

Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38

NIV Harmony 30-31; Loyal 9-26; Compassionate 45-50

Introduction

1. With the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, the royal succession for the throne of England has changed.
 - a. Queen Elizabeth's eldest son Charles is now King Charles III.
 - b. According to the royal family's website, "The succession to the throne is regulated not only through descent, but also by Parliamentary statute. The order of succession is the sequence of members of the Royal Family in the order in which they stand in line to the throne. . . . The Succession to the Crown Act (2013) amended the provisions of the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement to end the system of male primogeniture, under which a younger son can displace an elder daughter in the line of succession. The Act applies to those born after 28 October 2011. The Act also ended the provisions by which those who marry Roman Catholics are disqualified from the line of succession. The changes came into force in all sixteen Realms in March 2015" (<https://www.royal.uk/succession>).
 - c. Upon Charles' death/abdication, the throne will pass to his son William, the Prince of Wales.
 - d. The line after William is as follows: William's and Kate's children Prince George of Wales, Princess Charlotte of Wales (not displaced by Louis), Prince Louis of Wales, and the line continues on the royal family's website to a total of 23 names in the current line of succession.
2. Royal succession is an important topic for both Matthew and Luke.
 - a. They trace out the lineage of Jesus to establish His place both in the royal succession of King David and in the line of humanity.
 - b. There are some interesting differences in the lineages that they each provide.
 - c. We will analyze by comparison and contrast the lineages of Jesus provided by both Matthew and Luke.

A. Who was Matthew?

1. Like the other three gospels, Matthew is anonymous. The title of each gospel was added later by those who collected the gospels in the process of forming the Christian canon.
2. The author of this gospel is traditionally ascribed to be Matthew, whose Hebrew name was Levi, and who was one of Jesus' twelve disciples and later an apostle.
 - a. Matthew/Levi was a tax collector for the Romans and would have been despised by his fellow Jews.
 - b. He was called by Jesus as recorded in Mt 9:9 (cf., Mk 2:14; Lk 5:27-28).
 - c. As a disciple, he would have had eyewitness knowledge of Jesus' life and ministry.
3. Internal evidence within the book is consistent with its authorship by Matthew.
 - a. As a Hellenized Jew, Matthew would have been capable of the good Greek used to record this gospel. His Greek is better than Mark's but not quite as refined and polished as Luke's.
 - b. Matthew incorporates a large portion of Mark within his gospel.
 - 1) Some people might ask if Matthew was a disciple, why would he use a gospel written by Mark who was not a primary eyewitness?
 - 2) Mark's gospel is considered to reflect the remembrances of Peter, who was one of the inner disciples of Jesus. So, Matthew would have deferred to information provided by one of his peers who was a part of Jesus' inner circle.
 - c. There is no conclusive proof for authorship of this gospel by the Apostle Matthew, but again there is no clear reason to deny the early church tradition that he was its author.
 - d. When was Matthew's gospel written?
 - 1) Matthew was most likely written after Mark's gospel (ca. CE 64) and before CE 110 when Matthew is quoted by the early church father Ignatius.
 - 2) There are no verifiable traditions concerning when the Apostle Matthew died, which of course would give us the latest possible date for this gospel's writing.
 - 3) Some scholars believe the predictions of Jerusalem's destruction (cf., Mt 22:7, 23:37-24:40) belie the fact that this gospel was written after CE 70 when these events had occurred. However, these passages may simply be seen as prophetic oracles of Jesus delivered prior to CE 70.
 - 4) D.A. Carson surmises that any date CE 40-100 is possible. Craig Blomberg concludes that "a very slight preponderance of weight favors a date from ca. 58-69 (Craig Blomberg, *Matthew in NAC*, 41).

B. The Genealogy of Jesus in Matthew (Mt 1:1-17)

1. Analysis of Matthew's genealogy
 - a. Matthew lists a total of 40 names/generations in his genealogy of Jesus.
 - 1) There are 14 names from Abraham to David, whose reign marks the beginning of the Davidic Covenant and dynasty.
 - 2) There are 14 names from Solomon to Jeconiah, who was the king taken into captivity in Babylon.
 - 3) There are 12 names from Shealtiel, the first king after the exile, to Joseph.
 - 4) Warren Wiersbe comments, "Matthew clearly omitted some names from this genealogy. Probably he did this to give a systematic summary of three periods in Israel's history, each with fourteen generations. The numerical value of the Hebrew letters for 'David' equals fourteen. Matthew probably used this approach as a memory aid to help his readers remember this difficult list" (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Loyal*, 26).
 - b. Craig Blomberg elucidates Wiersbe point, "When one adds up the numerical values of the Hebrew consonants in (David's) name (DVD), one arrives at the number fourteen (4+6+4). This gematria, as ancient Hebrew numerical equivalents to words are termed, probably accounts for the centrality of the number fourteen in Matthew's genealogy" (Blomberg, 53).
2. Another interesting feature of Matthew's genealogy is that he lists the names of four women in addition to Mary.
 - a. Tamar, the mother of Perez and Zerah, is listed most likely due to her faithfulness in confronting Judah, her father-in-law concerning his rape of her (cf., Genesis 38).
 - b. Rahab, a Gentile prostitute from Jericho, is listed due to her allegiance to Yahweh and the help that she gave to the Israelites in taking Jericho (cf., Joshua 2-6). She became the wife of Salmon, the mother of Boaz, and the great-great-grandmother of King David.
 - c. Ruth, a Gentile from Moab, is listed due to her allegiance to Yahweh and loyalty to her mother-in-law Naomi. She became the levirate wife of Boaz, the mother of Obed, and the great-grandmother of King David (cf., Ruth 1-4).
 - d. Luke also lists Uriah's wife, whose name was, of course, Bathsheba. Bathsheba was forced to commit adultery with King David. Her first child by David died, but her second child with him became King Solomon (cf., 2 Samuel 11-12).
 - e. Generally, women were not mentioned in genealogies. Even more interesting is the fact that two of those listed were the victims of rape and two were Gentiles. God can use anyone in spite of background or circumstance of life as long as she/he follows Him in faith.
 - f. Blomberg comments, "Why are the first four of these women included? Suggestions have included viewing them as examples of sinners Jesus came to save, representative Gentiles to whom the Christian Mission would be extended, or women who had illicit marriages and/or illegitimate children. The only factor that clearly applies to all four is that suspicions of illegitimacy surrounded their sexual activity and childbearing. This suspicion of illegitimacy fits perfectly with that which surrounded Mary, which Matthew immediately takes pains to refute (vv. 18-25)" (Blomberg, 55-56).
 - g. Warren Wiersbe concludes, "This genealogy also illustrates God's wonderful grace. It is most unusual to find the names of women in Jewish genealogies, since names and inheritances came through the fathers. But in this list we find references to four women from Old Testament history . . ." (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Loyal*, 26).
3. One's family tree or genealogy was important to the Jews.
 - a. A Jewish male by his *Bar Mitzvah*, around age thirteen, would be expected to be able to recite his lineage from his father all the way back to Abraham.
 - b. Wiersbe notes, "But there were many Jewish men who could trace their family back to King David. It would take more than human pedigree to make Jesus Christ 'the Son of David' and heir to David's throne. This is why the divine heredity was so important. . . . Matthew pointed out that Joseph did not 'beget' Jesus Christ. Rather, Joseph was the 'husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.' Jesus was born of an earthly mother without the need of an earthly father. This is known as the doctrine of the virgin birth" (Wiersbe, *Be Loyal*, 26). We will come back to this important doctrine as we study Jesus' conception in Luke 1:26-38.

C. The Genealogy of Jesus in Luke (Luke 3:23-34)

1. Luke does not provide his genealogy of Jesus at the beginning of his gospel as does Matthew.
 - a. Luke does not give us a reason for this, but we can infer one from what he has written.
 - b. Charles Erdman writes, “The purpose of Matthew is to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, who, as the King of Israel, fulfills all the Old Testament prophecies. It is of the utmost importance that Jesus should be shown to be the Son of David and of Abraham and that the official genealogy citing this record should open the story and even precede the account of the nativity. Luke, however, has given the significant account of the birth and infancy and career of the great forerunner, John, because of the light these throw upon the ministry of Christ. Therefore, when the career of John has been related, when the ministry of Jesus is about to be recorded, Luke gives his genealogy to emphasize the fact that the narrative concerning John has closed and the story of the ministry of Jesus is about to begin. The genealogy is thus an artistic interlude, or an important introduction. . . . We are not followers of John but of Jesus.” (Charles Erdman, *Gospel of Luke*, 45).
2. Compare the direction/order and point of origin for of Luke’s and Matthew’s genealogies.
 - a. Matthew’s genealogy descends from Abraham to Joseph by naming “the father of” each successive person in lineage.
 - 1) Matthew lists the genealogy as an official record of royal descent from father to son.
 - 2) Blomberg notes, “. . . it is clear that Matthew has omitted several names to achieve this literary symmetry. But the verb consistently translated in the NIV “was the father” (more literally *begat*) could also mean *was the ancestor of*.
 - 3) Matthew also had a reason for starting with Abraham since his purpose was to prove that Jesus is a Jew, a true son of Abraham, in whom Abraham’s Covenant with God is fulfilled.
 - b. Luke’s genealogy ascends the family line by naming “. . . the son of . . .” back to the origin in “. . . Adam, the son of God” (Lk 3:38).
 - 1) Luke follows the family line from son to father.
 - 2) Luke started with Adam. Erdman states, Luke’s genealogy “. . . is a private document compiled from the public records with a view to fixing the attention upon the particular person whose name stands at the head of the list. This is quite in accord with the literary art of Luke, who desires at this point in the narrative to center the thought upon the supreme importance of Jesus, the Savior, of whose redeeming work he is now to write” (Erdman, 45).
 - 3) So Luke identifies that Jesus was human and could be traced in his humanity back to the origin of all humans in Adam. Luke’s purpose was to reveal that Jesus and the salvation that He came to bring belongs not just to Jews but to the whole human race.
 - 4) In pointing out Jesus’ humanity in Adam, Luke does not deny the divinity of Jesus.
 - a) Note Luke said “. . . He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, . . .” (Lk 3:23).
 - b) G. Campbell Morgan states, “To the ordinary reader that phrase may suggest that everyone supposed, in our sense of the word, that He was the son of Joseph. It means nothing of the kind. The word so rendered literally means, ‘according to law.’ Jesus was the Son, according to law, of Joseph; that is not the actual Son, but the adopted Son.” (G. Campbell Morgan, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 52).
 - c) Erdman further notes, that this statement “. . . does indicate that Jesus was reckoned as one in the great brotherhood of man, and like all his brothers, owed his origin to God; but it does not mean to deny that he also sustained to God a relationship that is absolutely unique. . . . he was the legal heir of Joseph and so the promised Son of David because of the marriage of Joseph to Mary; but he was not really the son of Joseph; he was the ‘only begotten Son’ of God” (Erdman, 46).
 - d) Morgan concludes, “Jesus was the Son of God in His human nature, as well as in the profounder and eternal sense of His Divine nature” (Morgan, 53).
 - e) Wiersbe concludes, “Both Mary and Joseph belonged to the house of David. The Old Testament prophecies indicated that the Messiah would be born of a woman (Gen. 3:15), of the seed of Abraham (Gen. 22:18), through the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10), and the family of David (2 Sam. 7:12-13). Matthew’s genealogy traced the line through Solomon, while Luke’s traced it through Nathan, another one of David’s sons. It is worth noting that Jesus Christ is the only Jew alive who can prove His claims to the throne of David! All of the other records were destroyed when the Romans took Jerusalem in AD 70” (Wiersbe, *Be Loyal*, 27).

3. When we compare Luke's genealogy with that of Matthew, we find some interesting differences. See the chart "Comparison of the Genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke" for a color-coded comparison.
 - a. The total number of names/generations listed by Matthew is 40, but Luke gives 75 names/generations. So, Luke lists 35 more names than Matthew.
 - b. Also some of the names given by Luke are different than the names given by Matthew. The two lists share only 17 names in common.
4. Compare the length of the lineages given by Matthew and Luke.
 - a. Part of the reason for their difference in length is that Luke traces Jesus' line back to Adam while Matthew stops at Abraham. This addition by Luke only accounts for 20 of the 35 additional names that he provides. Robert Stein comments, "Luke demonstrated that Jesus' lineage stemmed not only from David, from whom the Christ was to come, but also from Abraham and from Adam. Thus Jesus is the fulfillment not only of Jewish hopes and aspirations but of the hopes of the entire world. Like Adam, who was described as the son of God because of his unique relationship to God, so Jesus also is understood as possessing a unique relationship to God" (Robert Stein, *Luke* in *NAC*, 138).
 - b. Matthew and Luke agree on seventeen names: fourteen names from Abraham to David, plus Shealtiel, Zerubbabel, and Joseph, the father "so it was thought" of Jesus (Luke 3:23).
 - 1) Many of the names listed in Luke's genealogy are ". . . obtained from Gen 5:1-32; 11:10-26, and 1 Chr 1-3. Yet thirty-six names are unknown. None of the names from Jesus to Rhesa (3:23-27) are found in the OT. Nor are the names Neri, Melki, Addi, Cosam, Elmadam, and Er (3:27-28). The names Admin [or Ram] and Arni [or Hezron] (3:33)—the textual evidence is uncertain here—are not found in the OT either" (Stein, 140).
 - 2) Luke provides a different lineage from David to Zerubbabel containing 20 names versus only 14 names listed in Matthew's lineage. There are no names in common between Matthew and Luke in this part of the genealogy. A fact that we will take up shortly. As far as the total number of names, this difference in the length of the genealogy from David to Zerubbabel only accounts for 6 more additional names on Luke's list. So, we have now accounted for 26 of Luke's 35 additions.
 - 3) The final difference in number is due to the fact that Luke lists 21 names between Zerubbabel and Joseph, whereas Matthew only lists 12. Again, all of the names in these comparative sections of the two genealogies are different.
5. Investigate the differences in the actual names in each list.
 - a. There are 17 names in common between the 40 given by Matthew and the 75 given by Luke
 - b. None of the 14 names given by Matthew and the 20 names given by Luke between David and Zerubbabel agree.
 - 1) Matthew follows the line of royal succession, and Luke follows the line of actual descent which would account for both the differences in number of names and the actual names given in each list.
 - 2) Morgan clarifies, "If we compare the genealogy in Luke with that in Matthew, we find that from Abraham to David the names are the same. But in Matthew, when we reach David, the line continues through Solomon. But in Luke, when we reach David the line continues through Nathan. Jesus was born of Mary in the line from David through Nathan. Pause here for a moment and observe the beacon lights of personality; Adam, Seth, not Cain; Enoch, not Lamech; Noah; Shem, not Japheth or Ham. Abraham; Isaac, not Ishmael; Jacob, not Esau; David; Nathan, not Solomon. The Divine procedure is seen overriding and setting aside things that man makes supreme. The old law of primogeniture is ruled out when God begins to deal with men. If the firstborn son fails, he is set on one side, and another man is taken; but the line of Divine purpose continues" (Morgan, 53).
 - c. None of the 12 names given by Matthew and the 21 names given by Luke between Zerubbabel and Joseph agree.
 - 1) Matthew again follows the line of royal succession, and Luke follows the line of actual descent through Mary's lineage. This accounts for the difference in the number of names.
 - 2) Morgan shares the usual explanation for the differences in the actual names given in the two genealogies when he writes, "Now Matthew says that Joseph was the son of Jacob. Joseph was the son of Heli, by marriage with Mary; and the line here is Mary's line" (Morgan, 53).

- 3) Warren Wiersbe agrees with this common view when he states, “Genealogies were very important to the Jews, for without them they could not prove their tribal memberships or their rights to inheritances. Anyone claiming to be ‘the Son of David’ had to be able to prove it. It is generally concluded that Matthew gave our Lord’s family tree through His foster father, Joseph, while Luke gave Mary’s lineage . . .” (Wiersbe, *Be Loyal*, 25).
- 4) However, Erdman proposes an interesting alternative view when he states, “Some have attempted to explain the differences on the ground that Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph, while Luke gives that of Mary. It is probably wiser to conclude that both give the genealogy of Joseph, but Matthew traces the line of royal succession showing Jesus to be the heir of David; while Luke gives the line of actual descent. This surely accords with the purpose of Matthew who ever depicts Christ as King, and also with the purpose of Luke who is painting for us Christ as the true, the ideal Man” (Erdman, 46).

D. Questions/Thoughts for Reflection

1. Do the differences in the genealogies of Matthew and Luke still trouble you?
2. How were the purposes of Matthew and Luke different in writing the genealogies that they shared?
3. How do the differences in Matthew’s and Luke’s genealogies not detract from but bring richer detail to the lineage of Jesus?
4. Who are your spiritual ancestors?
 - a. Give thanks to God for the faithful generations preceding you.
 - b. If you are a first generation Christian, give thanks for the line leading to the one whose witness led you to a personal relationship with Jesus.
5. Who is in your spiritual lineage? You can have an impact on the lives of future generations as you faithfully share your witness and see God change lives by the power of the gospel to His glory.

Comparison of the Genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke

Matthew 1:1-17

1 This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of **Abraham**:

² Abraham was the father of **Isaac**,

Isaac the father of **Jacob**,

Jacob the father of **Judah** and his brothers,

³ Judah the father of **Perez** and Zerah, whose mother was **Tamar**,

Perez the father of **Hezron**,

Hezron the father of **Ram**,

⁴ Ram the father of **Amminadab**,

Amminadab the father of **Nahshon**,

Nahshon the father of **Salmon**,

⁵ Salmon the father of **Boaz**, whose mother was **Rahab**,

Boaz the father of **Obed**, whose mother was **Ruth**,

Obed the father of **Jesse**,

⁶ and Jesse the father of King **David**.

David was the father of **Solomon**, whose mother had been **Uriah's wife**,

⁷ Solomon the father of **Rehoboam**,

Rehoboam the father of **Abijah**,

Abijah the father of **Asa**,

⁸ Asa the father of **Jehoshaphat**,

Jehoshaphat the father of **Jehoram**,

Jehoram the father of **Uzziah**,

⁹ Uzziah the father of **Jotham**,

Jotham the father of **Ahaz**,

Ahaz the father of **Hezekiah**,

¹⁰ Hezekiah the father of **Manasseh**,

Manasseh the father of **Amon**,

Amon the father of **Josiah**,

¹¹ and Josiah the father of **Jeconiah** and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

¹² After the exile to Babylon:

Jeconiah was the father of **Shealtiel**,

Shealtiel the father of **Zerubbabel**,

¹³ Zerubbabel the father of **Abihud**,

Abihud the father of **Eliakim**,

Eliakim the father of **Azor**,

¹⁴ Azor the father of **Zadok**,

Zadok the father of **Akim**,

Akim the father of **Elihud**,

¹⁵ Elihud the father of **Eleazar**,

Eleazar the father of **Matthan**,

Matthan the father of **Jacob**,

¹⁶ and Jacob the father of **Joseph**, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

Luke 3:23-38

²³ Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of **Joseph**,

the son of **Heli**, ²⁴ the son of **Matthat**,

the son of **Levi**, the son of **Melki**,

the son of **Jannai**, the son of **Joseph**,

²⁵ the son of **Mattathias**, the son of **Amos**,

the son of **Nahum**, the son of **Esli**,

the son of **Naggai**, ²⁶ the son of **Maath**,

the son of **Mattathias**, the son of **Semein**,

the son of **Josek**, the son of **Joda**,

²⁷ the son of **Joanan**, the son of **Rhesa**,

the son of **Zerubbabel**, the son of **Shealtiel**,

the son of **Neri**, ²⁸ the son of **Melki**,

the son of **Addi**, the son of **Cosam**,

the son of **Elmadam**, the son of **Er**,

²⁹ the son of **Joshua**, 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 **Jonam**, the son of **Eliakim**,

³¹ the son of **Melea**, the son of **Menna**,

the son of **Mattatha**, 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**,

the 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 **Kenan**, ³⁸ the son of **Enosh**,

the son of **Seth**, the son of **Adam**,

the son of **God**.

Notes:

1. The two genealogies agree on the line of descent from **Abraham to David**.
2. The two genealogies show different lines of descent from **David until the exile**.
3. The lines are different again regarding the descent from **Zerubbabel to Joseph**.
4. Luke traces Jesus' lineage back to **Adam/God**, but Matthew only goes back to Abraham.
5. Note that Matthew mentions **four women** in addition to Mary in describing Jesus' lineage.