



**Luke 3:23-38**

**“A Place In God’s Family”**

May 26, 2013  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

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**“Following Christ from City Center”**

		<u>CLUE (No. 7)</u>	<u>SOURCES</u>	<u>TITLES</u>
23	<b>Jesus</b>	Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being <b>THE SON</b> (as was [falsely] supposed) <b>OF JOSEPH</b> ,	Joseph(1)	11 x 7, //1 Enoch 10:12 1:5-4:15 Pre-Public Life
		the son of Heli,	(2)	<b>DIRECT CREATION, SON OF JOSEPH (Legal)</b>
24		the son of Matthat,	(3)	<b>Jesus Is The Ordered Culmination Of History</b>
	1/7	the son of Levi,	(4)	<b>Grand Interruption Before Temptation! //Mt. 1:15</b>
		the son of Melchi,	(5)	<b>Status = Lineage Based, Kinship Groups, Identity, Legitimacy</b>
		the son of Jannai,	(6)	<b>Highly Selective Reading With A Purpose</b>
		the son of <u>Joseph</u> ,	Joseph(7)	<b>Joseph Had A Family Tree, What Does It Mean?</b>
25		the son of Mattathias,	Mattathias (1)	<b>Lk. Has 36 Unknown Names</b>
		the son of Amos,	(2)	
		the son of Nahum,	(3)	
	2/7	the son of Esli,	(4)	Source Unknown: Heli → Rhesa
		the son of Naggai,	(5)	
26		the son of Maath,	(6)	
		the son of Mattathias,	Mattathias (7)	
		the son of Semein,		
	3/7	the son of Josech,		
27		the son of Joda		
		the son of Joanan,		
		the son of Rhesa,	Rhesa	
		the son of Zerubbabel, -----	-I Chronicles 3:19 (Mt. 1:12)	<b>Sons Of David By Solomon</b>
		the son of Shealtiel, -----	-I Chronicles 3:17 (Mt. 1:12)	
28		the son of Neri,	<u>Neri</u>	
		the son of Melchi,		
		the son of Addi,		
	4/7	the son of Cossam,		
		the son of Elmadam,		
29		the son of Er,		
		the son of Joshua,		
		the son of Eliezer,		
		the son of Jorim,		
		the son of Matthat,		Source Unknown: Neri → Mattatha
30		5/7 the son of <u>Levi</u> ,		
		the son of Simeon,		
		the son of Judah,		
		the son of <u>Joseph</u> ,		
		the son of Jonam,		
31		the son of Eliakim,		
		the son of Melea,		
	6/7	the son of Menna,		
		the son of Mattatha,	Mattatha	
		the son of Nathan,	<u>Nathan</u> (3 <sup>rd</sup> son: prophet?, 2 Sam. 5:14, 1 Chr. 3:5)	
32		<b>THE SON OF DAVID.</b>		<b>1:27, 2:4, SON OF DAVID (Royal)</b>
		The son of Jesse,		<b>David To Abraham (12 Names With Mt. 1:1-17)</b>
		the son of Obed,		
		the son of Boaz,		
	7/7	the son of Sala,		
		the son of Nashon,		I Chronicles 1:34-2:15, 3:5
33		the son of Aminadab,		
		the son of Admin, -----	-Unknown (added by Lk.)	
		the son of Arni, -----	-Unknown (added by Lk.)	
		the son of Hezron,		
		the son of Perez,		
34		8/7 the son of Judah,		
		the son of Jacob,		
		the son of Isaac,		
		<b>THE SON OF ABRAHAM,</b> (21 <sup>st</sup> back)	<u>Abraham</u>	<b>SON OF ABRAHAM (Jewish)</b>
	<b>Abraham</b>	the son of Terah,		<b>1 Chron. 1:1-27, Gen. 4:25-26, 5:9-32, 11:10-26</b>
	<b>Matthew 1:1-16, 17</b>	the son of Nahor,		
	(3 sets of 14 names)	the son of Serug,		
35		9/7 the son of Reu,		
		the son of Peleg,		Genesis 11:10-26
		the son of Eber,		
		the son of Shelah,		
36		the son of Cainan,		
		the son of Arphaxad,		
		the son of Shem,	<u>Arphaxad</u>	
	10/7	the son of Noah,	<u>Shem</u>	
		the son of Lamech,		
		the son of Methuselah,		
37		<b>THE SON OF ENOCH,</b> (7 <sup>th</sup> back, Jude 14)		<b>SON OF ENOCH (No Death)</b>
		the son of Jared,		
		the son of Mahaleleel,		Genesis 5:1-32
		the son of Cainan,		
38		11/7 the son of Enos,		<b>Roman Genealogies Back To Hero/God</b>
		the son of Seth,		
		the son of Adam,		
	<b>THE SON OF GOD.</b>	(Unique element)	<u>Adam</u>	<b>Jesus As New Adam: New Race, 4:3, 9</b>
			<b>SON OF GOD (First Man: Direct Creation) CONFRONTS EVIL ONE</b>	

A Brief Treatment Of Luke 3:23-38

Two of the four canonical gospels contain extensive genealogies (Matthew 1:1-17, Luke 3:23-38). Bringing them into harmony and full historical correlation is, as many scholars admit, an impossible task. The fact that the early church kept both accounts in the same canon and did not choose one over the other ought to make us leary of investing the differences with too much weight. It was common in ancient biographies to include such family trees, and for several reasons. It helped explain the hero's future by reference to his illustrious past. It was a statement about divine providence and the continuity of the divine purpose. It appealed to the ancient bias towards what was old instead of what was novel. In a world that was still largely tribal, it offered an account of roots, place, and belonging. In our world of radical, Western individualism where identity is earned through achievements, the appeal to ancestry is ignored.

Matthew's listing opens his story. We walk through a long gallery of Jewish men and a few scandalous women before we arrive at Jesus, the virgin-born Jew. He takes us from Abraham through a numerically structured reading of the highs and lows of Jewish history down to Jesus (p. 16) with the implication Christ fulfills it all. Matthew reveals the key to his structure in 1:17 in three sets of fourteen names and a clear inclusion (vv.1-2 // v.17). Luke's genealogy does not open his gospel but is placed between Jesus' baptism and wilderness temptation as a further evidence Jesus is *the Son of God*. And, since Luke does not explain the structure so explicitly, we must look for cues. Our first insight is the clear inclusion or verbal bracket in the phrase *the son of God* (v.23b // v.38d). The first and last members of the chain (Jesus, Adam) do not have biological fathers as with every other name using the formula *the son of*. If we count *Joseph* (v.23b) as the first ancestor and count back seven, we find another *Joseph* (v.24e). The list of five (Heli, Matthat, Levi, Melchi, Jannai) is bracketed by two named *Joseph* seven generations apart. Same with the second group of seven which is bounded by *Mattathias* (v.25a // v.26b). When it's noted that the luminaries (*the son of David, the son of Abraham, the son of Enoch, the son of God*) all fall in the seventh position and that David is at the center, the pattern is confirmed. Like 1 Enoch 10:12, Luke has cast Jesus theological ancestry in eleven periods of seven as a way of saying that Jesus' history is ordered by God towards a goal. Jesus begins the twelfth, final period of history. In him a new life is opened to all.

The issue of Luke's sources is disputed. At several points there are parallel sequences to Matthew, but thirty-six of the names are otherwise unknown. Here we trust Luke's preface (1:1-4) that his research was careful by ancient standards, and when we remember that such ancestry lists were more about meaning than modern precision, more resume than precise DNA sequence, we read the texts on their own terms.

Luke's presentation is distinctive. Matthew works from Abraham down to Jesus, but Luke works from Jesus past Abraham back to Adam who offers a partial type for Jesus. Since Jewish history properly begins with Abraham (Gen. 12:1 ff.), the rest are, strictly speaking, Gentiles. The work of Jesus is for both Jew and Gentile, thus even in the genealogy the agenda of Acts 1:8 is supported. Jesus comes for the whole human family; the offer of salvation- though not its appropriation- is universal. Several identity markers are alluded to in that Jesus is from King David (messianic credentials), from Abraham (Jewish credentials), from Enoch (who mysteriously went to heaven), and from Adam (God's direct creation). Jesus includes and exceeds all his famous forebears, and with him the new generation of humanity, the twelfth, begins. The one who was *son of God* by conception, by angelic and biblical prophecy, by baptismal announcement and now by genealogy is the one who will soon face down the Evil One (4:1-15) and begin the mission of freeing the long-held captives (4:16-30). Jesus is credible.



## A PLACE IN GOD’S FAMILY

“Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age...”

The time of preparation is now over; the battle commences!

LUKE 3 : 2 3

Children love to hear stories about when their parents were small. A six year old asks a forty year old, "Dad, what was it like back in *the olden days*?" If a child has grandparents, the sense of having a place in the flow of life can be pushed back through their extended memories. I loved to listen to my ninety-five year old grandmother speak about her father and grandfather who remembered when the Yankees crossed the Little Pee Dee at Gallivant's Ferry. Or the story from my mother's side about how a little Indian blood crept into the family to explain the high cheekbones of the Turner women. Or my uncle James Turner who during Prohibition was sent to McClellanville to stay with my grandfather's supposedly upright Methodist-steward brother who was then making whiskey for the Capone syndicate, and how during an inspection tour his enforcer Leggs Diamond flipped James a five-dollar gold piece across the hood of his Pierce-Arrow automobile, or so family legend has it.<sup>1</sup> Saints and the scoundrels all: they gave me a story to live inside of; they told me whence I had come. I positively relished family reunions where I would stand close enough to my uncles to hear their World War II reminiscences. B-25 tail gunners facing ME109's. Sub-mariners pinging Jap cargo ships. Heady stuff for a goofy kid.

But the very best came in the tenth grade. My father subscribed to the magazine *Civil War Illustrated*. In one issue was an article on Quantrill's raiders, a band of southern irregulars who ran amuck across Kansas murdering Republicans. Bloody Lawrence, an awful massacre, was one of their raids. In that band of rogues are some familiar names: Jesse James, Frank James, Coleman Younger, Bloody Bill Anderson, and at the end of the list of thugs a name that made my hairless fifteen-year-old chest swell with pride: John Thraikill. I said to myself, "Always

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<sup>1</sup> On Diamond, see [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack\\_Diamond\\_\(gangster\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Diamond_(gangster)).

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knew I had a little outlaw in my blood! It's why I like *Waylon and Willie* so much." I recently uncovered a dark chapter in my lineage that helps me understand a long, blank silence in my family. When the family tree is shaken, you never know what may fall to the ground or what they may be wearing, maybe a pointy red hood! That I now own the man's pistol makes me wonder what it may have been used for.

When I listen to family stories from before I was born, there's always an emotional reaction. Whether the story concerns a saint or a scoundrel is immaterial. With each story comes a firmer sense of place, that I didn't just spring out of nowhere. That is why children and the child inside each adult deposits those stories in a slot labeled *Who I Am* and another labeled *Where I Came From*. For some the history is more positive than others, as when a persistent strain of alcoholism or mental illness or suicide or abortion or inherited disease or unbelief or occult involvement runs down the family lines.<sup>2</sup> For some the history is more available than others, as when a child is adopted or when a parent dies before the larger family story are in place. Perhaps that is why so many are doing genealogies these days. They ask: Where did I come from? What is the place of my life in the passing of the generations? What tribe am I, and what larger forces shaped us along the way? And if a true hero, a first class scoundrel, or an honest saint is found, so much the better. They add splashes of color to the mundane passing of time.

Because this generation exalts youth and worships the immediate and focuses on the individual, we tend to skip over the biblical genealogies as irrelevant. We make jokes about all *the begats* in the Old Testament. Didn't have TV in those days! Occasionally you meet a Jacob, and David remains common, but who names their son Arphaxad or Zerubbabel? In fact, the widely used three year cycle of Bible readings known as *The Revised Common Lectionary* omits both Luke's and Matthew's genealogies as unworthy of reading in worship, which- when you consider that these are two of the four official biographies of Jesus- is a highly questionable decision<sup>3</sup>

"But Pastor Phil," I hear someone say, "nobody wants to read this stuff; it's boring! Give me something I can use this week!" Our pragmatism and impatience

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<sup>2</sup> For a simple treatment of generational healing, see Norma Dearing, *The Healing Touch* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen), Chapter 5, "Generational Healing," 75-96.

<sup>3</sup> *The United Methodist Book of Worship* (Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1992), 227-237 omits both genealogies for public reading. In the Roman Catholic lectionary the genealogy is buried on an Advent weekday.

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say much about us and little about those who carefully preserved such lists because they were so full of meaning. So who's right? Not us. When it comes to relevance, I frankly trust the biblical writers over our modern obsessions, which is why I prefer to preach through books of Scripture rather than jump around for a new hot topic each week. The Bible does not come to us as a list of self-help topics for successful living but as a collection of books, each of which deserves a reading.

For Luke the family tree of Jesus is important.<sup>4</sup> Luke the historian took care in his research and compilation.<sup>5</sup> He understood well that no hero in the ancient world has credibility unless you demonstrate how history was shaped for his appearing, and you do that with a genealogy. To have credibility Jesus has to come from a great and long lineup, and so at the center we find Israel's greatest monarch, King David, followed fourteen generations earlier by Abraham the first patriarch of the Jews, then back fourteen more to Enoch who walked with God so closely that when it came time to die he just went home with God, then seven back to the first man Adam who had no human father but was God's direct creation, just like the name at the other end of the long list- Jesus! Jesus was *through* Mary, legally inheriting Joseph's legacy, but *from* God and *by* the Spirit as the first man of a new creation. Jesus did not appear from nowhere out of nothing.<sup>6</sup> He did not pop into history as a fully-formed adult. He had roots, place, and belonging within the undulating rhythms of Jewish history. He had a Jewish mother and a legal Jewish father. We Gentiles are grafted like wild branches into a cultivated olive tree, but Jesus is original root stock.<sup>7</sup> The following is from Linda Chick:

“One day I sat down with my daughter and explained with pride that her

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<sup>4</sup> On the form and function of ancient Jewish genealogies, see Joseph Kelly, *The Birth of Jesus According to the Gospels* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008), 27-34; Marcus Borg & John Dominic Crossan, *The First Christmas* (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2007), Chapter 4, “Genealogy as Destiny,” 81-98.

<sup>5</sup> 1:1-4 is a formal preface that demonstrates Luke's historical intent.

<sup>6</sup> “Some ‘Docetists’ (who claim Jesus only *appeared* to be fully human) claimed Jesus was not born but simply appeared- so to speak, ‘out of thin air’” (Justo & Catherine Gonzalez, *Heretics for Armchair Theologians* (Louisville, KY: WJK., 2008), 38.

<sup>7</sup> For a treatment by a Jewish New Testament scholar, see Amy Jill-Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 2006), particularly Chapter 1, “Jesus and Judaism,” 17-52.

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grandfather was a preacher, her great-great grandfather was a preacher, and her great-great-great grandfather was a preacher. To which she replied, "Wow! We sure come from a long line of grandfathers."<sup>8</sup>

Jesus came from a long line of grandfathers and grandmothers. Because his lineage goes past Abraham to the first man Adam, we Gentiles are not afterthoughts.

We want a sound bite; Luke shoots a documentary. We want a *how-to* for the *here-and-now*; Luke turns his gaze across the ups and downs of God’s hidden hand of providence and sings *O God, Our Help In Ages Past*. In a world where many have a memory that extends back only a single generation, Luke gives us a long-haul perspective that invites us to trust God with more than our few years. This is not just a jumble of names; it’s a carefully crafted, numerically sophisticated compression of the Old Testament from Genesis to Jesus. In Jesus God provides a place for our fragmented stories to be caught up in the larger stream of God’s work. If you feel lost in this world, I have good news: there’s room for you in the genealogy of Jesus and in the family of God the Father and in the kinship of the Holy Spirit.

The list is important because of where Luke placed it. He interrupted the flow of his major source, Mark’s Gospel, and inserted this list of seventy-eight names between the story of Jesus baptism where he is acclaimed as *beloved son*<sup>9</sup> and the story of Jesus’ wilderness temptation by Satan who tests him with the taunt, *If you are the Son of God*.<sup>10</sup> Jesus is God’s Son because of his eternal pre-existence, his virginal conception, his baptismal announcement, and now by genealogy. Jesus’ identity is clear. God the Son appeared among us as a first century Jew, and he’s the only one with qualifications to do what needs to be done to bring us home.

**The Named And The Neglected**

The simplest meaning of this list is that people matter. Every human being is made in the image of God. Everyone has a heritage, and everyone has a story if we will listen. About most of the men listed here we know nothing. There are great and notables here: King David; the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Noah and

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<sup>8</sup> PreachingToday.com.

<sup>9</sup> 3:22.

<sup>10</sup> 4:3, 9.

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Enoch and Adam, and the complete other end Joseph, the legal father of Jesus. But for most we have only a name, no story. In the roster they mark a space, but behind each name is a story of birth and death and all that was in between. There are no insignificant people. God remembers the stories we have not and holds within the divine mind the details of each life, including children who never made it to birth. Books could be written about each, not because they were famous, but simply because they were all part of something larger than themselves. How great to die after an ordinary life and find out that you are in the lineage of the Messiah who is to come five hundred years hence! We do not know the depth of the meaning of our own lives. I will not know the full meaning of my life until Jesus shows it to me when I stand before him, and I am counting on a merciful retelling. In that moment I will see the long lineage from which I came and know every name and turn of events back to creation. I will see what effects my life had, how often I was protected by angels, and what was the meaning of those who met me at life's crossroads. If our God can work through all the lives listed here, then God can work through us! They bore the Messiah by lineage as his predecessors, and we bear him spiritually to the world as his followers. They prepared the way, and now we walk in the way of Jesus.

A second observation is that, for the purposes of this list, men mattered more than women. That's how it was in those days. We know a few of the wives from other places in the Bible: Eve for Adam, Sarah for Abraham, Bathsheba for David, Mary for Joseph, but none are found in the list. They are the invisible side of this genealogy, necessary but unnamed. But this has been the status of women for most of history: bearing children in pain, feeding them from their own bodies, wiping the bottoms of little boys who will one day grow up to treat them as less than equals, denied recognition in the rosters of recognition and power. In our day is that inferior status being challenged, and I am thankful for it. I count myself a biblical feminist, and the church is greatly enriched when women are welcomed into full partnership. So in one sense this genealogy is a witness not only of the grace of God working through history but also of persistent sin and of our blindness to the contribution of women. There are no daughters listed here, only sons. But God works faithfully within the sinful limits of our history; God draws straight with our crooked lines. In the church we have an opportunity to model for the world a new partnership.

One day in the kingdom beyond history we will be able to go back and fill in the women who figured in Jesus' genealogy and hear their stories. Earth is about people, about men and women, and so is God's new world! Thomas Carlyle wrote,

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“History is the essence of innumerable biographies.”<sup>11</sup> People matter. You matter. Men and women matter. Your story and the Jesus story are meant to be intertwined. You will not become what you we meant to be unless your name is added to the genealogy of faith that flows from Jesus.

### **The Genealogy Itself**

We know that painting and sculpture are art forms that carry meaning, but in our modern world we’ve lost the genealogy as an art form. It’s still common in oral cultures, but extinct in ours. Oh, we buy fake coats of arms, but we build our identities elsewhere, on money and prestige and accomplishments. But Luke’s creation is more than a list of names. It has structure and balance, even a certain beauty as the rhythmic cadences of the names are read aloud. We begin with the birth of Jesus and march back to a little clay man into whose nose God blew the breath of life. This genealogy is comprehensive. It was also written to be memorized in eleven series of sevens with King David at the center. Jesus is the beginning of a new age, the twelfth generation of humankind, and through him all must pass.

There is a message here if we are patient; for Luke’s first hearers it overflowed with meanings. Jesus is the new Adam and the beginning of a new humanity. Adam gave into the devil’s temptations; Jesus defeated them. Adam was the direct creation of God at the beginning of humanity without father or mother, and he fell into sin and death. Jesus was the direct creation of God without father but with mother, and he rose from the dead. He is from David, the king, and thus of messianic lineage. He is from Abraham, the father of all Jews, a faithful member of his people. He descends from mysterious Enoch who walked with God and was no more because God took him to heaven. David’s line, Abraham’s seed, God’s Son. Across the vast expanse of time God is working towards the day when Jesus would be born. Out of the history’s disorder God is bringing new order. Nature and history are not independent of one another or of God, for God is working through both to offer salvation to the whole human family. Jesus is the meaning of history, and all history is moving towards his vindication. God has come personally in Jesus, and that event shines its light all the way back to the beginning, tracing out a fragile human linkage across the generations. Jesus is one of us, part of our family, wrapped in our flesh and embedded in our history; nothing genuinely human is foreign to him save sin. He is also one

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<sup>11</sup> G. Curtis Jones & Paul H. Jones, *Illustrations: Stories from Life for Preaching & Teaching* (Nashville, TN: Abington, 1998), 35.

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with the Father as God the Son. We call this great event *the incarnation*, the enfleshment of God. The great German preacher Helmut Thielicke once wrote:

“Jesus Christ did not remain at base headquarters in heaven, receiving reports of suffering from below and shouting a few encouraging words to us from a safe distance. No, he left the headquarters and came down to us in the front-line trenches, right down to where we live..., where we contend with our anxieties and the feeling of emptiness and futility, where we sin and suffer guilt, where we must finally die. There is nothing he did not endure; he understands everything.”<sup>12</sup>

Jesus has the credentials to be our Savior! We moderns see a meaningless list of names because we do not understand the sophistication of an author like Luke. But when this was read to its first hearers, they understood what Luke was laying before them. Jesus is an act of God, one the Father has been preparing for from the very beginning! To miss him is to miss the meaning of history and of your own life! “He became what we are, that he might make us what he is.” So wrote the fourth century theologian Athanasius.<sup>13</sup> With Jesus the whole human family and the whole mess of history is offered a new beginning.

### **A Loaded Opening Verse**

Luke chapter 3, verse 23, “Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was [*falsely*] supposed) of Joseph.”<sup>14</sup> That is a loaded verse. Thirty was the age when Jewish men entered public service. It was when David became king,<sup>15</sup> when Joseph in Egypt received high office,<sup>16</sup> when a man was fit to

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<sup>12</sup> Edited from Calvin Miller, *The Book of Jesus* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 254.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen Gaukroger and Nick Mercer, *A-Z* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997), 79.

<sup>14</sup> “With no exception, Luke uses *nomizo* (*supposed*) to mean a false apprehension” (Luke Johnson, *Luke* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991]), 70.

<sup>15</sup> II Samuel 5:4

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 41:46.

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bear arms and serve as a priest,<sup>17</sup> and when the prophet Ezekiel was called to ministry.<sup>18</sup> Jesus was ripe. It was the right time, culturally and personally, for Jesus to leave obscurity and step into public ministry empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim his Father’s ruling presence in true words and powerful deeds.

The little parenthesis “being the son (as was [*falsely*] supposed) of Joseph” is a reminder of Jesus’ virginal conception. I believe in miracles, in signs and wonders, in a God who may interrupt, from inside or outside, the relative integrity of creation.<sup>19</sup> But I do not believe in the virginal conception of Jesus as an isolated thing in itself. As the Presbyterian preacher John Leith has written, “There could be a million virgin births without an incarnation.”<sup>20</sup> That is true. The virginal conception is *the means of the incarnation*, the chosen tool of God’s coming among us, and in it both sexes are honored, men in the maleness of Jesus and women in the femaleness of Mary. Since only women can bear children, a female savior born of woman would leave out half the human family. But God has honored both genders in the incarnation of Jesus. Without the incarnation, the virginal conception of Jesus is a mere curiosity.

Think about it. Thirty years of obscure village and family life in Nazareth. Thirty years of ordinary. Three decades of being faithful in little things like earning a living with your hands and paying creditors and forgiving debts and going to the synagogue and burying friends and staying morally pure and honoring your parents and being the oldest brother and going to Jerusalem for feasts and studying the Scriptures and living with love and integrity and prayer, all the while honoring a longing that waited for a nod from above. That is how God prepared his Son Jesus the Savior, in a hick village with common folk. Kind of like Greenwood or Cheraw! We ought to be able to grow some saints here, don’t you think? Same raw materials.

But then, beginning with the baptism, everything changed. Jesus showed up on cue and got wet, the heavens parted, the Spirit descended, the Son was announced,

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<sup>17</sup> Numbers 4:3, 47, 8:23, John 8:57.

<sup>18</sup> Ezekiel 1:1.

<sup>19</sup> For a chaste defense of both order and miracle by a world-renowned geneticist, see Francis Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Present Evidence for Belief* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> *Crisis in the Church: The Plight of Theological Education* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 29.

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power was given and the battle begun. And so Luke pauses between the blessing of the Father's from heaven and the forty day engagement with Satan to give us Jesus' family tree. Make no mistake, says Luke, this is *de man*, the one on whom history's been waiting, the one who will eventually put his lashed and beaten shoulders not only under an old rugged cross but under the full weight of this world's pain and sin and evil and death all the way back to the beginning; he will bear it into the place of death, then rise without it. So great is his sacrifice- because of who he is, and so great his resurrection- because of who he is, that the effects of his work move back in time and forward through time at the same time. Jesus is the Savior of Adam and Enoch and Abraham and David, of his momma Mary and his step-father Joseph and of any and all who responded to the grace and call of God before ever he appeared.

### **The Lineage That Counts**

I'm not looking forward to dying; I'm looking forward to something on the other side of death. For God to show me the lineage that brought the gospel my way. I want to move up the chain of witness that reached across time and space to bring the story down to me. I want to stand with my Grandmother Lida who prayed for me daily and sing "Amazing Grace." I want to move on to my Sunday School teachers from First Methodist in Cheraw, gather them in a circle as they gathered me and sing, "Jesus loves me, this I know." One by one I will thank the faithful ministers who preached the word and served the sacraments, and with them I will sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, early in the morning my song shall rise to thee."

Further up the path of faith I'll meet with John and Charles Wesley, clear up a few Methodist theological questions and sing "O for a thousand tongues to sing my great redeemers' praise." With Luther and a German chorale I will sing "A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing." Who knows through what twists and turns the trail will thread as I thank each successive link in the chain of faith? Popes and preachers, monks and minstrels, the humble and the highborn, each a vital part of the gospel genealogy that kept the great story alive and passed the baton of faith across the generations till I could lay my hand on it. And when I arrive at the ones who wrote the book, to Paul and Peter and John and James and Luke, I will thank them for the texts they gave me to preach, including the genealogies that stretched my heart and mind to new insights. We will look at one another as fellow pastors, and perhaps we will sing, "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear, what a privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer."

What will it be like to see the risen Lord? To be bathed in holy love, sins

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forgiven, to know that your heart has come home forever? What words would be better than “Crown him with many crowns, the lamb upon his throne, hark how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own. Awake my soul and sing, of him who died for thee. And hail him as the matchless king, throughout eternity.”

Then begins life with a *Capital L!* I look forward to the freedom of not having to worry about my besetting sins and the Devil’s attacks any longer. Only then will we fully be who we were created to be; each a masterpiece in a resurrection body like that of Jesus. I have a debt of gratitude to the genealogy of faithful witnesses who told the story and lived the story and passed on the story till it came to me. And by God’s grace I’m going to pass it on to as many as I can, so that when I stand before the Lord there will be a lineage of faith that flows through me. Not everyone can have biological children; but all can have spiritual children who found Christ because of our witness. I want there to be people who pass by me on their way to Jesus, who look me in the eye and say, “Your faith and witness helped keep me faithful.”

### Conclusion

Just as there is a shadow genealogy of women alongside Luke’s listing of men, so there is another list that unfolds beginning with Jesus and continues into the present. It’s growing day by day as people around the world trust Jesus as Savior and are adopted into his family. It’s open-ended. There is room for you in the family of God. You do not enter it by being born but by being born again. The family resemblance is not genetic similarity but sharing the same faith. It’s a big family, every tribe and tongue and nation under heaven. Some of you need to do it for the first time. You need to pray, “Lord Jesus, forgive my sins and make me a part of your people.” And then you need to be baptized. Others of you need to repent of neglecting the family of God and renew your membership vows to follow Christ and to support this church through your prayers, your presence, your service, your gifts, and your witness. Let’s ask God to make Main Street Church a good place for people to come home to.

And oh, by the way, two names are added to the genealogy today: Ruby Gentry and Coles D’Alessandro. They may wander; they may even leave the family if they so choose, but today the risen Jesus claims them as his own and offers them new life. The genealogy of Jesus is still growing and extending its reach to new generations. I think this is a great text to preach. I wish the church would take it more seriously.

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**The Lukan (3:23-38) And Matthean (1:1-17) Genealogies**

(Genesis 4-5, 19, 1 Chronicles 1-9; Nehemiah 7:5, 64-65; Josephus *Life*, 3-6, *Against Apion* 1.7.30-36; Diogenes Laertius, *Life Of Plato* 3.1-2; Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, Alexander 2.1)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Matthew 1:1-17</b>	<b>Luke 3:23-38</b>
Placement	Opens Gospel	Between Baptism As <i>Beloved Son</i> And Temptation As <i>Son Of God</i> . Credentials.
Direction	Abraham Down To Jesus (with history)	Jesus Back To Adam (against history)
Scope	Back To Abraham	Back Past Abraham To Adam
Grandfather	Jacob	Heli
Track	Through Solomon (David's Son)	Through Nathan
Formula	"X was the father of Y" (Verbal form) Explicative words are common	"the son of X" (Simple genitive) No explicative words
Periods	Introduction + 3 Periods of 14 + Conclusion	11 Sets of 7 Names, David At The Center
Number Of Names	42 (Abraham to Jesus)	78 total, 56 (Abraham to Jesus)
Agreements	Rare From Jesus To David Only 5 (No Biblical Texts For Either Author) From David To Abraham (Biblical texts) Share All But Two Names	Rare
Women	Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Wife of Uriah, Mary (All involved in sexual irregularities)	No Women Mentioned
Purposes	Pedigree Of Jesus The Hero Jesus Is Jew From Abraham Who Climaxes Jewish History. Jesus Is First For Jews.	Pedigree Of Jesus The Hero Who Is The Direct Creation Of God Like Adam, Head Of New Race. Jesus Is For The Whole Human Family.
Key Names	Christ, David, Abraham As Inclusions	Son of Joseph (Legal), Son of David (Royal), Son Of Abraham (Jewish), Son Of Enoch (Assumption), Adam (All humanity)
Hint At Virginal Conception	"The father of" Omitted For Joseph To Change The Pattern (1:16) At The End	"Being the son (as was falsely supposed) of Joseph" (3:23) At The Beginning
Providence	Jewish History <i>Adds Up</i> To Jesus	Jesus Is A Fresh Start For All. He Has The Credentials To Serve As Mediator And Savior. As King Of Israel, He Is Head Of The Human Race.
Significance	Jesus Does Not Have Biological But Spiritual Children Joined To His Family	The Church Has A Mission To All The Children Of Adam To Join Jesus' Family

**Key Ideas: No One Is An Island. History Has Purpose, And Is Fulfilled In Jesus. Jesus Is A Jew Whose Benefits Are For All. Jesus Is God's New Creation & Our Champion. The Biological Family Is Not Ultimate. We Must Be Grafted Into The Line Of Jesus Through Adoption. The Church Has A Universal Mission. The Issues In Life Are Larger Than Our Singular Choices. What Kind Of Legacy Will You Leave? God Knows It All. The Curse And Legacy Of Adam Are Reversed In Jesus. Nationality, Race, Social Status Are Real But Not Ultimate. Jesus Is Destiny.**

MATTHEW 1:1-17 "CLIMBING THE FAMILY TREE"

<b>1) vv.1-2 Introduction: Three Important Titles</b>		<b>Jewish Letters Function As Numbers</b>	
1	The book of the genealogy/origin ( <i>genesis</i> ) of Jesus <b>CHRIST</b> .	(1)	Genesis 2:4, 5:1: Begins With Last Person
	<b>THE SON OF DAVID</b> ( <i>daleth</i> = 4 + <i>waw</i> = 6 + <i>daleth</i> = 4 = 14),	(2)	Royal Lineage, 2 Sam. 7:2-16, 1 Chron. 17:1-14
	<b>THE SON OF ABRAHAM</b> .	(3)	Jewish Lineage: Gen. 12:1-3, 22:18, <i>All Nations</i>
<b>The Famous/Infamous; Noteworthy/Notorious/Nobodies</b>			

Linear Genealogy: Patriarchal

**2) vv.2-6 From Abraham To Highpoint In King David. DATE/SOURCE 5 ODD, RIGHTEOUS, WOMEN**

2	Miracle/Age	1. Abraham was the father of ( <i>egennesen</i> , begat) Isaac,	1800 BC	Active Initiation, Ruth 4:18-22 For Pattern
		2. and Isaac the father of Jacob,		3 Patriarchs, Jubilees 4:7-33, 8:5-9 On Wives
3		3. and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers/		<i>Brothers</i> //v.11, 12 Tribes/ All Israel,
	1/7	4. and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah <i>by Tamar</i> ( <i>Gentile</i> )	(vv.1-6a) 1) TAMAR(Canaanite 2x Widow). . Gen. 38	
		5. and Perez the father of Hezron,	I Chron. 2:1-15	(Period Of Patriarchs, Dressed As Harlot)
4		6. and Hezron the father of (A)Ram,	Ruth 4:12, 18-22	(Judah Was Her Father-in Law! Incest)
		7. and Ram the father of Amminadab,	400 Yr. Gap 1/7 & 2/7	No Women In Lk. 3:23-28
		8. and Amminadab the father of Nahshon,		Nashon , Wilderness Wanderings
		9. and Nahshon the father of Salmon,		Num. 2:3, 7:12, Ex. 6:3
5		10. and Salmon the father of Boaz <i>by Rahab</i> ( <i>Gentile</i> )	200 Yr. Gap	2) RAHAB(Conquest, Harlot)... Joshua 2,6
	2/7	11. and Boaz the father of Obed <i>by Ruth</i> ( <i>Gentile/Moabite</i> )		3) RUTH (Judges) . . . Ruth 3:6-18,4:5,13
		12. and Obed the father of Jesse,		(Foreigner, Seductress, Dt. 23:3)
6		13. and Jesse the father of		(Great-grandmother of King David)
		14. David the King (Title).	1000-960 BC	Marks A Break: Hope Is High

David Did Not Bring God's Kingdom

**3) vv.7-11 From King David To Low Point In Babylonian Exile. 4 Women: Scandal/Scorn**

7		1. And David was the father of Solomon <i>by the wife of Uriah</i> ( <i>Gentile/Hittite</i> )	4) BATHSHEBA (Monarchy)	
		2. and Solomon the father of Rehoboam,		(Adultery, Mother Solomon). . 2 Sam. 11-12
		3. and Rehoboam the father of Abijah,		(4 Women Thus Far Are All Gentiles!)
	3/7	4. and Abijah the father of Asa(ph),		Rise/Loss Of Davidic Kingship
8		5. and Asa (psalmist) the father of Jehoshaphat,		Ps. 50, 73-83
		6. and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram,	(vv.7-11)	3 Kings Between
		7. and Joram the father of ... Uzziah,	I Chron. 3:5, 10-17	Joram/Uzziah Omitted
		8. and Uzziah the father of Jotham,		For Symmetry Of Number 14
9		9. and Jotham the father of Ahaz,		
		10. and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,		
10	4/7	11. and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,		Most Evil King Of Israel, 2 Kgs. 21:1-18
		12. and Manasseh the father of Amos,		
		13. and Amos (n) the father of Josiah,	587-539 BC	
11		14. and Josiah ...the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the deportation to Babylon.		Low Point

Omission For Symmetry

End Of Davidic Dynast, How Will God Fulfill Promise?

**2') vv.12-16 From Low Point To New Highpoint In Jesus And Beyond.**

12		After the deportation to Babylon:		
		1. Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,	I Chron. 3:17-20	
		2. and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,		Last Figure With OT Evidence
13		3. and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud,		No. 3ff. differ from Luke 3:23-27
	5/7	4. and Abiud the father of Eliakim,		No Known Source For Abiud To Jacob, All Names In O.T.
		5. and Eliakim the father of Azor,		
14		6. and Azor the father of Zadok,		Genealogy Has Religious/Political Meaning
		7. and Zadok the father of Achim,		
		8. and Achim	the father of Eliud,	
15		9. and Eliud	the father of Eleazar,	
		10. and Eleazar	the father of Matthan,	
	6/7	11. and Matthan	the father of Jacob,	6 Weeks Of Years: Apocalyptic Scheme, Jesus Starts Seventh
16		12. and Jacob	the father of	Lk. 3:23 Has Heli
		13. Joseph,	<i>*the husband of Mary</i> .(*Change Pattern)	5) MARY (Irregular Birth, 1:18-25)
		<i>of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.</i>	3-4 BC	Legal, Not Physical Father, Goal Of History
	7/7	New Lineage?	14. (Seventh generation left unfinished and open ended...)	Jesus Had No Physical Offspring, Only Spiritual!

Blood Replaced By Faith, Your Named Added To The Family Of Jesus!

**1') v.17 Conclusion: Three Generational Divisions Explained. Jesus Has Credentials! Divine Timing!**

17		So all the generations from <b>ABRAHAM</b> to <b>DAVID</b> were fourteen generations, (3)		The Symmetry Indicates Divine Plan
		and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, (2)		Several Omission To Attain No. 14
		and from the deportation to Babylon to the <b>CHRIST</b> fourteen generations. (1)		Key! Beginning A New Humanity