

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

Series: Covenant: God's Way of Relationship



Teaching Sermon: "God's Covenantal Faithfulness Part Two"
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Why all the "begats" and genealogies in Scripture? Well, they provide a unity in God's plan of redemption, a framework, cords to bind together the account of Christ. God is faithful to His Covenants, and we can see it in the genealogies. Bad kings, good kings, silence, promises of a Messiah—all were before God's vigilant eyes.

Public registries were kept meticulously. (1 Chronicles 1:9, Ezra 2) In Nehemiah 7.5 we read: "And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy." If priests could not trace their ancestry, they were put out of office! (Neh. 7:64)

Whose Son is Jesus Christ? (Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44)

Matthew chapter one lists the descendants of David who were in the royal lineage. Matthew wrote primarily to the Jews of the first century, so he establishes the genealogy of Christ terminating with: "and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." (1:16) Luke, with a more universal audience in mind, begins with Jesus, "being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli" (Luke 3:23) and traces the lineage back to Adam, "which was the son of God." (Luke 3:38)

National records were kept until the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple, and the Jewish nation in 70 A. D. No one during the time of Christ could dispute that Jesus was of the house and lineage of David as He claimed to be because it was a matter of public record. After 70 A. D. no "Messiah" could prove that he was the prophesied son of David because the plunder of Jerusalem by Titus destroyed and/or confused the records.

At the time of Christ, people looked forward to their posterity because of this high regard for their ancestry. Children were a heritage of the Lord, and the line of descent was also a heritage.

What can we note about the two genealogies given in Matthew 1 and Luke 3?

1. Women were included. Tamar conceived after prostituting herself with her father-in-law who later declared her more righteous than he (Genesis 38), Rahab was a harlot, Ruth was a Moabite, and Bathsheba was the object of David's adulterous love. God gave these women places of honor in this unprecedented act. What is your response to this?
2. Matthew leaves out several names, a common practice among Jewish genealogies, in order to have sets of fourteen. (See the omission of Simeon (cruelty) in Deut. 33 and Dan (idolatry) in Rev. 7.)

3. Matthew gives Joseph's legal descent as successor to the throne of David and Luke gives Jesus' real parentage.
4. Matthew gives the real descent of Joseph and Luke, the real descent of Mary.
5. God provides two witnesses in establishing the matter (Deut. 19:15, Job 33:14, Psalm 62:11).
6. Matthew shows the descent through David from Abraham and Luke the descent back through Abraham to Adam. (Redemption was God's design from the beginning.)

Now as we look at the lineage in Matthew, we see that the fourteenth descendant of David was a king called Jeconiah (Mt. 1:11). **God pronounced a curse on Jeconiah** which is recorded in Jeremiah 22:30:

“Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.”

This curse did not render Jeconiah childless, but it did say that none of his seven sons or their descendants could occupy the throne of David. Well, those who had the legal right to the throne were barred from occupying it by the curse placed on Jeconiah. Yet he's in the lineage! Joseph was a direct descendant of Jeconiah. He inherited the legal right to the throne but could not sit upon it because he was a direct descendant of Jeconiah. If Jesus had been the physical son of Joseph, Jesus would have been under this curse and precluded from the throne of David.

Three conditions had to be met which seemed impossible to fulfill. First, Jesus had to be a lineal descendant of David (2 Samuel 7:12). Second, He had to be the legal son of Joseph in order to inherit the right to sit upon the throne of David. Third, He could not be the physical son of Joseph or else He would come under the curse.

Jesus meets the conditions. He is not the physical son of Joseph but is the legal son. Jesus is in the lineal descent of David because Mary was a direct descendent of David, not through King Solomon, but through Nathan, another son of David. So the curse on Jeconiah did not affect Mary or her Son. Jesus was the lineal son of Mary, “the seed of David according to the flesh (Romans 1:3)” though the legal son of Joseph.

What else can we note?

1. Matthew records from Abraham, the natural father of the Jews and spiritual father of the Gentiles (Genesis 17:5, Romans 4:16, 17). Luke writes from Christ to Adam, “who was the son of God” and the father of Gentiles and Jews, all sinners alike (Romans 5:19).
2. Matthew concerns himself with the kingship of Jesus; Luke, with His humanity.

The historic Jesus is the Jesus of prophecy. “In the volume of the book, it is written of Me” (Hebrews 10:7). Jesus was born a Jew, “the glory of His people Israel” and “a light to lighten

the Gentiles.” (Luke 2:32) He came from the line of Shem (Genesis 9:26, 27; Luke 3:36), a son of Noah. The name Shem means “name” or “noteworthy.” Shem was one of the two sons who dutifully covered their father’s shame. Shem is called “the father of all the children of Eber,” from which comes the term “Hebrews.” (Genesis 10:21, Num. 24:24) The Greek word for “shem” is *sem* from which we have the word “Semites.” Anti-Semitism means “against the Semites.”

Abraham is the descendent of Shem. To Abraham, God would give promises of blessing. (Genesis 12:1-7; 17:1-8, 15-19; Galatians 3:16) Jesus is the seed of Abraham. Abraham, a Gentile from Ur of the Chaldees, becomes the first man to be a Hebrew (Gen. 14:13). Galatians 3:8 tells us: “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.”

Abraham had many sons besides Ishmael and Isaac, but God decreed that the Messiah would come through Isaac. (Genesis 26:2, 4; Romans 9:4, 5, 7; Hebrews 11:18) Isaac had Esau and Jacob, but Jesus would be “the Star out of Jacob” (Num. 24:17, 19) and the “Lion of the tribe of Judah” (Psalm 78:67, 68; Gen. 49:10; Luke 3:33; Heb. 7:14; Rev. 5:5). Judah, the fourth son of Leah, means “praise.” God honored Leah over Jacob’s beloved Rachel in having Jesus come from her. The tribal identity of Judah was not to pass until Shiloh came, Shiloh meaning “peace” or “one sent.” (Gen. 49.10)

From the tribe of Judah we come to the family of Jesse. Isaiah 11:1, 2 foretells the fact: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him.” (See Luke 3:23, 32; Romans 11:26; Luke 4:18; Rev. 2:17, 12:5.) The imagery here is of God taking a man with no standing, a mere “stump,” and engrafting new life into him. Jesse was an unknown, not the head of a royal family. God made him the father of a king. In Ruth we read: “Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel.” (Ruth 4:14)

Of Jesse’s eight sons, David was chosen. David was the youngest. David comes to dominate the New Testament with 58 occurrences. In the covenant with David, God promises:

“Thy throne shall be established forever.” (2 Samuel 7:16)

“The Lord has sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it; of the fruit of your body will I set upon your throne.” (Psalm 132:11)

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David.” (Amos 9:11)

“Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David.” (Isaiah 9:7)

“Thou Bethlehem [city of David]...out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel...For now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth.” (Micah 5:2, 4)

“In that day...the house of David shall be as God.” (Zechariah 12:8; 13:1)

What do you think of Christ? Whose son is He? “They say unto him, The son of David.” (Matthew 22:42) John will tell us that “Christ comes of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was.” (John 7:42) “For unto you is born this day in the city of David

a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11) Of Himself, Jesus says: “I am the root and offspring of David” (Revelation 22:16).

Then we come to Joseph. Matthew speaks of Joseph as the son of Jacob. Luke speaks of Joseph as the son of Heli. What is? Heli was Mary’s father. Luke does not say that Heli begat Joseph. Joseph was the actual son of Jacob, but Joseph became the son-in-law of Heli as Mary’s husband. Some conjecture that Jacob and Heli were brothers, that if Mary was an only child, she would be married to Joseph according to the law despite their being first cousins. Jesus was not the “natural” fruit of their marriage. **Jesus was the child of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit** (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:32).

“...she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 1:18) Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end...(Luke 1:30-33ff).

Today, we must look at the records, consider the facts, ask our questions, and be open enough to the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Truth to guide us into the truth of who Jesus is. Why? Because many people sought to live righteously. Many thought and think today that they are righteous enough to merit eternal life. Many people died on crosses. Some people were even raised from the dead; they came back to life. But only through Jesus does one come to the Father. Only through Jesus, the Infinite God-Man, does one have eternal life. The Holy Spirit is the Life-Maker, the Life-Producer.

Our eternal destiny rests on who Jesus Christ is. The Bible says that Jesus is the Child of the Holy Ghost. He is full of grace and truth. He has the Holy Spirit without measure. He was sent by the Father to save a people given to Him by His Father. Of these He would lose none. He alone is Savior. He alone is King of kings and Lord of lords. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Almighty. He is worthy, the Lamb who was slain. And so as we gather the facts and accept God’s invitation to “come; let us reason together,” let us seek the truth. Our lives depend on it.

“And to you and your descendants I will give the land of your sojourn--all the land of Canaan-- as an eternal possession; and I will be their God.” Genesis 17:8

“And He told me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give freely from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.” Revelation 21:6, 7.

Bibliography: Craig, Mary. “Believe in Jesus, Believe Jesus, Believe What Jesus Believes, VII” Fort Lauderdale, FL: Mary Craig Ministries, Inc., 2017.

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