship**

To understand the need for these two genealogies, it is important to understand the two requirements for kingship in the Hebrew Scriptures. These were developed after the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon....

One was applicable to the southern Kingdom of Judah, with its capital in Jerusalem, while the other was applicable to the northern Kingdom of Israel, with its capital in Samaria. The requirement for the throne of



Judah was Davidic descendency. No one was allowed to sit on David's throne unless he was a member of the house of David. So when there was a conspiracy to do away with the house of David (Isaiah 7:5-6), God warned that any such conspiracy was doomed to failure (Isaiah 8:9-15).

The requirement for the throne of Israel was prophetic sanction or divine appointment. Anyone who attempted to rule on Samaria's throne without prophetic sanction was assassinated (1 Kings 11:26-39; 15:28-30; 16:1-4, 11-15; 21:21-29; 11 Kings 9:6-10; 10:29-31; 14 8-12).

With the background of these two biblical requirements for kingship and what is stated in the two New Testament genealogies, the question of Jesus' right to the throne of David can be resolved.

### **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 Miriam (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" Miriam): 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 Miriam'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 Miriam. The absence of Miriam's name is quite in keeping with the Jewish practices on genealogies. The Jerusalem Talmud recognized this genealogy to be that of Miriam and not Joseph and refers to Miriam as the daughter of Heli (Hagigah 2:4).

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, Miriam was a member of the house of David. But unlike Joseph, she came from David's son, Nathan, not Solomon. Miriam was a member of the house of David apart from Jeconiah. Since Jesus was Miriam'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 number of 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, Miriam; 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?

Endnote

1 A.T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels*.

Appendix C:  
Why it is NOT proper to "add up" the genealogies  
of Genesis chapter 5 and chapter 11 !

1) "Every word of God is pure; He is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.  
**Add thou not unto His words**, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Proverbs 30:5-6

a) **NO** where does the Bible "add up" the genealogies !

b) Or say to "add up" the genealogies !

c) Nor hint at how they should be "added up"!

d) Those that do so must assume that they know how the ancients did genealogies ! But, in fact they often used different rules than just a strict biological father to son lineage. See 2) below and the figure that follows.

2) The difficulties with **assuming** one knows how to "add up" the genealogies

a) **Luke adds a name**: In Luke 3:35-36 he includes a Cainan between Salah and Arphaxad. Genesis 11:12-13 includes No name between Arphaxad and Salah. Cainan is the son of Arphaxad and Shelah is the son of Cainan according to Luke; while in the Chronicle this name is not found. However, in Hebrew traditional lineage this name can be found, it is found in the Greek Septuagint Version. Why was this name not in our Bible and found in Septuagint and tradition? By some Hebrew traditions if a person died when they are very young before they have a chance to establish a name for himself, the child born to them will be known as the child of the living grandfather. This practice is shown in the book of Ruth where Ruth's son Obed is referred to as the son of Naomi. Ruth 14:7. If the son died before he established himself and legally took possession of the properties and rights as a son he would not be listed. Or if they were of bad reputation they might not be listed. Was the latter the case with Cainan?

In *The Patriarchal Age: or, the History and Religion of Mankind* (1854), George Smith writes[1]: *"It is remarkable that, notwithstanding the omission of the name of Cainan from the Hebrew text, and the consequent general rejection of him by historians, there are more traditions preserved of him than of his son Salah. The Alexandrine Chronicle derives the Samaritans from Cainan; Eustachius Antiochenus, the Saggodians; George Syncellus, the Gaspheni; Epiphanius the Cajani. Besides the particulars already mentioned, it is said Cainan was the first after the flood who invented astronomy (astrology), and that his sons made a god of him, and worshipped his image after his death. The founding of the city of Harran in Mesopotamia is also attributed to him; which, it is pretended, is so called from a son he had of that name."* -*Anc. Univ. Hist., vol. i, p. 96, note.*

Such a deletion would not be acceptable to the gentile world where actual parenthood is always counted. Many scholars have long proposed that due to the poetic similarity of Genesis chapter 5 and chapter 11 verses 10 thru 26 that only the most notable men were listed.

b) **Is Luke favoring the Septuagint translation?** If Luke is favoring the Septuagint translation that also includes Cainan then we have a problem since the Septuagint has many different numbers in the genealogies, (see the figure below.) "The Bible Knowledge Commentary" by John Walvoord and Roy Zuck reports that though Luke had relatively few direct quotations from the Old Testament, 15 times his "references and quotations...are based on the Septuagint." (The quote of 7:27 appears to be from an unknown text.)

c) **Yalad is multi-generational**: The Hebrew word "yalad" (Strong's #3205) can indicate multi-generations, thus some scholars have proposed that Genesis is using the "Patriarchal-Age" method which unless it was obvious from the text that there was a direct father-son relationship, there was instead an ancestral relationship with the named descendant being born during the year of the death of the patriarch. (see the figure below)

Following we have the usage of "begat" ("yalad") including not only the patriarch, but entire families or tribes.

"And Canaan begat ("yalad") Sidon his firstborn, and Heth,  
 And the Jebusite, and the Amorite and the Girgasite,  
 And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,  
 And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite:  
 and afterward were the families of the Cannanites spread abroad."  
 (Genesis 10:15-18)

Following we have the usage of "bare/begat" ("yalad") including 16 offspring in two generations.  
 "And sons of Gad; Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli.  
 And the sons of Asher; Jimnah, and Ishuah, and Isui, and Beriah,  
 and Serah their sister: and the sons of Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel.  
 These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter,  
 and these she bare ("yalad") unto Jacob, even sixteen souls."  
 (Genesis 46:16-18)

e) **The use of the term son is completely flexible:** Christ was the son of David, and in 1 Chron. 26:24, we read: "Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was ruler of the treasures." This was in David's time, several hundred years after Moses. Yet Gershom was the son of Moses, while Shebuel was twelve or fifteen generations from the person whose son he is said to be;

d) **Matthew skips names:** One would possibly think that Matthew in his genealogy for Christ would have copied directly from the Chronicles, but in fact in verse 1:8 there is skipped three names between Jehoram and Uzziah (Azariah) that 1 Chronicles 3:10-11 includes, that of Akaziah, Joash, and Amaziah. Affirming as "The Bible Knowledge Commentary" by Walvoord and Zuck says "Jewish reckoning did not require every name in order to satisfy a genealogy."

Sample Chronological Calculations of Birth Date - BC				
	"Ussher" Method		"Patriarchal-Age" Method	
	Masoretic	Septuagint	Masoretic	Septuagint
Adam	4004	5490	10842	12028
Seth	3874	5260	10712	11798
Enos	3769	5055	10607	11593
Cainan	3679	4865	9702	10688
Mahalaleel	3609	4695	8792	9778
Jared	3544	4530	7897	8883
Enoch	3382	4388	6935	7921
Methuselah	3317	4203	6570	7556
Lamech	3130	4016	5601	6597
Noah	2984	3828	5419	6399
Flood	2348	3228	4819	5799
Shem	2446	3326	4917	5897
Aphaxad	2346	3226	4317	5297
Cainan		3019		4762
Salah	2311	2961	3879	4302
Eber	2281	2831	3446	3842
Peleg	2247	2697	2982	3438
Reu	2217	2567	2743	3099
Serug	2185	2435	2504	2760
Nahor	2155	2305	2274	2430
Terah	2126	2126	2126	2126
Abram	1996	1996	1996	1996

Therefore, the Biblical genealogies are often formulated under rules that differ from the strict biological father to son lineage.