

# Bite Size Bible Study

## Christmas Story – 1 Jesus' Genealogy #217

By Pastor Lee

This begins a series of studies of information that is not generally used in the popular stories during Christmas or that shows there is more to the story than is often mentioned.

I plan on touching on several aspects of the birth of Jesus that are frequently ignored or otherwise left out of the season's festivities and readings. I hope to bring some information to each subject that the reader may or may not be aware of:

1. Jesus' Genealogy
2. 4 women
3. Bethlehem
4. Joseph
5. Mary
6. Wise men and Shepherds
7. Simeon and Anna
8. Herod's atrocities

### Genealogy

When many people begin to read about the Christmas story, they often begin in Matthew. But chapter one is a genealogy and that is generally not an interesting topic for most readers and is often ignored because it is considered not part of the Christmas story.

But I beg to differ with that train of thought and what follows is why.

Matthew begins with a genealogy exactly where he must. Because if Jesus is not in the family tree of Abraham, David and other patriarchs, then he is not the Messiah. So, Matthew begins by linking Abraham with Jesus through the family line of Joseph, Jesus' legal father, the line which includes King David. Many of the prophecies of a coming Messiah are linked through this family line. If Matthew had not provided this genealogy, we would not have the confidence that we have of Jesus being the promised Messiah.

Unless Matthew can show that Jesus is a legal descendant of David through the royal line, it is impossible to prove that He is the Messianic King of Israel. If Mathew is successful then Jesus has the legal right to the throne of David through His stepfather, Joseph. Matthew's genealogy follows the royal line from David through his son, Solomon, the king who reigned after King David.

Luke traces Jesus' descent as Son of David, through another son of David's; Nathan. This genealogy begins with Joseph, of whom Jesus was the adopted Son. This genealogy probably traces the ancestry of Mary, who's actual birth son is Jesus.

A millennium earlier, God had made an unconditional agreement with David, promising him a kingdom that

would last forever and a perpetually ruling line (Ps. 89:4, 36, 37). That covenant is now fulfilled in Jesus; He is legal heir to the throne of David through Joseph and the actual seed of David through Mary.

Because Jesus lives forever, His kingdom will last forever, and He will reign forever as David's greater Son. Jesus possesses two basic claims to the throne of Israel (the legal and the lineal) and since He still lives, there can be no other claimant to the Messiah (Anointed one) of Israel.

The title Son of Abraham presents Jesus as the One who is the ultimate fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham, the progenitor of the Hebrew people.

The genealogy is divided into three historical sections: from Abraham to Jesse, from David to Josiah, and from Jeconiah to Joseph. The first section leads up to David; the second covers the kingdom period; the third preserves the record of royal descent during the exile up to Jesus' birth.

There are many interesting features in this genealogy. For example, four women are mentioned: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba (which we will deal with in the next part of this series)

Of interest too, is the mention of a king named Jeconiah (also known as Coniah and as Jehoiachin). In Jeremiah 22:30 God pronounced a curse on this man:

*Thus says the Lord: "Write this man down as childless, A man who shall not prosper in his days; For none of his descendants shall prosper, Sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah."*

If Jesus had been the birth son of Joseph, He would have come under this curse. Yet He was the legal son of Joseph, through adoption, and could inherit the rights to the throne of David. The problem of Jeconiah was solved by the miracle of the virgin birth: Jesus was the legal heir to the throne through Joseph. But He was also the biological Son of David through Mary. The curse on Jeconiah did not fall on Mary or her children since she did not descend from King David through the line that included Jeconiah.

Jesus, the promised Messiah, had to be of the lineage of David. Matthew gives the genealogical proof that Jesus, in His humanity, was a direct descendant of Abraham and David through Joseph, Jesus' legal father. The genealogy in Luke traces Jesus' lineage through His mother, Mary. It is interesting that Luke traces Jesus' genealogy back to Adam and then to God, making Him both the Son of God as well as the Son of Man.

Another issue is that Matthew counts 27 generations from David to Jesus, while Luke gives 42. Even though

the evangelists are outlining different family trees, it still seems odd that there should be such a difference in the number of generations.

Middle Eastern societies were patriarchal, and it was considered that only through male line could any meaningful lineage be traced. (The reasoning is for this is for another study.) The Hebrew culture adhered to that line of thinking as well. But Matthew breaks the rules and deliberately includes four women within this genealogy.

In the next study in this series, we will look at the lives of these four women and what caused Matthew to include them in this genealogy.

These genealogies provide us with a wealth of information that could be difficult if not impossible to bring together to prove that Jesus is the expected Messiah, the King of Israel and Savior of the entire world – past, present and future.

***Don't skip the "begats"***

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