

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS Luke 3:23-38

INTRODUCTION

The Inauguration of the Lord Jesus' public ministry is Jesus' Baptism.

The baptism of Jesus is immediately followed by the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness by Satan
→ Matthew and Mark

But Luke interrupts the flow in his gospel. He chooses to place something in between the baptism and temptation. It's not a record of a dialogue the other gospel authors don't record. It's not like John's record in between the **temptation** and Jesus leaving **Judea** to go to **Galilee** where he inserts the first followers, miracle, and cleansing.

It's also not a short interruption. It comprises 16 verses between the baptism and the temptation. It comprises 16 verses and 4000 years of history! What is it that Luke inserts? A Genealogy 😊

Machen – “*Vastly more important than all questions with regard to methods of preaching is the root question as to what it is that shall be preached.*” Topics? Stories? Jokes? Opinions? No – the Word of God.

We are as the apostle Paul:

1 Cor 1:22-23 – “Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; ²³but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness,”

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| Now, this is my favorite kind of passage to preach, a genealogy, the list of names at end of epistle – greetings to Peter, Paul, and Mary. There is so much rich history behind them. |
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All the elements of a captivating, gripping, fascinating story:

- Scandal and redemption
- The heights of dignity, the depths of depravity
- Deep theological themes: humanity, deity, sovereignty

Consider, for example, the question: Are Genesis chapters 1-11 important?

- 2 full chapters are devoted to genealogies (5 and 10)
- 2 other chapters have significant genealogies (4 and 11)
- In fact, all of Genesis is outlined with 10 **tAdl.At** (*toledoth*)

There is big business today about ancestry – a newfound interest among Americans to found out from whence they came.

Most teenagers don't really care about the past. They are just glad they have one. (My children are an exception.)

Illustration – Now, we are not like the Millennial who comes inside with a telephone directory he picked up in the driveway – “Mom! Dad! I found something very strange! Someone left this big book full of numbers and names on our driveway. What could this possibly mean? ☺

In the Ancient World → A provable ancestry was necessary for: credibility, treasury (inheritance), clergy, royalty (throne)

Illustration – Famous rabbi Hillel was able to prove his ancestry back to David by the fastidious records kept by the nation of Israel.

Now, besides the fascinating history and scintillating drama

→ What is God communicating to us here??

→ Why did God through Luke place this genealogy between baptism and temptation????

READ Luke 3:23-38

Including **Jesus** and **Joseph** at the beginning, and **God** at the end
→ there are 77 names. At least 36 of these men are completely unknown except for this passage of Scripture.

Proposition: There is no distinction in the text from Eli forward. It is the exact same pattern all the way through 75 of the names. So, I draw the outline from notoriety of certain key names and understanding of the history: **4 Epochs:**

- I. Jesus to Exile
- II. Exile to David
- III. David to Abraham
- IV. Abraham to Adam

So That: We see gospel themes: Sin and depravity, God and holiness, Christ and redemption.

This sermon will be different than most.

It will be a combination history class and drama class.

1st Epoch, ...

I. From Jesus to Exile 3:23-27

Point – The first name is the name above all names ...

Proof – “^{23a}**And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself**”
Emphatic → why? Connects with what we have seen before: **1:31; 2:21; 2:27; 2:43; 2:52; 3:21**

“^{23b}**was about thirty years of age,**”

This was a recognized age for acceptance into service.

- Prime Minister: Gen 41:46 – “Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh,”
- King: 2 Sam 5:4 – “David was thirty years old when he became king”
- Levitical Priesthood: Num 4:47 – “from thirty years and upward ... everyone who could enter to do the work of service.”
- Prophet- Ezek 1:1 “Now it came about in the thirtieth year”

“^{23c}**being supposedly *the son of Joseph,***” – Interesting beginning!
The word ‘supposedly’ means to think, presume
→ **Matt 5:17** – “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.”

Not biological → virgin birth – only appearance of the word **son** in this entire passage in original Greek. After this, every *son* is in italics → “^{23d}**the son of Eli,**” – literally “of Eli ... of Mattat ...”

This is a good place to make a comparison with the other genealogy in the New Testament → Matthew

And right at the beginning, we notice something interesting. Matthew lists Jesus’ grandfather as **Jacob** (Matt 1:16).
→ Not a problem. Everybody has 2 grandfathers ☺

Matthew traces the genealogy of Joseph.
Luke traces the genealogy of Mary.

Luke moves around Joseph, to the first male biological connection, Jesus’ grandfather and Mary’s father → **Eli**
→ Mary is called the daughter of Eli in the Talmud

Matthew uses “x begat (or fathered) y” - for example, ‘Abraham fathered Isaac’ - more definite for Joseph
Luke uses “son of y” → more vague for Mary

Matthew traces his Genealogy through David’s son **Solomon**, whereas Luke goes through David’s son **Nathan**.

Luke’s gospel is all about Mary. Joseph is absent. He doesn’t say anything or do anything. Matthew has Gabriel talking to Joseph and Joseph talking. So, the genealogies fit perfectly.

Jesus to David → different lists of names

David to Abraham → same list of names

Abraham to Adam to God → only Luke. Matthew stops at Abraham.

Matthew gives the genealogy then the birth narrative.

God begins the New Testament with a genealogy.

Luke gives the birth narrative then the genealogy.

Matthew begins with Abraham and goes forward to Jesus.

Luke works back from Jesus to Abraham and then all the way to Adam and to God himself. Why is this??

Matthew is writing primarily to Jewish believers, so he starts with Abraham because he is establishing right at the beginning of his gospel the credibility and the genealogy from the father of the Jewish nation.

Luke is writing primarily to Gentile believers, so he goes all the way back to the father of humanity, Adam, and then to God.

Luke starts with Jesus and goes backward → because he's already introduced us to Jesus and is building the base of credibility afterwards.

Remember, Luke was a companion of Paul. Paul was the singular apostle to the Gentiles. And Luke himself is a Gentile! Genealogies are important.

→ Lists of names in the epistles are important!

This is how we know Luke is a Gentile → from the list of names at the end of Paul's letter to the Colossians.

6 Men with Paul in Rome when he writes to the church in Colossae (Col 4:10-14). He lists first 3 Jews: Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus Justus and he calls them in **Col 4:11** – “these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision.” Then he lists 3 Gentiles: Epaphras, Luke, and Demas → it is very clear that Luke is a Gentile

Matthew, the consummate Jewish man, is writing primarily to Jews.

Luke, the consummate Gentile, is writing primarily to Gentiles.

This fits beautifully with Luke's emphasis we have already seen on the universality of the Gospel—it is open to all men.

Angel-2:10 and Simeon - **2:31-32!**

Matthew's focus is Jesus' ethnicity

Luke's focus is Jesus' humanity

Jesus is not just a son of Abraham. He is a son of Adam. His **humanity**, not His **ethnicity**, is the crucial thing for Luke's purpose. So, Luke continuing his genealogy from Abraham to Adam to God makes perfect sense.

Matthew gives His legal genealogy (through Joseph) and

Matthew gives His natural genealogy (through Mary)

One last point of differentiation:

Whereas Matthew's genealogy has **41 names**, Luke's has **77**.

- Matthew's genealogy covers about 2100 years.
- Luke's covers about 4000 years.

This is the longest genealogy ever, anywhere.

It covers 2/3 of the Age of Creation, the Age of the Universe.

“²⁴**the son of Matthat** ... ²⁷**the son of Rhesa**,”

From **Matthat** in v. 24 to **Rhesa** in v. 27 → only mention of these men in all of Scripture or anywhere else (**17 Unknown**)

“^{27b}**the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri**,” – 2 leaders of post-exilic Israel (**2 Known**)

“**Zerubbabel**” – was the head of Judah during the return from Babylonian Captivity in the first year of Cyrus.

These are the only 2 men common in both Luke's and Matthew's genealogies.

In **1 Chr 3:19**, **Zerubbabel** is the son of Pedaiah and the nephew of **Shealtiel**. Likely **Shealtiel** adopted his nephew as his heir because he had no sons.

Luke – “**Shealtiel, the son of Neri,**” → probable other adoption
Matthew – “to Jeconiah was born Shealtiel;”

Haggai and **Zechariah** ministered in connection with the first stage of the restoration → to rebuild the Temple, 520 B.C.

Hag 2:6-9, 20-23 → **Rev 5:1-5** “seal” → “signet ring” - the promise to Zerubbabel – one of the threads that weaves through this genealogy is the sovereign election of God and His faithfulness to fulfill His promises

2nd Epoch, ...

II. From Exile to David 3:28-31

Point – **18 more unknown** ... then **2 names that are known**
Familiar names, but not familiar people ... until the end

Point – There are skeletons rattling around in the royal closet.

→ Incest, prostitutes, adultery, murder, moon worship, etc...
stories that would make a black mark on a piece of coal. This is the Word of God and he gives us an accurate picture of the frailty of man through whom He would bring the Messiah.

“²⁸**the son of Melchi ... the son of Nathan, the son of David,**”

David – **2 Sam 7:8-14a** –the elements of God’s promise to Israel is **Name** (Tower of Babel),

Place (Land – Abraham), **Rest** (Noah), **Throne** (Judah)

Gabriel → **1:32** – “the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;”

Zacharias → **1:69** – “has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant”

Nathan – who is Nathan?

Older brother of Solomon → **2 Sam 5:14** – “Now these are the names of those who were born to him (David) in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, **Nathan, Solomon,**”

Matthew has the line coming through Solomon → Joseph
Luke has the line coming through **Nathan** → Mary
But ... who was their mother??? **Bathsheba**
→ Reminder of King David's great sins (adultery, murder)

3rd Epoch, ...

III. From David to Abraham 3:32-34

Point – Same list is Matthew, familiar names ... **Election!**

Proof – “³²the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, ³³the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, ^{34a}the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham,”

Jesse – 1 Sam 16:1-12 (1, 7, 10, 12) – **Election** – God's sovereign choice of David jumps out at us

Matthew includes 4 women: **Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba**

Obed – (his mother was **Ruth**, by Boaz)

Ruth was not an Israelite. She lived in Moab, which is east of the land of Israel, across the Dead Sea in a barren desert area.
Ruth 1:22 – “Ruth the Moabitess”

A woman who was under the death curse of God on the pagan idol-worshiping enemies of Israel.

Ruth made her decision when all God's providences seemed against her: Death reigned in her family. Her possibly one Christian witness, her mother-in-law, was given over to depression and hopelessness. But Ruth was a woman of tremendous faith. She was the great-grandmother of King David and 1 of 2 woman in Scripture with a book named after her.

Point - In the worst of all times—the period of the Judges—God quietly moved in the tragedies of a single family to prepare the way for the King of Kings.

Proof - 2:3 – “So she departed and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.” – literally “her happening happened upon her”

The providence overrides the situation as **Ruth** “happens” to come to the field belonging to **Boaz** who “happens” to be a candidate for **kinsman-redeemer**.

Boaz – (mother is **Rahab**, by Salmon) – **Josh 2** → she was a prostitute.

James 2:25 – “was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?”

Rahab is commended for hiding the Israelite spies, caring for their needs, and sending their pursuers, the enemies of God, in a different direction. She recognized the truth of God in Israel and demonstrated her faith in the God of Israel

Perez – **Gen 38:27-30** (his mother was **Tamar**, by Judah) – again election

Judah – **Gen 49:10** – Shiloh is the true King of Judah.
→ Shiloh is a messianic title of our Lord Jesus.

Jacob, Isaac, Abraham – Abram doesn’t seek God. God seeks Abram.
→ God came to Abram when he was just like the rest of the moon worshipping pagans in Ur: not seeking God, serving and worshipping idols, seeking to make a name for himself. → And God saves him.

4th Epoch, ...

IV. From Abraham to Adam/God 3:35-38

Proof – “^{34a}the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,³⁵ the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Heber, 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 Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan,³⁸ the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.”

Shem – Gen 9:26-27a – “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. ²⁷May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem;”

Japheth is the oldest – Election → **Shem** is set apart – mentions hwyw in Shem only;

Noah – Gen 5:29a – “Now he called his name Noah, saying, ‘This one shall give us rest’” Continuity → **Noah** and **David**
Illustration– Heb 4:1-11

Enoch – Gen 5:5-20 – death takes over → like walking through a cemetery → 8 times we read “and he died ... and he died ... and he died ...” → Shining Light of Hope in the funeral parade of chapter 5 → **Enoch escaped death**

In the middle of the march of death in Genesis 5
→ Enoch lived in obedience and fellowship with God.
And God overruled death for him.

Seth – Gen 4:25 – “Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, *she said*, ‘God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel; for Cain killed him.’”

“**Seth**” (tve) – “**appointed**” (tyvi) – by God in the place of Abel

Firstborn Replacements: **Nathan**, not Solomon; **Perez**, not Zerah; **Judah**, not Reuben; **Jacob**, not Esau; **Isaac**, not Ishmael; **Shem**, not Japheth or Ham. **Enoch**, not Lamech; **Seth**, not Cain.

Adam – Adam fell and an avalanche of sin was loosed that never stopped. He pulled a stone and discovered a fatal rock slide that buried all humanity in the dirt and rubble of sin.

This is not a list of bluebloods, not a list of social elites.
God has pulled together a rogue's gallery.

Can a prostitute go to heaven? Can an adulterer go to heaven?
Can a murderer go to heaven? Can a liar go to heaven?

Yes, if there is repentance.

God – we are reminded at the very end of the genealogy of the Divine origin of the human race

→ Baptism of Jesus – At the very beginning of His ministry
→ He who is without sin identified Himself with sinners
... He identified Himself with sinners like you and me.

He stood where we sinners stand, receives what we deserve,
and give us life and adoption into the family of God.

3:22 – “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.”

CONCLUSION

So, why did Luke insert the genealogy here between the baptism and temptation of Jesus, which Matthew and Mark put together?

→ This is God weaving a thread through the tapestry of human history.
Matthew – King, Mark – Servant, Luke – Man, John – God

But it is not merely His humanity → He is the 2nd Adam

Part of the reason why Luke goes all the way to Adam and then to God is to show that Christ is the 2nd Adam.

The apostle Paul connection as well – **Romans 5:12-19**

→ The 1st Adam was tempted once in paradise and failed.
→ The 2nd Adam, was tested three times in the wilderness, after fasting for 40 days, and was victorious.

→ The 1st Adam turned the garden into wilderness.
→ The 2nd Adam begins the work of replanting the wilderness to turn into a garden – Paradise Restored/Regained

Gen 5:1 – “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.” → 1st mention of “book” in Old Testament → 1st Adam
Matt 1:1 – “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” → 1st mention of “book” in New Testament → Last Adam

Beloved, He is our Redeemer. All those threads of the Gospel, all those demonstrations of the mercies of God, all of those manifestations of the sovereign plan of God unfolding is for His glory, and for you blessing and your joy.