

## Extra Study Teen Lesson 7

Age 12 and Baptism — Luke 2:41–3:38 and Matthew 3:13-17

### Jesus' Pedigree

After the account of Jesus' baptism in Luke, there is a list of His genealogy - His ancestry (Luke 3:23-38). You might find it interesting and helpful to read through this - and the genealogy in Matthew 1:1-17 - in some of your own study time.

When you read through these genealogies you'll discover that they aren't exactly the same and that there seems to be a contradiction between the two. Luke 3:23 says that Joseph is the son of Heli, but Matthew 1:16 says that Jacob is his father! We all know that it's not possible for both Heli and Jacob to be Joseph's father, so what does this mean?<sup>1</sup>

Well, there are several explanations, but the commonly accepted one is that Matthew is explaining the LEGAL descent of Jesus through His stepfather, Joseph, whereas Luke is listing the ACTUAL descent through His mother, Mary, who was the DAUGHTER of Heli. This means that there is really no contradiction between the two genealogies at all. Luke 3:23 is simply saying that Jesus was the (supposed) son of Joseph, but the GRANDSON of Heli (Mary's father), who was the son of Matthat and so on (listing the rest of Mary's ancestors).

You will notice that both Mary and Joseph were descendants of David, but that Matthew traces Joseph's genealogy back to Abraham, and Luke traces Mary's genealogy back to Adam. There is a good reason for this. Matthew wrote his gospel to the Jews, so to explain Christ to them, he showed the link between Jesus and Abraham, their "father" or ancestor (see Luke 1:73; John 8:31-33, 39). Luke was writing to the Gentiles, so to make the point that Jesus would be the Saviour of all people - including the Gentiles - he showed the link between Jesus and Adam, who was the ancestor of all mankind.

Both of these genealogies also reflect the fact that Joseph was not the father of Jesus, but that Jesus was the Son of God. Matthew explains that Joseph was the HUSBAND of Mary (rather than calling him the father of Jesus, see Matthew 1:16), before going on to give a fuller explanation of Jesus' miraculous conception and birth (verses 18-24). In Luke's account, the genealogy comes right AFTER Jesus' baptism where God HIMSELF has called Jesus His Son! So that explains why Luke wrote that

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<sup>1</sup> Information about this and the other material in this Extra Study was gathered from several sources, including *The Life Application Bible* and the *Jewish New Testament Commentary*.

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Joseph is the "supposed" father of Jesus - in other words, NOT the real father even though that's what people might think.

You might also be wondering why these genealogies were written - especially as they seem quite boring to read! But they are actually quite important because they show that Christ fulfilled the Old Testament promises (and prophecies) of the coming Saviour - or Messiah (Acts 13:23). For example, Jesus WAS a descendant of Abraham (Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:16), Jacob (Numbers 24:17), Judah (Genesis 49:10), Jesse (Isaiah 11:1), David and Solomon (2 Samuel 7:13) - just as the prophecies said He would be!

Another thing that might help as you read these genealogies is this quote from the Life Application Bible Notes on Matthew 1:1-17.

"... In the first 17 verses we meet 46 people whose lifetimes span 2,000 years. All were ancestors of Jesus, but they varied considerably in personality, spirituality, and experience. Some were heroes of faith - like Abraham, Isaac, Ruth, and David. Some had shady reputations - like Rahab and Tamar. Many were very ordinary - like Hezron, Ram, Nahshon, and Akim. And others were evil - like Manasseh and Abijah. God's work in history is not limited by human failures or sins, and he works through ordinary people. Just as God used all kinds of people to bring his Son into the world, he uses all kinds today to accomplish his will. And God wants to use you [too]...."

When you read these words, hopefully it will make the list of names in these genealogies come alive! Especially if you consider what you know about God's Plan.

God wants you to be in His family and He is working toward that end even now. He has an important job for each of you to do in His Kingdom, but even before that time, God wants you to be a part of the Work that He is doing on this earth! It doesn't matter who you are, or how old you are, or what mistakes you make along the way (although we hope there won't be too many), if you love God and are trying your best to live His way of life, then God will be able to use you to help other people and to accomplish His will - just as He used the people you'll read about in these genealogies!