The Prophecies of Jesus

Jeremiah 33:15

Lesson 5

1. Hello. My name is Ken Samuel, and this is the fifth part of an eleven-part series on the prophecies of Jesus that was originally created by Stephen Katz of Jews for Jesus. Today, we are going to study the genealogy of Jesus Christ to show that he fulfilled the prophesy in Jeremiah 33. <click>
2. So, here’s what Jeremiah 33:14-16 says: “‘“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah. In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior.”’” <click> Now the word “branch” in this context means “descendant.” A branch in a tree is a descendent in a family tree. <click> David refers to King David, the second king of Israel. <click> And “he” is the Messiah, as you can see from the context below. One of the prophesies of the Messiah is that he will bring peace to the borders of Israel. So, in order for Jesus to have been the Messiah, he must have been a descendant of King David. <click>
3. So, Matthew and Luke both told us that Jesus was a descendant of King David by listing his ancestors. Luke 3 says, “… [Jesus] was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli, ... the son of David, ...” and Matthew chapter 1 says, “... And Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, ..., the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.” As you can see, I like to use ellipses to cut away everything except what I want to focus on. The important thing here is that both gospel writers listed David as one of the ancestors of Jesus to show that he qualifies to be the Messiah. <click>
4. Well, the anti-missionaries disagree with that. Here I used ellipses to focus on different parts of the two genealogies. The first passage is still from Luke 3, and the second one from Matthew 1. <click>
5. The anti-missionaries note that Luke claimed that Jesus was a son of Joseph, but then that conflicts with Christian theology, which says Jesus had no human father. So, calling Joseph his father is a contradiction with what Luke said only two chapters earlier: <click> “The angel answered, ‘The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.’” <click>
6. Meanwhile, according to Matthew, Jesus was the son of Mary, so unless Mary was Joseph’s daughter, which is inconceivable, Joseph was not even one of Jesus’ ancestors, so there was no point in climbing down Joseph’s branch as Matthew just did. And even if Mary was on the Davidic line to Jesus, that wouldn’t qualify him to be the Messiah, because the kingship is passed through men, and Mary was not a man. <click>
7. In addition, Luke chose Nathan instead of Solomon as David’s son, and Nathan was not a king. <click>
8. Also, Matthew and Luke disagreed on the name of Joseph’s father. Luke said it was Heli, but Matthew claimed it was Jacob. <click>
9. And Luke included this caveat, “so it was thought.” Though that’s not really important, it is telling. <click>
10. Now there are other problems with the ancestor lists provided by Matthew and Luke. If we compare the family line in the Old Testament shown in the column on the left, with Luke’s family line, shown in the rightmost column, we see that the first twenty generations match up perfectly, *except* Luke created a person named Cainan. <click>
11. Luke said, “the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad.” So, he inserted Cainan between Shelah and Arphaxad. However, the Old Testament says that Arphaxad was the father of Shelah in two different chapters of Genesis and also in I Chronicles. “Arphaxad was the father of Shelah.” “When Arphaxad had lived 35 years, he became the father of Shelah.” “Arphaxad was the father of Shelah.” And, by the way, you can’t find the name “Cainan” spelled that way anywhere else in the entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments. <click>
12. In this table, Matthew’s genealogy is on the left, Luke’s is on the right, and the combination of genealogies in the Old Testament is between them. <click>
13. While Luke felt free to create a name, Matthew deleted names. Comparing Matthew’s genealogy with the ones in the Old Testament, we see that Matthew skipped four of the kings, Ahaziah, Jehoash, Amaziah, and Jehoiakim. <click>
14. And as we turn to Luke’s list, we see another problem. Two of David’s sons are shown in row 35, Solomon and Nathan. Solomon was king of Israel, but Luke’s list has Solomon’s brother, Nathan, instead. And, unsurprisingly, Nathan’s line is vastly different from Solomon’s line. In fact, there are about twenty names on Luke’s list that don’t appear anywhere else in the Bible. <click> Interestingly, if you look at rows 41 through 44 of the last column there are four sons of Jacob: Joseph, Judah, Simeon, and Levi. It seems that, when Luke was making up names, he encountered a lapse of creativity. <click>
15. So, as I said, of David’s many sons, Luke chose to follow Nathan’s branch. But I Kings and I Chronicles promised that the Messiah would be a descendant of Solomon, not Nathan. “I will establish Solomon’s royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, ‘You shall never fail to have a successor on the throne of Israel.’” “‘I will establish Solomon’s kingdom forever…’” <click> Without Solomon, Luke’s genealogy fails to satisfy these two prophesies. <click>
16. Now let’s look at the problems at the very bottom of the family tree. In this table the first column is Luke’s, and the second and third columns both represent Matthew’s genealogy. <click>
17. First, who was Joseph’s father? Luke said it was Heli, while Matthew said that it was Jacob. <click>
18. Luke stated that Joseph was the father of Jesus while Matthew said Mary was the mother of Jesus. So, they chose different parents. <click>
19. And Matthew did something very strange. He said that Mary was the mother of Jesus, after presenting <click>
20. *Joseph’s* line instead of Mary’s. I’ll give you a few moments to absorb that, since it’s so hard to believe. <click>
21. Now, neither genealogy proves that Jesus could have been the Messiah. <click> Being the son of Joseph doesn’t matter, because Joseph was not Jesus’ biological father. He was Jesus’ adopted father. And there’s no precedent for kingship to pass to an adopted son. <click> Also, the line of kings follows *men*, not women, as Jeremiah 33:17 wrote: “‘For this is what the Lord says: "David will never fail to have a *man* to sit on the throne of Israel, …’”” Note that this verse immediately follows the verses that we’re studying. So a woman cannot be a ruler of Judah. <click>
22. Okay. The anti-missionaries made a lot of arguments. Can the missionaries rebut all of them? <click> The anti-missionaries say that the fact that Joseph adopted Jesus is irrelevant for the purpose of showing that Jesus is a descendant of David, because the line of kings goes through genetic children, not adopted children. Well, the missionaries retort, the Bible doesn’t say the line of kings *can’t* go through an adoption. <click> And the anti-missionaries argue that it doesn’t matter if Mary is an ancestor of Jesus, because women cannot be rulers of Judah. “Oh really?” say the missionaries. Let’s look at II Kings chapter 11. “When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family. But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram and sister of Ahaziah, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the royal princes, who were about to be murdered. She put him and his nurse in a bedroom to hide him from Athaliah; so, he was not killed. He remained hidden with his nurse at the temple of the Lord for six years while Athaliah ruled the land.” So, little known fact, Judah did have a queen… for six years. <click>
23. The anti-missionaries complain because Matthew skipped four of the kings of Judah. Actually, it is not uncommon for the Bible to skip generations in a genealogical line. This is called telescoping. Maybe Matthew skipped those four kings, because they were particularly wicked. <click>
24. If the anti-missionaries want to claim that the missionaries made up the idea of telescoping with no evidence outside of the New Testament, well, telescoping is in the Old Testament too. For example, compare the genealogies in I Chronicles 6 and Ezra 7. We see that Ezra skipped six generations. <click>
25. We don’t know about telescoping now, because we usually don’t talk about long genealogies. Most people today don’t even know the names of their great great grandparents. But tradition says that, in ancient Israel and Judah, the priests kept all of the genealogies in the temple so people could remember them. This is because <click> a person’s name is a representation of that person. Anything you said about a person’s name you were saying about that person. That’s why the Bible says things like “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” and “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.” And today, we still have the expression, “Give him a good name.” As long as a person’s name was remembered, they were still alive in some sense. And it’s the reason that, in ancient times, people’s names included their ancestors, as we see in Matthew and Luke’s genealogies. <click>
26. So, for this reason, there’s a strange law in Leviticus that kept a man’s name alive even if he didn’t have a son. “If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband’s brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.” This is called levirate marriage. <click> This may explain how Joseph had two fathers, Jacob and Heli. Perhaps Jacob died without a son, so his brother Heli married his wife and conceived Joseph with her. Or maybe Heli died without a son, so his brother Jacob married his wife and conceived Joseph with her. Either way, Joseph would have been known as Joseph son of Jacob *and* Joseph son of Heli. He would have answered to either name. <click>
27. Telescoping can explain how Cainan could be a real person who was completely deleted from the Old Testament. And there is some evidence that Cainan was particularly wicked. However, Cainan *is* in the Septuagint. The Septuagint is the Greek version of the Old Testament that was created by *Jewish* translators. And those Jews decided to put Cainan back in. Here we see Cainan, underlined, in both of the verses of Genesis that the anti-missionaries showed us. And, as for the I Chronicles verse, well that verse is missing in the Septuagint. <click>
28. I have an idea of how levirate marriage might explain how Matthew and Luke could choose different sons of David, Solomon and Nathan. Now remember the problem. By choosing David’s son Nathan instead of Solomon, Solomon is not part of Luke’s genealogy. So, since the prophesies say that the Messiah would be a descendant of Solomon, Luke’s genealogy is irrelevant for proving that Jesus could be the Messiah. Now I’m going to show you a family tree. <click> First, I’ll tell you what the colors I used mean. I colored the parts of the genealogy that come from Matthew, Chapter 1 in red. Those that are in Luke, Chapter 3 are blue. And the parts in both Matthew’s and Luke’s genealogies are colored purple. Then, the orange parts of the family tree that I’ll show you are not in the Bible; they just came from my own brain. Okay, here we go… <click> We’re going to start with King David, <click> and end with Jesus Christ. <click> Matthew chose Solomon as the one of David’s sons for his list, and <click> Luke chose Nathan. <click> Now, let’s suppose Nathan got married. Of course, the name of his wife is not in the sexist Bible. Next, let’s suppose that Nathan died without having a son. <click> So, his brother Solomon, in accordance with the law of levirate marriage, stepped up and made the unnamed widow one of his 700 wives. <click> They had a son who they named Mattatha. <click> Now, according to the law of levirate marriage, Mattatha counted as Nathan’s son too. Now I’ll pause for a moment to let you make sure you understand how levirate marriage works, because this story is going to get more complicated. Okay. <click> Matthew’s genealogy goes from Solomon to a man named Matthan, <click> while Luke’s goes to a man named Matthat. <click> Now let’s suppose that Matthat married another unnamed woman, <click> and they had a son named Heli. Then Matthat died. Note that, since Matthat had a son, the law of levirate marriage doesn’t apply here. So Matthat’s widow could marry anyone. <click> She might have married Matthan. <click> Then, they could have had a son named Jacob. So now, Jacob and Heli are half brothers, since they have the same mother. I’ll pause again. <click> Next, suppose that Heli got married and died without a son. <click> So, his half brother Jacob obeyed the law of levirate marriage by marrying Heli’s widow and having a son with her. <click> They named their son Joseph. And, as I said before, <click> Joseph was Heli’s legal son and Jacob’s biological son. <click> Finally, Mary gave birth to Jesus, <click> Joseph married her, <click> and he adopted Jesus as his own son. So, the conclusion of all this is that, since Luke’s list runs through Mattatha, on the third row, and Mattatha is a son of Solomon, Luke’s genealogy does in fact qualify Jesus to be the Messiah, because Mattatha is on Luke’s list, so Solomon is an ancestor of Jesus through Mattatha. Whew! <click>
29. So, in conclusion, I won’t tell you who is right. You have the freedom to decide who to believe, the missionaries or the anti-missionaries.