

In 1963, Walter Cronkite filmed a television special entitled “D-Day Plus 20 Years,” which was aired on June 6, 1964. In the filming, Cronkite asked President Eisenhower what he thought about when he returned to Normandy. In *Character Above All*, Steven Ambrose summarized Eisenhower’s response: he “spoke not of the tanks, the guns, the planes, the ships, the personalities of the commanders and their opponents, or the victory. Instead, he spoke of the families of the men buried in the American Cemetery in Normandy. He said he could never come to this spot without thinking of how blessed he and Mamie were to have grandchildren, and how much it saddened him to think of all the couples in America who had never had that blessing, because their only son was buried in France.”

The response is a reminder of the cost of war and the importance of history. It was a reminder that while we may not remember or even know all the stories of all our ancestors, they have been woven into our lives in essential ways. In a similar (but far greater) way, the genealogy of Jesus is a reminder to us of the importance of Christ, and the reality that history is actually *His* Story. Everything is moving toward Him or flowing from Him.

In 3:23, Luke notes the beginning of *His ministry* after Jesus’ baptism. For all of the important events and people in the opening chapters of the book, Luke now transitions to Jesus as the priority of the book. John the Baptist may have been the greatest man among men born naturally (7:28), but Jesus infinitely supersedes John. His story and ministry are about to be told. But before Luke launches into the details of Jesus’ life, he offers the basis of Christ to be considered as the focal point of history. So Luke provides the genealogy of Jesus (3:23-38). From this genealogy we learn this reality:

AS THE SON OF MAN AND SON OF GOD, CHRIST ALONE IS PERFECTLY PLACED TO REIGN AS KING.

In this genealogy, let’s look at six pictures/snapshots of Christ to gain six perspectives on His Story...

1. Jesus is the Son of MARY: He is Genuine HUMANITY (v. 23)
2. Jesus is the Son of NERI: He Avoids the CURSE (v. 31)
3. Jesus is the Son of DAVID: He is Rightful KING (v. 32)
4. Jesus is the Son of ABRAHAM: He Fulfills the PROMISE (v. 34)
5. Jesus is the Son of ADAM: He is the World’s SAVIOR (v. 38a)
6. Jesus is the Son of GOD: He is Genuine DEITY (v. 38b)

Lessons About Genealogies —

1. Jesus is the Son of MARY: He is Genuine HUMANITY (v. 23)

- In any genealogy there are always questions — who was that and how is he connected to the family? That begins immediately in Luke's recounting of Jesus' lineage.
 - ✓ Jesus, he says, ***as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli...***
 - When he says ***as was supposed***, Luke is affirming that while Joseph was recognized as Jesus' father, he was not actually Jesus' biological father. He was not involved in the conception.
 - When you compare this genealogy with Matthew's you find that Matthew says Joseph's father was Jacob, but Luke says it was Eli. What is going on? Is there a conflict? No. It's complicated, but there is a hint at what Luke is doing.
 - For all the other names, he lists them "the [son] of ____" with the article ("the"). But with Joseph, he doesn't use the article, which indicates that Luke is separating Joseph out from all the other names — he's not biologically in the lineage of Jesus. So we might read it this way: "Jesus, being (as was supposed the son of Joseph) the son of Eli..." — that is, he is the grandson of Eli.
 - And who was Eli? We don't know for certain, but since Luke is excluding Joseph from the genealogy, it is likely that Eli was Mary's father, making Jesus' (maternal) grandfather.
 - So Jesus' position as genuine man as the son of Mary is preserved, but He also is true deity because He is not the biological son of Joseph.
 - ✓ We also see the humanity of Jesus in the list of names:
 - There are 76 names in the list (not counting Joseph) and those names remind us person after person, that Jesus has a genuine genealogy — He is genuine man.
 - Luke's genealogy differs from Matthew's in multiple ways including that he has 20 names between Abraham and Adam — he purposefully connects Jesus to Adam to demonstrate that just as Adam was real, historical, and created, so Jesus had a body that was real, historical, and created (though created differently than any other man's body).
- The importance of Jesus' humanity is that as a man He could fulfill the Law and demonstrate the righteousness of man that God demanded. And He could be sacrificed in our place and provide substitutionary atonement for us (which the OT animal sacrifices could anticipate, but not do).

2. Jesus is the Son of NERI: He Avoids the CURSE (v. 27)

- Following the mention of Eli (v. 23) the names of the individuals in vv. 24-26 are unknown to us. They would have been Jesus' ancestors during the 400 years of silence after the closing of the OT.
- In v. 27, we find the names of ***Zerubbabel*** and ***Shealtiel***, who were instrumental in the return of Israel from the Babylonian exile, which is a historically interesting fact.

- What is important about these names, though, is that **Shealtiel** is called **the son of Neri**. But Matthew says that Shealtiel's father is Jeconiah (**Mt. 1:12**; affirmed in 1 Chron. 3:17). How do we resolve this?
 - ✓ Remember that the two genealogies are different —
 - Matthew traces his lineage to David through Joseph, demonstrating Jesus' *legal* right to reign.
 - Luke traces His lineage to David through Mary, demonstrating his *blood* ancestry and the human right to rule.
 - ✓ One of Joseph's ancestors was **Jeconiah** (or Jehoiachin); he was the last Davidic king to rule before the Babylonian captivity and such an exceedingly evil king that in **Jer. 22:30** God says, "Write this man down childless, A man who will not prosper in his days; For no man of his descendants will prosper Sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah."
 - It appears that Jeconiah *did* have other sons; so God through Jeremiah means that he would have no legal heir; no physical descendent of Jeconiah could ever take the throne of Israel.
 - How then did **Neri** end up in Mary's line instead of Jeconiah as the father of Shealtiel?
 - ... Because of the curse, when Jeconiah died, it could be that his brother (supposedly Neri) took Jeconiah's wife as his own to perpetuate the lineage (called a levirate marriage).
 - ... So, biologically, **Neri** was the father, but legally, Jeconiah is considered the father.
 - So Jesus, by being born biologically only to Mary avoids Jeconiah's curse while maintaining legal and blood right to the throne of David because He was descended from David.
- An even greater wonder is that while Jesus avoided the curse of Jeconiah, He also avoided the curse of sin: He never sinned, so He could rightly absorb the wrath of God in our place as the perfect substitute.
 - ✓ Jesus was not born into the curse of Jeconiah and because of the virgin birth Jesus was not born into the curse of Adam, though as a human being He also was in that lineage (Lk. 3).
 - ✓ Yet in grace, Jesus took on the curse of Adam. He stood in our place, took what was rightly meant for us so that we might be spared the eternal wrath of God.
 - ✓ This is Paul's very point in **Gal. 3:10-14**. Because of the unique manner of Christ's birth, He avoided two curses so He could absorb the one great curse to redeem men and fulfill the promises made to both Abraham and Moses.

3. Jesus is the Son of **DAVID**: He is Rightful **KING** (v. 31)

- After a series of names that are unknown in vv. 28-31, at the end of verse 31 we come to one of the most well-known names in the Bible — **David**.
 - ✓ In the beginning of Israel's history, the nation was ruled by God as her king, through the judges.
 - ✓ In 1 Samuel 8, the people became discontent with the dishonest sons of Samuel as their judges.
 - ✓ So they asked for a king "like all the nations" (**1 Sam. 8:5-6**). God makes clear that this request was a rejection of God as their king (1 Sam. 8:7-8).

- ✓ God gave the people a warning through Samuel of what would happen, but they persisted.
 - ✓ And they received a king — Saul, who was a failure — and then David and Solomon. And then the kingdom was divided and there was persistent trouble; the northern tribes never had a good king, while the tribes of Judah only intermittently had good kings.
 - ✓ Yet in grace, God promised a future eternal king that would descend from David (2 Sam. 7:12-16).
 - ✓ That kingdom will culminate in Christ, as we've already seen (1:31-33; 2:11; cf. 20:41-44 [Ps. 110]).
- As the descendent of David, Christ has the right to rule from David's throne. As the second person of the Trinity, the eternal God-Man, He only is the rightful eternal King of Israel (and all people).

4. Jesus is the Son of ABRAHAM: He Fulfills the PROMISE (v. 34)

- In verse 34 we find another well-known name — **Abraham**.
 - ✓ Abraham was an idol-worshipping unbeliever in the far East (what became Babylon). God brought him out of that country and false worship, and brought him to the land of Canaan (Josh. 24:2-3).
 - ✓ Then God made a covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), promising that from him would come a unique people in a privileged relationship with God — his descendants would be God's chosen people.
 - ✓ That promise included three components — a physical land, physical descendants and ruler, and blessing that would flow from them to the nations of the world.
 - ✓ The three promises made to Abraham in that covenant were amplified in three more covenants — the Palestinian (land), the New (blessing), and the Davidic (Ruler/Messiah).
 - ✓ But these promises were not made a couple of years before Christ. We believe Abraham lived in the 19th century before Christ — almost 2000 years before Christ.
 - ✓ So when Luke mentions Abraham in the genealogy, it is a reminder, "God hasn't forgotten His promises. He made them and this is the fulfillment of them."
- In grace, God is a promise-keeping God. He will fulfill everything He has promised to do.
 - ✓ These promises are not kept because of the faithfulness of the individuals; e.g., Abraham twice lied about the identity of his wife and became impatient about the promise and tried to fulfill God's promise through his sin with Hagar and the birth of Ishmael.
 - ✓ Rather, God keeps His promises because He is faithful to Himself and because He is gracious.
 - ✓ Just as Israel could depend on God to keep His Messianic promises, we can depend on Him to keep His promises of salvation, His second coming, and His keeping us from the evil one and from trials that will overwhelm us — that Jesus is from Abraham reminds us of God's good promises.

- *Titus 1:1-2 Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,*
 - *Heb. 10:23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;*

5. Jesus is the Son of ADAM: He is the World's SAVIOR (v. 38a)

- We also know well the name of **Adam**, the first created human being (v. 38).
 - ✓ **Enosh** and **Seth** are “of Adam” — sons (descendants) of Adam. And because of the lineage, Jesus is also descended from Adam. With this genealogy Luke is making the point that Jesus is a literal human being, born physically from this physical lineage that descended from the first man.
 - ✓ Yet as the Son of Adam, Jesus was also as Adam was before the fall into sin; He was the sinless perfect image of God and He remained so all His time on earth and remains so in Heaven now.
 - ✓ But the name **Adam** also is the Hebrew word for mankind, so while Luke is drawing attention to the people from whom Christ descended, being the son of Adam, He also is literally, “the Son of Man.”
 - ✓ He has been presenting Jesus in this book as the Son of Man, and here He *is* the Son of Man.
 - Luke’s account is not just about “Jesus” but on the pre-eminent God-Man, the Son of Man.
 - The emphasis on this term is the humanity of Christ — this really is God, *in the flesh*. In the same way that “Son of David” affirms Christ as the Messianic King, “Son of Man” affirms Christ as a genuine man. He is the culmination of manhood.
 - But He is no ordinary man — He is the One to whom the Ancient of Days entrusts the authority and kingship of the nations (not just Israel, **Dan. 7:13-14**).
 - “Here, the royal and glorious Son of Man comes in humility and servitude, but he does so also knowing the day will come when his dominion will be exercised over all the earth (Matt. 26:64). So, both as the Son of Man who serves and suffers and as the Son of Man who rules and reigns, Jesus, the Son of Man, must have come to be our Savior as a man.” [Ware, 106-7.]
- And there is a theologically important principle here as well — while Jesus was descended from the first Adam, He is the second Adam who has come to restore all that was lost in the first Adam (**Rom. 5:12ff**). As the Son of Man, He is also the Redeemer.
- And even more, because He is the Son of Adam, Jesus is related to all people — He has the same common ancestor of all people, so He is the eternally and universally sovereign Lord (21:27).
- As the Son of Man, He is not just the redeemer of Israel, but of all nations (**2:31-32**; **17:16-19**; **24:47**).

6. Jesus is the Son of GOD: He is Genuine DEITY (v. 38b)

- Lastly, Adam was the Son of God — not procreated from God in the same way all humans are, but Adam was “of God” — from God, created by God to reflect God’s glory.
- Even more, Jesus also was **Son of God** (Ps. 2:7).
- Jesus, as the Son of God, was with God and was God (Jn. 1:1ff) and had the same essence as God the Father (**Lk. 10:22**; **Jn. 10:30**; Phil. 2:6; **Col. 2:9**)

- So, Jesus is the Son of Man (Adam), yet He is also the Son of God. He is both humanity and deity, and in both He is exalted: He is the Son of Man who has the right to reign (Dan. 7:13-14) and He is the Son of God who is eternal in the Heavens with the Father, who is undiminished deity (Jn. 1:1ff). He has come to earth and He has the right to accomplish His plan of redemption because of His hypostatic union.
- He is now ready to begin His ministry because of His baptism.
- And He is qualified to begin His ministry because of His ancestry. God has perfectly prepared the God-Man who will be the Redeemer of Israel and all people.

Lessons About Genealogies (let us not just quickly move past the lists of names) —

- ✓ **The genealogies are not an opportunity for speculation and imagination** — don't infer more than you know from the story or related biblical passages (1 Tim. 1:4; Tt. 3:9).
- ✓ **God knows everyone, remembers everyone, and is attentive to everyone** (even when they are unknown to anyone else). There are many unknown names in Scripture, but none are unknown to God. The One who knows even fallen sparrows and every hair on every head knows every individual who has ever lived — all have been created by Him, in His image and for His glory. [And those who do not love Him will not escape His wrath because of any deficient memory on His part.]
- ✓ **God is guiding history to His purposes** — there are no renegade people who can change His plans.
 - No matter how many walk righteously and how many walk unrighteously, the purposes of God are never subverted. He will accomplish His purposes at all times and in all circumstances.
 - No matter how slowly it seems that God is working, He is working. The genealogy of Jesus was about 4000 years long with many seasons of "quiet." Generation by generation, person by person, year by year, God was moving to exactly accomplish His plan. We can be patient.
- ✓ The lists of hundreds of unknown names are a reminder that **God often accomplishes His purposes with "ordinary" people** just being faithful to Him. Learn to be faithful in small things when no one is watching and no one knows.
- ✓ As we read these books and lists some names are known more for their sin than for their faithfulness. **The failures are reminders of the folly of sin** and the devastating results of that sin. Remember Jeconiah, and David, and Judah, and Jacob, and Abraham, and Adam? Read their names and heed the warnings of their lives (and rest in the hope of God's redemptive reversals).
- ✓ The lists are a reminder that **all men are related under a common head, Adam**. Matthew only takes the genealogy back to Abraham, while Luke (writing to Gentiles) goes back to the beginning, Adam. And his decision in the Garden of Eden have made all men dependent on the work of Christ, the second Adam, to redeem them from Adam's first and lasting sin.
- ✓ **All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable...** (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Not all passages are useful in the same way, but even the more difficult and obscure passages are given by God to us for our benefit.

BENEDICTION: **Luke 2:29-32**