

# The Two Genealogies

Almost every Christian who has read their Bible will sooner or later become aware of the differences between the two genealogies of Jesus Christ found in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke.3:23-38. Secular critics consider these differences to be evidence of the Bible contradicting itself. As a consequence, some of their unbelieving questions have provoked scholars to find suitable answers in order to satisfy and silence the voices of doubt that attack the integrity of the Word of God. In pursuing this subject I discovered just how thoroughly God has **crossed every “T” and dotted every ‘I’, or as Jesus put it, “Not one jot or tittle of the Law shall pass away to all is fulfilled.”**

Most if not all of the Church has accepted the explanation that the genealogy listed in Matthew pertains to Joseph and the genealogy listed in Luke pertains to Mary. Closer examination of both the genealogies exposes a number of mysteries that could still be unsettling for some and so with this article I hope to show how these apparent anomalies can be satisfactorily and plausibly resolved.

Here we have the genealogy from the Gospel of Matthew:

## Matthew 1:1-17 NKJV

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: 2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. 3 Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. 4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. 5 Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, 6 and Jesse begot David the king.

David the king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife* of Uriah. 7 Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. 8 Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. 9 Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. 10 Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. 11 Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. 13 Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. 14 Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. 15 Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and

Matthan begot Jacob. 16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon *are* fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ *are* fourteen generations.

And here we have the genealogy from the Gospel of Luke:

Luke 3:23-38 NKJV

Now Jesus Himself began *His ministry* at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) *the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, 24 the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Janna, the son of Joseph, 25 the son of Mattathiah, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, 26 the son of Maath, the son of Mattathiah, the son of Semei, the son of Joseph, the son of Judah, 27 the son of Joannas, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, 28 the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmodam, the son of Er, 29 the son of Jose, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, 30 the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonan, the son of Eliakim, 31 the son of Melea, the son of Menan, the son of Mattathah, the son of Nathan, the son of David, 32 the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, 33 the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, 34 the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, 35 the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, son of Shelah, 36 the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, 37 the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan, 38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*

Matthew's account of the genealogy of Joseph begins with Abraham and follows the ancestry through King David and King Solomon and ends with noting Joseph as "the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus." Matthew is writing primarily to the Jews and the genealogy he listed was to communicate to them the legal ancestry of Jesus' right to the Throne of David because He is the son of David and the seed of Abraham. Matthew uses the term "begot" to indicate a biological descendant, usually the immediate son but sometimes it can mean progeny a few generations distant. Begot also refers to the rare practice of a brother raising up a son on behalf of a childless deceased sibling and so it is more concerned with the legality of the inheritance than the specific bloodline. It therefore extends to adoptions and step children. More on that later.

**Luke's account of Mary's ancestry begins** with Jesus and goes all the way back to Adam. **We have Jesus "as was supposed" the son of Joseph.** Thereafter you will note that the words "*the son*" are in italics throughout the rest of the passage. This indicates in the NKJV that the words are added to the text by the editors for clarification. The actual original only says "of".

Luke does not use the term "begot", but the much broader term "son". While it certainly includes begotten children and progeny in general, it also includes such things as adoption, sons in law, the fact of being created and even those of like character, as in the term "sons of the devil". **Although Luke's Gospel is written primarily to the Gentiles, Luke's genealogy is according to Jewish tradition that always identified the man and rarely his wife, even when the wife's blood line is being noted. Thus Joseph is recorded as "of Heli" when that was actually Mary's father, Joseph being the son in law. Joseph's actual father was called Jacob (Matthew 1:16).** To our way of thinking, this seems rather misogynistic but in reality it was done to keep track of the inheritance according to the Law. Complicated business sorting it all out in our day.

At the time of the writing of these two genealogies, the records were available to be confirmed as the registry was kept in storage by the priesthood. The record was probably recorded when the presentation of a child was done at the temple with the offerings under the Law. Because the genealogy could have been easily verified when the Gospels were originally written, secular critics have no legitimate reason to dispute the Gospel records as it would have been simply silly for anyone to claim a direct lineage falsely when the records were so readily available. However, these temple records were all later destroyed at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD which incidentally presents a tremendous dilemma for Orthodox Jews who are now not able to give credibility to the bloodline and inheritance of any son of David, which means they could never legitimately confirm the identity of the Messiah they are waiting for. For Christians, this loss of the records leaves us leaning on the written Word of God and the witness of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

A notable difference in the two genealogies is the number of **people listed in Matthew's Gospel compared to the number listed in Luke's, particularly for the period of time from the captivity in Babylon to the time of Christ.** Critics point out that there are not enough people listed for the 500 years that this lineage covers. They also note that some of the **descendants of David are simply left out of Matthew's list when the bloodline is compared to other genealogical recordings in the Hebrew Scriptures.** Four rather wicked kings are simply omitted.

As mentioned above, the term "begot", is used in a broad manner. We can all see that Jesus is referred to as the son of David even though it is many generations later. Later in this article you will see a prophecy given to Hezekiah that speaks of sons he will beget a hundred years into the future. It appears that Matthew, perhaps for the sake of easy memorising, has limited the account of the genealogy to fourteen for each period of time and so he has left out four of the more wicked kings from his account. Likewise with the time from the captivity to Christ, all the characters are not mentioned. It appears the Jews were more interested in descent and it was not out of order for them to omit unseemly

characters from their genealogy. As we have no records covering this period of time, we can but speculate as to the reasons why certain people were skipped over.

Luke on the other hand has given a fuller record in the genealogy of Mary. But there is one thing that really does need explanation and that is the fact that both genealogies mention the same two characters: Shealtiel and Zerubbabel. And it is regarding Shealtiel and Zerubbabel that we find incredibly confusing details. In both Matthew and Luke, Shealtiel is recorded as the father of Zerubbabel, but in Chronicles we have a different character listed as father:

### **1 Chronicles 3:19 NKJV**

**The sons of Pedaiah were Zerubbabel and Shimei.**

**Here we have Pedaiah as Zerubbabel's father. To add to the confusion, Matthew 1:12** records Shealtiel as the son of Jeconiah, but Luke 3:27 lists him as the son of Neri. **And the portion of the genealogy mentioned in 1 Chronicles 3 that recorded Zerubbabel's children does not mention either of the names found in Matthew or Luke.**

Scholars have offered many attempts at reconciling those starkly different accounts in the **ancestral records. With a combination of many people's insights and some of my own analytical thinking I believe I can present a likely solution to this conundrum.**

**Let's lay out this portion of the different genealogies so you can see this easily.**

#### **Matthew's Genealogy:**

Jeconiah, Shealtiel, Zerubbabel, Abiud

#### **Luke's Genealogy:**

Neri, Shealtiel, Zerubbabel, Rhesa

#### **1 Chronicles Genealogy:**

Jeconiah, Shealtiel of whom there is no record of any children

Jeconiah, Pedaiah, Zerubbabel who had several children but neither Rhesa or Abiud are mentioned

We note with this following Scripture that Shealtiel and Pedaiah are brothers.

### **1 Chronicles 3:17-18 NKJV**

**And the sons of Jeconiah were Assir, Shealtiel his son, 18 and Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.**

**Okay, it's time to start sorting this mess out. Let's do the easy one first. With regard to Zerubbabel's children, we can easily accept the idea that the genealogy is accurate but not exhaustive so that the Chronicles account of his children is simply incomplete due to the Babylonian captivity being fraught with geopolitical turmoil. To address the other apparent contradictions we must first have a look at the historical context and also some**

prophetic statements about the descendants of David that were to be in the captivity in Babylon that have a bearing on this matter.

### 2 Kings 20:16-18 NKJV

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the Lord: 17 ‘Behold, the days are coming when all that *is* in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,’ says the Lord. 18 ‘And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’”

In fulfillment of this prophecy, a ruthless pagan king takes King Jeconiah captive. Some of his sons and perhaps he himself were going to be castrated. There would have been widows and all sorts of tragic family situations that we can but speculate on as this was a major war scene and prisoners were not treated with any regard to our present day norms concerning human rights. Note also that the sons Hezekiah will beget, are in the distant future for that prophecy was not fulfilled until about a hundred years later, which is an example of the use of the term beget.

Along with the above prophecy effecting the situation we have this excerpt from the Law of Moses which shines some light on the question about the different fathers. Most of us consider this to be a strange custom, however, God had a purpose for everything He instituted into His Law.

### Deuteronomy 25:5-6 NKJV

“If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be *married* to a stranger outside *the family*; her husband’s brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her. 6 And it shall be *that* the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

This explains why we have both Shealtiel and Pedaiiah recorded as the father of Zerubbabel. They are recorded as brothers and Pedaiiah must have had to continue the inheritance on behalf of his brother.

### Jeremiah 22:28-30

“Is this man Coniah a despised, broken idol— A vessel in which *is* no pleasure? Why are they cast out, he and his descendants, And cast into a land which they do not know? 29 O earth, earth, earth, Hear the word of the Lord! 30 Thus says the Lord: ‘Write this man down as childless, A man *who* shall not prosper in his days; For none of his descendants shall prosper,

**Sitting on the throne of David, And ruling anymore in Judah.”** (Coniah is also called *Jeconiah* and *Jehoiachin*.)

This Scripture placed a curse on the descendants of Jeconiah that prohibits them from prospering on the Throne of David. He is also written down as childless, though he clearly had a number of children. However, due to all his sons becoming eunuchs, he effectively had no progeny and so it is only an adopted son who could pass on the inheritance to the throne.

### **Jeremiah 52:31-34 NKJV**

**Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth *day* of the month, *that* Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the *first* year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison. 32 And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who *were* with him in Babylon. 33 So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the *king* all the days of his life. 34 And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king of Babylon, a portion for each day until the day of his death, all the days of his life.**

With all the above giving us a look at the historical and prophetic context, we can now present what follows as the most likely scenario. At the age of eighteen after reigning for only three months, Jeconiah is taken to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar along with his wives, mother, sons and many others (2 Kings 24:14-15). (He must have started at a young age!) After thirty seven years Nebuchadnezzar dies and his son, Evil-Merodach lets Jeconiah out of prison (2 Kings 25:27-30). We presume he finds his sons were all made eunuchs according to the prophecy given to Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:18). Seeing his family neutered and perhaps at this stage a widower, Jeconiah then marries the widow of Neri and thus adopted her sons: Shealtiel and Pedaiah, thus conveying the right to the throne to them as their progeny would sooner or later have become the only surviving heirs. Or perhaps he just took another wife as it is **noted that he already had “wives”** (2 Kings 24:15) indicating that he was that way inclined. Thus Shealtiel would have both Jeconiah and Neri as his recorded fathers with Neri being a blood descendant of David from the line of **Nathan. Note: any other bloodline sons of Jeconiah, if he had any that weren’t made eunuchs, would never be able to prosper on the Throne of David because of the curse that was upon them. Jesus could not come from that bloodline.**

Following through with this likely scenario we conclude that Shealtiel marries but dies childless. Pedaiah would then have stepped in as kinsman redeemer and taken his **brother’s wife to continue the heritage as per the Law and thus we have both Shealtiel and Pedaiah recorded as Zerubbabel’s father. The whole story of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz is another example that is typical of this custom.**

Zerubbabel has a number of children, two of which are only recorded in Matthew and Luke: Rhesa and Abiud, who begin two separate bloodlines leading to Joseph and Mary. **Because Zerubbabel is not subject to the curse on Jeconiah's actual bloodline**, both Joseph and Mary can pass the inheritance of the Throne of David to Jesus and He can prosper on it. This ensured a legal male all the way through for Joseph to **legally adopt and be Jesus'** step-father and convey the right of inheritance to the throne, whilst Mary has the actual bloodline from King David.

There is one more factor in this whole incredibly complex scenario that is added by the following prophecy which was spoken against Zedekiah. As mentioned above, he had been placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar when his nephew King Jeconiah was taken into captivity. It is to be noted that Ezekiel never called Zedekiah "king" but always referred to him as "prince", presumably because the actual king was still alive and ended up outliving him. Jeremiah also refers to Jeconiah as king of Judah when he came out of prison (Jeremiah 52:31-34). However, in this passage the Throne itself is spoken of:

### **Ezekiel 21:25-27 NKJV**

**'Now to you, O profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose iniquity shall end, 26 thus says the Lord God: "Remove the turban, and take off the crown; Nothing shall remain the same. Exalt the humble, and humble the exalted. 27 Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It shall be no longer, Until He comes whose right it is, And I will give it to Him."**

The NIV and numerous other translations render the word "overthrown" as "ruin" so that it reads as follows:

### **Ezekiel 21:27 NIV**

**A ruin! A ruin! I will make it a ruin! The crown will not be restored until he to whom it rightfully belongs shall come; to him I will give it.**

So then, whilst the curse of not prospering on the Throne of David was circumvented when the line of Nathan was joined to the kingly bloodline with the birth of Zerubbabel, this verse prohibited that restoration from happening until the coming of Messiah. Although Zerubbabel became governor of Judea when the Jews returned to the Promised Land, none of the descendants of David would ever reign as king on the Throne of David until Jesus came whose right it was and is to this day. This understanding effectively removes any claim by any other descendant of David to sit upon that Throne. The suggestion that the British Crown is presently inheriting that right is thoroughly debunked. They may indeed be descendants of King David, along with other kings and queens in Europe, but certainly not the inheritors of the Throne of David, for He whose right it is has already come and claimed it for Himself through His absolute obedience and is presently seated on that Throne on which He must reign until every power and authority is made subject to Him (1 Corinthians 15:25-28). God has absolutely and amazingly covered every single detail to fulfil both the Law and the Prophets. Hallelujah!

