

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
II. Christ's Authenticating Genealogies
(Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38)

I. Introduction

- A. Genealogical records were essential in Jesus' day for proving one's Hebrew ancestry, and especially giving proof that One like Him Who claimed to be the Messiah was of David's seed and had the right to his throne.
- B. Two genealogies of Christ are given in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38, so we view them for our insight:

II. Christ's Authenticating Genealogies, Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38.

- A. In order for God to arrange for an effective genealogical record of Christ to be presented in the Gospels, in view of the religious and cultural practices of His era, several key obstacles had to be overcome (as follows):
1. Though allowed in Jesus' day, "it was not according to Jewish custom" for the "rights of inheritance" to "be transmitted through Mary to her Son, Jesus" (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 37-38). This created a hurdle to presenting Him as Mary's virgin conceived and born Son of God Who would be of David's line, for it was unlikely that she would even be named in His lineage.
 2. Also, the royal line of David through Solomon was cursed at king Jechoniah's life (Jeremiah 22:30), a curse that prohibits anyone later coming through that line as prospering on the Davidic throne. Somehow, if Jesus was to rule on David's throne, His *physical* lineage could not come through David's **royal** line.
 3. Besides, Christ's genealogical record(s), as that of any Hebrew in His era, was available in the Jerusalem temple for all of Christ's enemies to see, so these records still had to make room for Jesus to be able to rule on David's throne or His enemies could have readily discredited His entire claim to be Israel's Messiah.
- B. The genealogical records of Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38 solve each of these hurdles with precision:
1. Matthew traces David's **royal** line through Solomon and Jechoniah (Matthew 1:6-7, 11-12) down to Joseph, the husband of Jesus' mother Mary (Matthew 1:16), and then avoids stating that Joseph "begat" Jesus as occurs in all the other cases of Matthew's genealogy but asserts that Joseph was "the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus." The expression "of whom" translates the Greek word *hes*, the genitive singular **feminine** form of the pronoun *hos*, meaning "who" (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 2; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 188; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 587-589), translated "of whom . . ." This strongly points to the virgin conception and birth of Christ through Mary, and since she wed Joseph who was of David's **royal** line, Jesus by Hebrew law had the right to David's throne by His mother's marriage while escaping the curse of Jechoniah in Joseph's physical line!
 2. Luke traces David's **physical** line through David's son Nathan (Luke 3:31d,e), avoiding the curse of Jechoniah in David's royal line, but it presents Heli as being Joseph's father instead of Jacob as in the Matthew genealogy! (Luke 3:23; Matthew 1:16) This is due to Hebrew custom: "Since it was not according to Jewish custom – even though permitted – to name women in direct line of descent, the name of Mary's husband, Joseph, was substituted for hers. But Jesus' right to the throne of David" by way of physical lineage "was clearly through His mother, according to Luke's genealogy, as well as through His" presumed earthly "father Joseph," Ibid., Pentecost, p. 38. Luke's genealogy implies the virgin birth and conception of Christ by stating that He "as was supposed" to be the son of Joseph, Luke 3:23.
 3. "The fact that Jesus had throne rights through both His paternal and maternal lines would make His claim to be the Messiah very strong" in the Hebrew mind! (Ibid.)
- C. The emphases of Matthew's record and Luke's record differ, and that for intentional reasons (as follows):
1. Matthew's Gospel was written to convince Hebrews that Jesus was the Hebrew Messiah, so Matthew's genealogical record begins with Israel's patriarch Abraham and immediately mentions David, men through whom God's covenants regarding Israel were provided. (Matthew 1:1-17)
 2. Matthew named women in the genealogy contrary to Hebrew custom, and three of them were great sinners and two were foreigners, deflating the pride of fellow Hebrews to get them to trust in Christ, Ibid., p. 36.
 3. Luke's Gospel was written to Greeks (Theophilus, Luke 1:1-4), so he traced Christ's line back beyond David and Abraham to Adam, the father of the whole human race that Christ came to save! (Luke 3:23-38)

Lesson: Scripture's prophetic demands that Jesus be virgin born of David's physical line with the right to rule on David's throne while eluding the curse of David's royal line were met as clarified by Christ's genealogical records.

Application: May we rejoice that Jesus genealogically qualified to be the virgin born Son of God and the Messiah.