THE GENEALOGIES OF YESHUA
MATTHEW 1:1-17
LUKE 3:23-38

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The Genealogies of Yeshua

In this article, the two genealogies for Yeshua will be examined. The first thing that should enter into one's mind is why would there be **two different** genealogies for Yeshua? One historically accurate genealogy should be sufficient. During the latter Second Temple period, it became common practice for Jewish sages to write genealogies in a unique manner. Although they were accurate from an historical perspective, providing a clear historical account of the genealogy was **not** the primary concern of these sages. Rather, these types of genealogies were intended for theological revelation.

Those who are familiar with the New Covenant will remember that Paul warned Timothy and Titus,

"*Nor turn the mind to myths and endless genealogies which seek to cause questions; rather than G-dly edification in the faith.*" I Timothy 1:4

"*And foolish questions and genealogies and arguments and disputes of the Law avoid; for they are useless and of no purpose.*" Titus 3:9

These two verses have caused many people to ignore the two genealogies which are found in Matthew and Luke. This should not be! Paul's words to both Timothy and Titus only apply to extra-Biblical genealogies; that is, those genealogies which are not found in the Scripture. Certainly, these two genealogies of Yeshua should be studied and understood as Biblical revelation, and as genealogies given by and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

However, it is vital that the reader understand that a literal accounting of who gave birth to who, is **not** the primary purpose of either Matthew or Luke. There is **nothing** in these genealogies which is **incorrect**. Hence, they are historically accurate; but both Matthew and Luke were inspired to list the names found in their genealogies in a manner which conveyed to the reader theological truth. These changes are not errors, nor do they invalidate the genealogies in any way; rather, they simply use a genealogical account to reveal theological information that otherwise the reader could not know.

Let us now begin with Matthew's genealogy of Yeshua.

Matthew's Genealogy

The first thing that this genealogy states is that this is a genealogy of Messiah Yeshua. Matthew immediately informs the reader that Yeshua is indeed the Messiah. In stating this, Matthew also points out that Yeshua is a legal descendant of both David and Abraham. There are several things which must be understood about this statement. Although I used the term a "legal descendant", I will speak of this distinction between a biological descendant and a legal descendant later on in this article. First, I want to emphasize that Matthew revealed to the reader that Yeshua is a rightful descendant of both David and Abraham. Judaism rightly understood that for one to be the Messiah, He had to be a descendant of Abraham, i.e. the Son of Abraham, as well as a descendant of David, i.e. Messiah, Son of David. After stating this, Matthew continues to write in order to prove this according to the Hebrew Scriptures.

Matthew's genealogy, from verses 2-6, is taken directly from the Old Covenant (see Ruth 4:18-21). There is no debating what appears in these verses. What is of significance is the change in language. Whereas in verse 1, the reader is simply told that Yeshua is a Son of both David and Abraham, beginning in verse 2, there is a verb which is utilized, **γεννάω**. This verb has numerous meanings; however, in this context, it is utilized to inform the reader that one begat or produced an heir (son). It is most significant when arriving at the end of Matthew's genealogy that the reader is **not** told that Joseph begat or produced Yeshua. This issue will be further discussed when dealing with verse 16. What must be pointed out is that in this first section of the genealogy, three women are mentioned, Tamar, Ruth and the wife of Uriah (Batsheva). It is very unusual for women to appear in genealogies. According to the Jewish sages, when a woman or women in general, appear in a Biblical account, it should cause the reader to think of the concept of redemption. The basis for this is found in the book of Exodus, also known as the book of redemption . This is because the Passover, the festival of redemption, figures so significantly in the book of Exodus. In this book, the Hebrew midwives, as well as Yokhebed, the mother of Moses, demonstrated faith, which was the cause of HaShem (G-d) moving to bring about the Exodus, i.e. redemption for the Children of Israel.

In Matthew's genealogy, Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah, is mentioned first. She faithfully utilized the commandment of a Levirate marriage (even before this commandment was given, see Deuteronomy 25) to raise up an heir for her deceased husband. It is due to this faithful act, that she is mentioned by Matthew. Her faithfulness was instrumental in the Messianic lineage not coming to an end due to Judah's sons' lack of faith or due to his own rebellion against the plan of G-d. Judah rightly states concerning Tamar, that she is more righteous than him for behaving in this manner (see Genesis 38:26). Hence, Tamar appears in Matthew's genealogy to convey to the reader concepts such as redemption, faithfulness, and obedience to the commandments of G-d. Each of these are closely related to a right understanding of the Kingdom, and therefore also connected to the character of Messiah, the King of the Kingdom.

Next, Rahab is mentioned. Only in the New Covenant does one know that Rahab was the mother of Boaz. It is important for the reader to accept that this is the same Rahab mentioned in the book of Joshua as a זונה. This Hebrew word is usually translated as a harlot, but there are authorities that understand it as relating to an inn keeper. For what purpose is Rahab placed in Matthew's genealogy, if it is customary to leave women out of genealogies? Rahab was unique among her people. All those in Jericho had heard about Israel's victory at the Red Sea and all the other miracles which were done for the Children of Israel with the result that fear fell upon them. These people knew that it was HaShem who was the G-d of the heavens and the earth, yet they would not respond faithfully to Him. It was only Rahab who did so. Once again, it was faithfulness that was being emphasized by the text. In addition to this, Rahab was not Jewish; hence, Matthew's genealogy wants to convey to the reader that it is not ethnicity that is the basis for being included with the people of G-d; rather it is faith that responds to G-d's revelation.

The third woman is clearly Batsheva. She is not directly mentioned by name. Rather, she is simply alluded to as the wife of Uriah. Again, because there is an allusion to a woman (the wife of Uriah), Matthew is once again emphasizing the concept of redemption. In a similar manner, Uriah (the Hittite) is **not** of the lineage of the Jewish people. However, what stands out about this man is his submission to G-dly authority and his obedience to the commandments of G-d (see 2 Samuel 11:11). When Uriah, in 2 Samuel, mentions the Ark of the Covenant, he is referring to what is contained within the Ark, i.e. the two tablets

upon which the commandments were written. Therefore, even though Uriah was not Jewish, he revered the commandments of G-d and applied them to his life, which relates to what redemption produces in one's life and therefore he had a kingdom character.

Now it is readily seen that Matthew's genealogy is more than a list of who begat who, but was constructed by the Holy Spirit to reveal vital truth concerning the **Kingdom of G-d** and what the Kingdom inhabitants should possess as character traits which are the direct outcome of true faith rooted in the Scriptures.

The next section in this genealogy is from verse 7 to verse 11. Since the previous section ended with David's son Solomon, these verses deal with the kings of Judah. When one closely examines this section, he will find that some generations are missing. Let us compare the Biblical account from the Old Covenant with that of Matthew's genealogy.

<u>Old Covenant</u>	<u>Matthew's Genealogy</u>
Solomon begat Rehoboam	Solomon begat Rehoboam
Rehoboam begat Abijam	Rehoboam begat Abijam
Abijam begat Asa	Abijam begat Asa
Asa begat Jehoshaphat	Asa begat Jehoshaphat
Jehoshaphat begat Jehoram	Jehoshaphat begat Jehoram
Jehoram begat Ahaziah	
Ahaziah begat Jehoash	
Jehoash begat Amaziah	
Amaziah begat Uzziah	Jehoram begat Uzziah*
Uzziah begat Jotam	Uzziah begat Jotam
Jotam begat Ahaz	Jotam begat Ahaz
Ahaz begat Hezekiah	Ahaz begat Hezekiah
Hezekiah begat Manasseh	Hezekiah begat Manasseh
Manasseh begat Amon	Manasseh begat Amon
Amon begat Josiah	Amon begat Josiah
Josiah begat Jehoahaz	*
Pharaoh made Jehoiakim son of Josiah King	Josiah begat Jehoakin*
Jehoiakim begat Jehoiachin	*
Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah King	Carried away to Babylon

Beginning with Solomon, the Old Covenant lists a total of 19 generations until the Babylonian Exile. Please note that Jehoiakim was a brother of Jehoahaz and became king after him, but was of the same generation. Likewise, Zedekiah became king replacing his relative Jehoiachin.

*When examining Matthew's Genealogy, it is clear that he skipped 3 generations from Jehoram to Uzziah, ignoring Ahaziah, Jehoash, and Amaziah. **Please note, that it was not an uncommon practice to skip generations and stating that a grandfather or great-grandfather was the one who begat a later generation**. There was a variety of reasons for this practice. The sages did not consider this an error or problematic. In addition to this, Matthew skipped Jehoahaz and linked Jehoakim and his sons into one generation. These practices allowed Matthew to have only 14 generations from David's son Solomon, to the Babylonian Exile, the same number as from Abraham to David. In other words, it was important for Matthew to have the number 14 play a role in his genealogy. We will examine this later.

The third and final section in Matthew's genealogy is from the Babylonian Exile until Messiah. In regard to these names listed after the exile there is very little Biblical evidence. This does not mean that this account should be rejected, rather one must simply accept it based upon the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the authority of Scripture. When one examines these generations the following list can be made.

Matthew's Genealogy: Exile to the Messiah

1) Jehoiachin begat Shal-tiel
2) Shal-tier begat Zerubabel
3) Zerubabel begat Abiud
4) Abiud begat Eliakim
5) Eliakim begat Azor
6) Azor begat Tzadok
7) Tzadok begat Achim
8) Achim begat Eliud
9) Eliud begat Eleazar
10) Eleazar begat Mattan
11) Mattan begat Yacov (Jacob)
12) Yacov begat Joseph
13) Messiah

There are a few issues within this section that must be discussed. The first is that there are only 13 generations listed, when the reader is told in verse 17 that there are 14 generations (as there were in the previous two sections). The second issue is that the text does **not** state that Joseph begat Yeshua, i.e. the Messiah (Matthew 1:16). Although Matthew clearly says Miriam gave birth to Yeshua, Joseph is only stated to be her espoused husband. The term that is used reveals that although Joseph and Miriam were legally married, they had only completed the first of two parts of the marital covenant and therefore sexual relations between them would have been forbidden prior to Yeshua's birth. Failure to state that Joseph begat Yeshua underscores a main point that Matthew wants to make. Related to this issue is the fact that Jehoiachin appears in Matthew's genealogy. Jehoiachin being listed is very significant and related to why Matthew refrains from saying that Joseph begat Yeshua. These two matters are connected to the Prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah stated that Jehoiachin (also known as Coniah) was despised by G-d for his wickedness and HaShem proclaimed through the prophet that none of his offspring would ever sit upon the throne of David (see Jeremiah 22:28-30). This means that Messiah cannot be a biological descendant of Jehoiachin. This prophecy poses great problems. It means that the Messianic promise would be abolished from a physical standpoint. How can HaShem keep this promise and not compromise any aspect of Jeremiah's prophecy? The only possible way is the **Virgin Birth**. It is the Virgin Birth that explains why Matthew's genealogy does not say that Joseph begat Yeshua; rather the reader is only told that **Joseph is the husband of Miriam (Mary) from whom Yeshua was born**. The fact that Miriam was espoused to Joseph means that Joseph, according to Jewish law, was indeed the legal father of all children born to Miriam. It was Joseph, being from the lineage of David, that causes Yeshua to be a legal heir of David, i.e. from the royal lineage, but **not** a physical descendant of Yehoiachin.

Let us now return to the seeming error regarding the number of generations between the Babylonian Exile and Messiah. The reader is told in Matthew 1:17 there were 14

generations from Abraham to David and 14 generations from David to the Exile, and finally 14 generations from the Exile to Messiah. First, one must answer the question of why there is an emphasis on the number 14? In Hebrew numerology, the number 14 relates to a **double blessing** or a **Kingdom blessing**. In other words, Matthew was inspired to construct his genealogy to convey to the reader that it is only through Messiah Yeshua that one can receive the blessings which are found in the Kingdom of G-d. Once again, the problem that remains is that in the last section of Matthew's genealogy there are only 13 generations found. Is this an error? Was Matthew mistaken? No, Matthew was perfectly inspired by the Holy Spirit and there are no errors in the Bible. What may seem like an error to the reader is in fact usually a place of great Biblical revelation. Matthew states in verse 17 that there are 14 generations from the Exile until the Messiah. What does Matthew mean when he says, **ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ** "*until the Messiah*"? One needs to remember that Messiah comes not just once, but **twice**, i.e. the Second Coming.

According to Matthew, there were 13 generations until Messiah's first coming, i.e. His birth. The number 13 speaks of unity between G-d Who is **one** and the **twelve** tribes of Israel. It was for this kind of unity that Yeshua entered into this world the first time— to bring about the reconciliation between Israel and G-d. However, the point that Matthew also wants to make in stating that there are 14 generations from the Exile to the Messiah, has to do with the **Second Coming** of Yeshua. One might think of the 14th generation as the "missing generation" within this genealogy, but within Judaism, there is a concept of the "**next generation**" "הדור הבא". This concept admonishes adults to prepare their children (the next generation) for the Kingdom, i.e. the coming of the Messiah. The foundation for this idea is found in the Prophet Malachi who states that Elijah will return shortly before the coming of the Messiah and turn the hearts of the fathers to their **children** and the hearts of the **children** to their fathers (Malachi 3:23-24).

In other words, Matthew, by using the phrase **ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ** "*until the Messiah*" coupled together with the concept of the **next generation**, is conveying to the reader the importance of being ready for the return of Messiah in every generation. Now we shall move to Luke's account of Yeshua's genealogy.

Luke's Genealogy

It is very significant that Luke introduces his genealogy with the words,

"*And Yeshua, He was about thirty years, beginning (His ministry) being as reckoned a son of Joseph….*" Luke 3:23

This verse makes it most clear that Luke wanted to inform his readers that Yeshua was not a biological son of Joseph. Yet his genealogy supports the fact that Yeshua was indeed a legal descendant of Joseph, i.e. from the royal lineage. The fact that Yeshua's age is mentioned and it was stated that He was about 30 years old also has great significance. The number 30 relates to death in Judaism, as 30 days were the Biblical amount of time for mourning. Therefore, Luke is revealing to the reader that Yeshua's ministry centered on His death.

When examining Luke's genealogy, one finds that he began his genealogy with Adam, the first man, rather than with Abraham, as Matthew did. Luke says Adam is **of** G-d. There is a very important grammatical construction in Luke's genealogy that the reader must be

aware of. In all English translations the phrase "**the son of**" appears before each name. In reality, this is not the case. Only the definite article precedes the name in the Greek text and this article is in the genitive case. Hence, all Luke is stating is that that **one is of another**. For example, if one translates verse 38 accurately it simply reads,

"*of Enos, of Seth, of Adam, of G-d.*"

Whereas Matthew used a verb that relates to a man who begets or produces an offspring, Luke purposely was inspired to write in a very general manner where at face value the relationship between the **one**, who is **of another**, is not clearly stated.

The section from Adam to Abraham, which Matthew does not include, agrees with the Old Covenant revelation (see Genesis chapters 5 and 11), with the exception of one name. Luke's genealogy has an extra name (Cainan) that appears in verse 36. According to the traditional text of the Hebrew Bible, the **Masoretic Text**, Arpachshad begat Shelah and not Cainan. Hence, Luke includes an extra generation which cannot be supported from the **Masoretic Text**. Is this an error? Even one error in the New Covenant invalidates all of its authority. One needs to remember that the Old Covenant which the writers of the New Covenant used was not in Hebrew and was certainly not the Masoretic Text (which was written from between the 7th and 10th century AD). New Covenant writers used a Greek Old Covenant, i.e. the Septuagint (LXX). When one looks at Genesis 11:12 in the LXX, it clearly states that Arpachshad did indeed begat Cainan. Hence, Luke 3:36 is not an error, but simply relates the tradition of the LXX, which the Hebrew text of the **Dead Sea Scrolls** also supports. This Hebrew text is significantly older (800-1000 years earlier) and in the majority scholars' opinion, represents a far better text.

It is also very interesting to note that in Luke's genealogy there are **75** names (**excluding** Yeshua and G-d). In a similar manner, according to the LXX, Genesis 46:27 states that "… *all the souls of the house of Jacob who came with Joseph into Egypt, were **75** souls.*"

When paying close attention to this number and how it is arrived at in Genesis chapter 46, one learns an important fact. An accounting of the 75 souls are as follows:

1. Jacob
2. Ruben
3. Enoch
4. Phallus
5. Asron
6. Charmi
7. Simeon
8. Jemuel
9. Jamin
10. Aod
11. Achin
12. Saar
13. Saul
14. Levi
15. Gerson
16. Cath
17. Merari
18. Judas
19. Er

20. Aunan
21. Selom
22. Phares
23. Zara
24. Esron
25. Jemuel
26. Issachar
27. Thola
28. Phua
29. Asum
30. Sambran
31. Zebulun
32. Sered
33. Allon
34. Achoel

Genesis 46:15 informs the reader that there are only 33 souls. Is this an error? Absolutely not, this same verse instructs us that the number 33 represents those who Leah bore to Jacob and therefore Jacob must be **removed** from the accounting and thus one would arrive at the number 33.

1. Gad
2. Saphon
3. Angis
4. Sannis
5. Thasoban
6. Aedis
7. Aroedis
8. Areelis
9. Asher
10. Jemna
11. Jessua
12. Jeul
13. Baria
14. Sara
15. Chobor
16. Melchiil

Genesis 46:18 informs the leader that the number of souls that Zilpah bore to Jacob were 16 souls.

1. Joseph
2. Benjamin
3. Manasses
4. Ephraim
5. Machir
6. Galaad
7. Sutalaam
8. Taam
9. Edom
10. Bala
11. Bochor

12. Asbel
13. Gera
14. Noeman
15. Anchis
16. Ros
17. Mamphim
18. Arad

Genesis 46:22 reveals that Rachel bore to Jacob a total of 18 souls.

1. Dan
2. Asom
3. Naphthalim
4. Asiel
5. Goni
6. Issaar
7. Sollem

Genesis 46:25 states that the number of souls that Bilhah bore to Jacob were 7 souls.

If one adds up these four sections, he will arrive at the number 74 souls; however, Genesis 46:27 states that all the souls that came from the loins of Jacob were 66. There are eight souls too many. The solution is simple, one must **subtract** Joseph and those who were born to him in Egypt: Manasses, Ephraim, Machir, Galaad, Sutalaam, Taam, and Edom. When doing this there are exactly 66 souls as Genesis 46:27 states.

Finally, Genesis 46:27 reveals that there were actually **nine** souls born to Joseph in the land of Egypt. When a person includes these nine souls with the aforementioned 66 souls the final total is 75 souls. It is vital that one remembers that **neither Jacob or Joseph is included in the total of 75 souls**. This is very similar to Luke's genealogy that also has 75 names listed with **neither G-d and Yeshua being included in this number**. What is Luke trying to reveal to his readers? Jacob is the **father** of the Children of Israel and his **son** Joseph is a typology for the Messiah. Hence, there is relationship between these two passages and a theological message is being conveyed. These 75 souls who were in Egypt represented exile. However the 75 souls who were mentioned in Luke's genealogy represent redemption through G-d's plan which is fulfilled in Messiah Yeshua. In other words, Messiah Yeshua is born into this world to reverse the exile and bring about redemption.

There are a few more observations that must be made concerning Luke's genealogy. The first is that whereas Matthew's genealogy and others found in the Scripture begins with the oldest time period and moves forward, Luke's does the opposite and begins with Yeshua. Second, Luke makes a surprising turn within his genealogy. It has already been stated that there are not any inconsistencies between the best Hebrew texts of the Old Covenant and Luke's genealogy from Adam to David. However, it is most interesting that instead of moving from David to Solomon, Luke's genealogy states,

"…*Natan of David,*" Luke 3:31

In other words, Luke avoids Solomon and his lineage altogether, and moves to another son of David, Natan. Natan was born to David in Jerusalem and was the third of eleven children (see 2 Samuel 5:14-15). According to Matthew's genealogy, Joseph was a direct

descendant of Solomon. It is very common for Christian scholars to assert the Luke's genealogy traces the Messianic lineage through Miriam (Mary), meaning that Miriam was a direct descendant of Natan. <u>However, there is **no** Biblical or historical evidence for a person to make such a statement</u>. One needs to remember that what Luke's genealogy states is that **one** is simply **of another**. The Greek grammatical construction of Luke's genealogy when translated literally reads,

"*And Yeshua, He was about 30 years, beginning (His ministry) being as reckoned a son of Joseph of Heli, of Matthat, of Levi, of Melchi, of Janna, of Joseph, of Mattathias, of Amos, of Naoum, of Esli, of Naggai, of Maath, of Mattathias, of Semei, of Joseph, of Judah, of Joanna, of Rhesa, of Zorobabel, Shal-tiel, of Neri, of Melchi, of Addi, of Kosam, of Elmodam, of Er, of Jose, of Eliezer, of Jorim, of Matthat, of Levi, of Simeon, of Judah, of Joseph, of Jonan, of Eliakim, of Melea, of Menam, of Mattatha, of Natan, of David, of Jesse, of Obed, of Boaz, of Salmon, of Naasson, of Aminadab, of Aram, of Esrom, of Phares, of Judah, of Jacob, of Yitzchak (Isaac), of Abraham, of Thara, of Nachor, of Sarouch, of Ragau, of Phalek, of Eber, of Sala, of Kainan, of Arphachad, of Shem, of Noah, of Lamech, of Mathousala, of Enoch, of Jared, of Maleleal, of Kainan, of Enos, of Seth, of Adam of G-d.*" Luke 3:23-38

There is only one time in Luke's genealogy that the word "**son**" appears and this occurrence is in regard to Yeshua, Who was reckoned, a **Son of Joseph**. In every other instance, Luke uses a construction that speaks of a relationship in the most general manner, without any clear indication of what this relationship might be. While it may be inferred from the list that this relationship is father to son, we certainly do not have this type of relationship in regard to Adam and G-d, nor of Yeshua and Joseph.

In conclusion, as Matthew's genealogy had more of a theological message than biological, the same thing can be said about Luke's genealogy. The genealogies of Mathew and Luke are good examples of the styles of such literature which were typical of the later Second Temple period.