DIFFICULTIES OF NEW TESTAMENT GENEALOGIES

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The genealogies in Matthew and Luke are integral parts of those Gospels. They are remarkably precise documents, each accomplishing the aim of testifying to God's design in the birth of Jesus Christ. This article presents the purposes and peculiarities of each genealogy, and also examines the difficulties of interpretation attendant to them. Special attention is focused on the difficulties found when Matthew is compared to the OT, and on the difficulties found when Matthew is compared to Luke. Both genealogies are reckoned as accurate in even the smallest details.

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THE NT opens with an arresting prefatory record of names. Many readers probably pass over them as being of no practical value. However, this genealogy which opens the NT is, in many respects, one of the most important documents in the Scriptures. Much of the Bible stands or falls with its accuracy. If the Word of God contains mistakes in this section, how is any of it to be trusted, for this is the connecting link between the OT and NT?

Evidently, genealogies were available to the ancient public, and it could be established easily if a person had a legitimate claim to any particular line. For example, Ezra 2:62 states, "These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood." This demonstrates how it was then possible to check the register of the tribe of Levi and remove those that made a false claim. The genealogy given in Matthew was important for the same reason of establishing a legitimate claim to a particular line.

This does not mean, however, that no difficulties exist in Matthew's genealogy. Some difficulties exist when Matthew is

compared to the OT, and some exist when Matthew is compared to Luke's genealogy. However,

> . . . allowing the Divine inspiration of the authors, we must grant that they could make no mistakes in any point, and especially on a subject where the truth of the Gospel history, and the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies are so nearly concerned.[1]

In this article the difficulties between Matthew and the OT and also between Matthew and Luke will be examined closely, the various solutions given, and a conclusion reached concerning each of them. Many of the difficulties can be answered with relative ease. However, some of them present greater problems and must be considered more closely.

DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN MATTHEW AND THE OT

Several difficulties have been observed when the genealogy of Matthew is compared to the OT genealogical records.

Source of Matthew's genealogy

From all indications public records were kept in the temple of the genealogies of families before and during the time of Christ. The

[1]Adam Clarke, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* in vol. 5 of *Clarke's Commentary* (New York: Abingdon, n.d.) 385. Not all scholars have such a high view of the inspiration and historical accuracy of the genealogies. For example, Hood approaches them from the perspective of form criticism and evaluates them on the basis of the way other genealogies in Greek, Roman, and Jewish history were used. He questions whether Jesus' relatives, or even Jesus himself, even knew what their ancestry was, and postulates that the genealogies, in reality, provide a context toward understanding early Christian attitudes toward Jesus. His view, while well presented, must be rejected by those who believe in the verbal inspiration of Scripture. See Rodney T. Hood, "The Genealogies of Jesus," in *Early Christian Origins: Studies in Honor of Harold R. Willoughby*, ed. Allen Wikgren (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1961) 1-15.

Although Abel does not follow the form-critical approach, he also calls into question the historicity and veracity of the genealogies. Indeed, before he enters into his discussion as to when and why the genealogies were written he states: "Given that both the Matthean and Lucan genealogies are therefore not historical, a number of questions present themselves. . . ." E. L. Abel, "The Genealogies of Jesus O KRICTOC," *NTS* 20 (1974) 205.

Perhaps the most thorough examination of the genealogies of Christ was undertaken by Johnson. Writing from the critical point of view he considers virtually every difficulty the genealogies pose, but does so with the assumption that they are fictional in character. While his exhaustive treatment is helpful in that it places many problems in focus, it is not of great value to the researcher who believes in verbal inspiration and who accepts the historicity and veracity of the accounts as they stand in Scripture. See Marshall D. Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies*, (SNTSMS 8; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1969) 139-256.

passage noted earlier in Ezra shows that these records were available and were accounted completely accurate. This fact has led some to believe that Matthew copied this genealogy as a whole from some existing record either public or private. There is nothing inherently negative in this supposition, and the document copied would have the seal of inspiration to validate its accuracy. However,

> It seems more natural to think that Matthew framed the list himself from the OT and the Jewish records. Some of its peculiarities, *e.g.* the incidental mention of certain females are best explained as having been introduced by him, with a special design.[2]

Meaning of Matthew 1:1

Matt 1:1 uses the phrase "book of the generation" (βίβλος γενέσεως). Two views exist as to the meaning of this particular phrase. The first is stated by Allen: "It seems probable that the title should be taken as covering not the whole Gospel, but only that portion of it which gives Christ's ancestry and the circumstances of His birth and childhood."[3] This is a possibility and is supported by the use of the same Greek word for "generation," translated "birth" (γένεσις), in v 18. The second view appeals to similar phrases used in the OT. The phrase, "These are the generations" is used in Gen 2:4 (אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדוֹת; Αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως, LXX), where it covers the history of the creation of the heaven and earth; it is also used in Gen 37:2 (אֵלֶּה תֹּלְדוֹת; αὗται δὲ αἱ γενέσεις, LXX), where it encompasses the history of Jacob; it is found again in Num 3:1 (וְאֵלֶּה תוֹלְדֹת, καὶ αὗται αἱ γενέσεις, LXX), where it refers to the lives and acts of Moses and Aaron. The same phrase, "These are the generations," is also used in Gen 6:9 (אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדֹת, Αὗται δὲ αἱ γενέσεις, LXX), in Gen 10:1 (וְאֵלֶּה תוֹלְדֹת, Αὗται δὲ αἱ γενέσεις, LXX), in Gen 11:10 (תוֹלְדֹת אֵלֶּה, καὶ αὗται αἱ γενέσεις, LXX), in Gen 11:27 (וְאֵלֶּה תוֹלְדֹת, Αὗται δὲ αἱ γενέσεις, LXX), and Ruth 4:18 (אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדֹת, καὶ αὗται αἱ γενέσεις, LXX), where in each instance it functions to introduce genealogies.

A similar phrase, "This is the book of the generations," occurs in the Hebrew text of Gen 5:1 (זֶה סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדֹת), where it covers the life of Adam and his immediate descendants. The LXX translation of this verse (Αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως) is identical to the LXX of Gen 2:4; in both cases the phrase appears to function in a broad sense as an

[2]John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1881) 2.

[3]Willoughby C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew* (ICC; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910) 2.

introduction to an entire history. Since this is the phrase adopted by Matt 1:1 (βίβλος γενέσεως), it seems best to understand it as not being a reference to the birth alone of Christ, but rather as an introduction to his life and acts. In other words, the phrase seems to introduce the complete book of Matthew.[4]

Matt 1:1 mentions Christ immediately as being the descendant of two men, Abraham and David. The reason for this pointed beginning is significant.

> By starting with Abraham it becomes evident that from the physical standpoint here is a racial, or Jewish, genealogy and yet since David is named before Abraham the emphasis is seen to be placed upon the Davidic aspect. Thus the fact of Jesus' Abrahamic sonship is made to be secondary to His Davidic sonship.[5]

Peculiarities regarding names

As the first chapter in Matthew is read, several peculiarities strike the eye regarding the names found there. These will each be dealt with at this time.

Spelling variations. Perhaps the most obvious thing is the difference in spelling, as found in the King James Version, between the

[4]Büschel argues for the former view: "This expression goes back to סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדוֹת or אֵלֶּה תּ׳ (Gn. 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 37:2; Ju [sic] 4:18); LXX: αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως or αὗται αἱ γενέσεις. The formula is used to introduce genealogies or historical narratives (Gn. 6:9; 37:2) or the two together. The question whether Mt. 1:1 is a heading for the whole book or just for the genealogy in 1:2-17 cannot be decided from OT parallels. The OT βίβλοι γενέσεως are not always the same, and as genealogies they are named after the ancestors rather than the descendants. The OT usage is undoubtedly changed here. Since, however, v. 17 refers back to v. 1 with its mention of Abraham and David, v. 1 is obviously meant to introduce vv. 2-17. Again, such a heading is clearly needed, since otherwise no one would know what the reference was in v. 2" (F. Büschell, "γενέσις," *TDNT* 1 [1964] 683).

Gilchrist provides necessary modification to Büschel: "As used in the OT, *tôlēdôt* refers to what is produced or brought into being by someone, or follows therefrom. In no case in Genesis does the word include the birth of the individual whose *tôlēdôt* it introduces (except in Gen 25:19, where the story of Isaac's life is introduced by reference to the fact that he was the son of Abraham). After the conclusion of the account in which Jacob was the principal actor, Gen 37:2 says, 'These are the *tôlēdôt* of Jacob' and proceeds to tell about his children and the events with which they were connected.

"In line with these usages it is reasonable to interpret Gen 2:4, 'These are the *tôlēdôt* of heaven and earth,' as meaning, not the coming of heaven and earth into existence, but the events that followed the establishment of heaven and earth" (P. R. Gilchrist, "יָלַד," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* [ed. R. L. Harris, B. K. Waltke, and G. Archer; Chicago: Moody, 1981], 1. 380).

[5]W. W. Barndollar, *Jesus' Title to the Throne of David* (Findlay: Dunham, 1963) 24.

names in the OT and the same names recorded in the NT. In understanding the reason for this it is necessary to remember that the translators of the OT transliterated names directly from Hebrew to English. In coming to the NT, however, there was a dual transliteration, first from Hebrew into Greek, and then from the Greek into English. Also, the Greek language is not able in some respects to express adequately Hebrew letters. For example, there is no "h" sound in Greek except to begin a word or in diphthongs. Then, too, the translators were not as precise as they could have been at times in the King James Version. Other translations of the Bible, such as the New American Standard Bible have used a consistent English spelling of the names in both the OT and the NT. Another point is that the translators of the LXX were not as precise in transliteration as they could have been. The Jews were then familiar with the Greek spelling of the names as found in the LXX and the NT writers used those names which were familiar to the people.[6]

Arbitrary Arrangement. The next peculiarity which usually comes to attention is the seemingly arbitrary arrangement of names by Matthew into three groups of fourteen each. To help see this arrangement the groups will be placed in columns.

Chart I

1. Abraham	1. Solomon	1. Jechoniah
2. Isaac	2. Rehoboam	2. Shealtiel
3. Jacob	3. Abijah	3. Zerubbabel
4. Judah	4. Asa	4. Abiud
5. Perez	5. Jehoshaphat	5. Eliakim
6. Hezron	6. Joram	6. Azor
7. Ram	7. Uzziah	7. Zadok
8. Amminadab	8. Jotham	8. Achim
9. Nahshon	9. Ahaz	9. Eliud
10. Salmon	10. Hezekiah	10. Eleazar
11. Boaz	11. Manasseh	11. Matthan
12. Obed	12. Amon	12. Jacob
13. Jesse	13. Josiah	13. Joseph
14. David	14. Jechoniah	14. Jesus

The second group consists entirely of kings; this list was apparently taken from I Chr 3:10-14. Some names have been omitted in this arrangement and this fact will be dealt with in a later section of this paper. Jechoniah is counted twice, perhaps because of the emphasis

[6]Broadus, *Matthew*, 3.

placed on him in regards to the Babylonian captivity. A definite break occurs between vv 11-12 with v 12 taking up a new thought—the Jews were taken captive.

A question arises as to why Matthew has 14 names in each group, and three suggestions have been given. Scroggie, in seeking to explain this, writes concerning the name David, "The letters of proper names had a numerical value, and in this name D-4, V-6, D-4, make a total of 14, and this fact may have led Matthew to divide his genealogy into three parts of 14 generations each."[7]

A second suggestion relates the 14 generations to the prophets Jeremiah and Daniel seeing special numerical significances. Ropes is an example of this approach:

> Jewish sacred arithmetic had found it necessary to calculate the future by the aid of Jeremiah's prophecy of God's salvation after seventy years; and in Daniel we find this interpreted as seventy weeks of years, or 490 years. Here in Matthew the methods of the rabbis are used, and the period from the initial promise to Abraham, by which the Jewish religion was really founded, to the birth of the Messiah is figured at three times seventy weeks of years, or three times fourteen generations which is the same thing. Thus at the exact fit time of prophecy and moreover of the lineage of David—in very truth the Son of David—*Jesus who is called Christ* is born.[8]

A third solution is that Matthew arranged the lists for literary symmetry. Lenski states: "It seems most likely that Matthew found 14 names in the first group and then arranged the rest in two more groups of 14."[9] The simplicity and directness of this third solution

[7]W. Graham Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels* (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1958) 510.

[8]James Hardy Ropes, *The Synoptic Gospels* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1934) 46-47. Two other approaches using a numerical significance idea are presented by Bruns: "He [Matthew] wanted, then, to emphasize the number fourteen. Why? Possibly because fourteen is twice seven (the perfect number), or possibly because three groups of fourteen are equivalent to six sevens, indicating that the seventh seven, the period of *Jubilee* (cf. Lev 25:8ff.), is now to follow. . . ." J. Edgar Bruns, "Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus," *The Bible Today* 15 (1964) 981-82. The whole problem of biblical numerology is outside the scope of this article. However, anyone desiring further study on this issue should consult John J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968).

[9]R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Columbus: Wartburg, 1943) 37. See also John F. Walvoord, *Matthew: Thy Kingdom Come* (Chicago: Moody, 1974) 18. Newman also discusses the arrangement of names into three groups of 14 each. Instead of having Jechoniah conclude the second group and begin the third, he has David conclude the first group and begin the second. However, it seems that the emphasis of the text at Matt 1:11-12 stresses Jechoniah much more than 1:6 stresses David. Therefore, this writer favors Jechoniah as being the more pivotal figure. See Barclay M. Newman, Jr., "Matthew 1.1-18: Some Comments and a

makes it the most probable answer to why Matthew so arranged his lists of names.

"All" the generations. Another concern regarding the names listed is the statement in Matt 1:17 that this is "all" the generations. Obviously, the "all" here does not mean every generation that actually lived from Abraham to Jesus. This "all" is simply referring back to those names Matthew has enumerated. He did not merely copy a list, but arranged it in a purposeful way.

Omission of names. A further complexity is that Matthew omitted some names in his genealogy. Several names which are recorded in other genealogies demonstrate this.

The first difficulty along this line is encountered in Matt 1:5-6 (see also Luke 3:32). From Perez to David both Matthew and Luke are in agreement with Ruth 4:18-22; however, a chronological difficulty is found in the time between Salmon and David. Salmon married Rahab the harlot of Jericho. The fall of Jericho took place about the year 1400 B.C. and David was born about the year 1040 B.C. (see 2 Sam 5:4). Thus, a gap of about 360 years exists here with only three names between Salmon and David—Boaz, Obed, Jesse. Two possible solutions to this difficulty prevail. The first is to hold to a late date for the Exodus and thereby shorten the time gap some 200 years. While many hold to the late date of the Exodus, this writer is of the conviction that there is no substantiating proof for this view.[10] The second solution is to hold that there is an omission of names found here. This is further substantiated by the fact that only five names are listed between Perez and Nahshon a gap of some 300 to 400 years. To attempt to likewise shorten this time gap causes considerable consternation in chronology.[11]

The second omission is found in Matt 1:8 where, according to a comparison with 1 Chr 3:10-12 there is an omission of Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah. The Uzziah of Matt 1:8 is equivalent to the

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Suggested Restructuring," *The Bible Translator* 27 (1976) 209-12. Raymond E. Brown (*The Birth of the Messiah* [Garden City: Doubleday, 1977] 74-84) thoroughly discusses this problem and concludes that the pattern of 3x14 indicates that "God planned from the beginning and with precision the Messiah's origins."

[10]For discussion of the arguments favoring the early date, as opposed to the late date, of the exodus see Leon T. Wood, "Date of the Exodus," in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. Barton Payne (Waco: Word, 1970) 66-87; also see Bruce K. Waltke, "Palestinian Artifactual Evidence Supporting the Early Date of the Exodus," *BSac* 129 (1972) 33-47.

[11]That biblical chronologies occasionally do have gaps is also discussed by John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1965) 474-89. Although their discussion relates specifically to chronologies in Genesis, the principles can be applied to other genealogies as well.

Azariah of 1 Chr 3:12. Matthew omitted these names to secure symmetry in this genealogy "and these particular persons might naturally be selected for omission, because they were immediate descendants of Ahab and Jezebel."[12] There was nothing unusual about shortening a genealogy. An example of this can be found by comparing Ezra 7:1-5 with 1 Chr 6:3-15. In Ezra only 16 generations are recorded between Ezra and Aaron while in 1 Chronicles 22 generations are recorded. Thus, Ezra shortened his genealogy and as a matter of fact even omitted his own father, Jehozadak. Apparently to the Jewish mind this was a proper thing to do, and it is not unusual to find Matthew omitting names in his genealogy.

The third omission is found in Matt 1:11 where, according to 1 Chr 3:15-16, Jehoiakim has been omitted. One solution that has been offered is to add the name Jehoiakim between Josiah and Jechoniah. This is supported by some later manuscripts, but is not found in the better MSS or even the Textus Receptus as a correct reading. In this verse Matthew simply omitted Jehoiakim to secure symmetry, "and this particular person may have been chosen because in his reign occurred the events which led to the captivity."[13]

Whether or not Matthew omitted other names cannot be dogmatically stated, but the assumption would be that he probably omitted names in his third section as he did in the second. Since there are now no records of that period available to determine it for certain, however, it must remain an open question.

Unusual mentionings. Not only does Matthew omit names in his genealogy, but he also has some unusual mentionings. These will be inspected briefly at this time.

Matt 1:2 includes Judah's "brethren" along with him. Two primary suggestions are made as to the purpose of alluding to the other eleven men. Perhaps it was because it was common to speak of the twelve patriarchs all together (cf. Acts 7:8). Or perhaps "the brethren of Judah are named . . . because all who were descended from them were alike Israelites, and had an equal interest in the Messiah."[14]

[12]Broadus, *Matthew*, 4.

[13]Ibid. The complication in this verse concerning the word "brethren" will be dealt with later.

[14]E. H. Plumptre, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Layman's Handy Commentary on the Bible, ed. Charles John Ellicott; reprint ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957) 1. Davis gives other suggestions as to why Judah's brethren are mentioned, and in the process makes two pertinent observations: "Judah and his brothers, the twelve patriarchs, are singled out as a unit. The nation is born. God's promise to Abraham is fulfilled. Jacob becomes Israel (Gen 35:9-15) and through his sons the land of Abraham will be possessed.

Matt 1:3 mentions Zerah in addition to Phares. This is unusual in that it is the only time in this list that a man is *named* that is not in the direct genealogy. A similar mentioning of the two brothers occurs in 1 Chr 2:4. This "is probably due to the fact that Tamar their mother has been mentioned and that she bore them both at one birth."[15]

At this point the complication concerning the "brethren" of Jeconiah in Matt 1:11 will be considered. Carr, in seeking to prove that this verse should have Jehoiakim in it and not Jechoniah, states that Jechoniah "had no brethren."[16] However, 1 Chr 3:16 is definite that he had at least one brother whose name was Zedekiah. Since it is known that Jechoniah had one brother and also known that genealogical lists often omit names, there "might very well have been other brothers known from genealogies existing in Matthew's time, but whom the compiler of Chronicles had no occasion to include in his list."[17] Indeed, the inspired Word of God proves there were other brothers because of this very verse under consideration.

A further unusual characteristic is the mentioning of four women in the genealogy, four women, in fact, of questionable background. The four women are: Tamar (1:3), Rahab (1:5), Ruth (1:5), and Bathsheba (1:6).

> Two of them were Gentiles, Rahab and Ruth, and Ruth, being a Moabitess, was expressly cursed (Deut 23:3). Three of the four women were wicked sinners—Tamar's fornication, Rahab's harlotry, and Bathsheba's sin being well-known. Yet their inclusion in the genealogy of the Messiah is a display of the triumph of the grace of God.[18]

"Judah is also set apart from his brothers. In his inheritance he is incomparable in honor to them." Charles Thomas Davis, "The Fulfillment of Creation: A Study of Matthew's Genealogy," *JAAR* 41 (1973) 524.

[15]Broadus, *Matthew*, 4.

[16]Arthur Carr, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, ed. J. J. S. Perowne; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1896) 30.

[17]Broadus, *Matthew*, 4.

[18]Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1959) 41. Brown (*The Birth of the Messiah*, 71-74) advances three proposals to explain the inclusion of these ladies: (1) "The *first proposal* . . . is that the four OT women were regarded as sinners; and their inclusion foreshadowed for Matthew's readers the role of Jesus as the Savior of sinful men." However, Brown observes that this proposal fails with the example of Ruth. (2) "The *second proposal* . . . has more to recommend it, namely, that the women were regarded as foreigners and were included by Matthew to show that Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, was related by ancestry to the Gentiles." However, Brown observes that this breaks down in that the fifth woman in the genealogy, Mary, is not a foreigner; also, first century Jews probably would not have regarded the four as foreigners. Still, Brown sees some degree of validity in this view. (3) "The *third proposal* . . . finds two common elements in the four OT women,

It would seem, on the surface, that if a woman was to be included it would have been someone who was highly respected, such as Sarah or Rebekah, but such is not the case. "If the Messiah deigns to link Himself with such a family—if God is pleased so to order things out of that stock, as concerning the flesh, His own Son, the Holy One of Israel, was to be born—surely there could be none too bad to be received of Him."[19]

Some have said that Matthew went against all usual ways of reckoning a genealogy by mentioning women, but there are other similar cases in the OT. For example, Keturah is mentioned in Gen 25:1, Esau's wives are recorded in Gen 36:10, Timna is found in Gen 36:22, Caleb's wives are written in 1 Chr 2:18-19, Caleb's daughter is listed in 1 Chr 2:49, and Tamar is given in 1 Chr 2:4. Thus, while it was not customary to include women, it was done numerous times.

Conclusion

The seeming difficulties between Matthew and the OT are not as great as some may think. Likewise, the solutions to the problems are relatively clear. Matthew in no way contradicts the OT, but rather serves as a complement to it.

DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN MATTHEW AND LUKE

Attention will now be directed to the difficulties found in a comparison of the genealogy in Matthew with the genealogy as given by Luke.

A word needs to be said about the source from which Luke drew his genealogy. "It is not known how Luke secured his genealogy. Although we today cannot test its correctness in all details there is no reason for calling any of its items into question."[20] The remarks made above concerning the source of Matthew's genealogy would also fit

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elements that they share with Mary: (a) there is something extraordinary or irregular in their union with their partners—a union which, though it may have been scandalous to outsiders, continued the blessed lineage of the Messiah; (b) the women showed initiative or played an important role in God's plan and so came to be considered the instrument of God's providence or of His Holy Spirit." This is Brown's preferred view.

[19]William Kelly, *Lectures on the Gospel of Matthew* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.) 16.

[20]R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel* (Columbus: Wartburg, 1946) 221. Bruns postulates that Luke borrowed from Jewish folklore and arranged his genealogy of 77 names into eleven sets of seven names each in order to present an ingenious rehearsal of salvation-history. Bruns' theory is interesting, but rests upon an acceptance of numerical significances, apocryphal stories, and imagination. Bruns states that Luke does not give a strict genealogy but was intended to teach the way of life. His position is unacceptable to anyone holding a high view of inspiration (Bruns, "Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus," 982).

here. Luke probably compiled this genealogy himself from public records and from the OT.

Purposes of the genealogies

Each of the genealogies was written by a different man to different people and as a result each had a different primary purpose. The book of Matthew was written for the Jewish people and it demonstrates to them that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah. To the Jewish mind one question would be of supreme importance, and this would be, "Is he of the house of David?" The genealogy presented by Matthew answers at the beginning in the affirmative. Luke, on the other hand, is not writing to Jews but to Gentiles, and specifically to the Greeks. Thus, Luke is concerned with demonstrating that Jesus is one with humanity, that he stands as the perfect man, which was the ideal among Greek thinking. In addition to the primary purposes of the two genealogies, there is also a secondary theme, implicit in both, which is salvation for the Gentiles. "In Matthew it is seen in the linking of Jesus with Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant, which promised blessings to all nations in the Seed. In Luke it is seen in the tracing of the genealogy back to Adam."[21]

Peculiarities of the genealogies

Although most of the peculiarities of Matthew have already been mentioned, they will be listed here again so that the contrast between Matthew and Luke can be more easily observed.

MATTHEW

1. Artificial division into three groups of fourteen.
2. Insertion of some brothers and women.
3. Omission of some names.
4. Protection of the virgin birth.

LUKE

1. Inverted order of names.
2. Ending list with Adam and God.
3. Omission of the article before Joseph.
4. Placing at beginning of ministry rather than beginning of Gospel.
5. Insertion of Rhesa and a second Cainan.

Each of the peculiarities of Matthew was previously discussed except the last. Matt 1:16 says that "Jacob begat Joseph the husband

[21]Ryrie, *Biblical Theology*, 41.

of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." In the English version the protection given to the virgin birth is not made clear. However, in the original there is no doubt since the pronoun in "of whom" (ἐξ ἧς) is feminine and could only refer to Mary.

Attention will be turned now to the peculiarities found in Luke. First, Luke has inverted his listing of the genealogy. Official genealogical registers usually present the descending order since individuals are only recorded in them as they are born. "The *ascending* form of genealogy can only be that of a private instrument, drawn up from the public document with a view to a particular individual whose name serves as the starting point of the whole list."[22] Therefore, Luke intends to emphasize the person with whom he begins his list, Jesus. A similar list in Ezra 7:1-5, mentioned previously, emphasizes Ezra.

The second peculiarity in Luke's list is the tracing of the lineage all the way back to Adam and God. Why does Luke do this?

> Certainly not in order to show the Divine Sonship of the Messiah, which would place Him in this respect on a level with all mankind. More probably it is added for the sake of Gentile readers, to remind them of the Divine origin of the human race,—an origin which they share with the Messiah. It is a correction of the myths respecting the origin of man, which were current among the heathen.[23]

The third peculiarity is the omission of the definite article before Joseph. This significant item will be dealt with fully in a later section of this article.

The fourth peculiarity is the placing of the genealogy at the beginning of the ministry of Christ rather than at the beginning of the Gospel. Plummer observes the importance of this placement:

> It would be only a slight exaggeration to say that this *is* the beginning of his gospel, for the first three chapters are only introductory. The use of ἀρχόμενος (*archomenos*) here implies that the Evangelist is now making a fresh start. Two of the three introductory chapters are the history of the Forerunner, which Lk. completes in the third chapter before beginning his account of the work of the Messiah. Not until Jesus has been anointed by the Spirit does the history of the Messiah, i.e. the Anointed One, begin; and His genealogy then becomes of importance. In a similar way the pedigree of Moses is placed, not just before or just after his birth (Exod. ii. 1, 2) . . . but just after his public appearance . . . (Exod. vi. 14-37).[24]

[22]Frederick Louis Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, (2 vols in 1; reprint ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), 1. 197.

[23]Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1953) 105.

[24]Ibid., pp. 101-2. Geldenhuys observes also: "Thus far Luke has dealt mostly with people and matters that had a preparatory significance for the appearance of Jesus.

"In other words, in connecting the genealogy directly with the ministry, Luke exhibits the fact that his interest in it is historical rather than antiquarian or, so to say, genealogical."[25]

The fifth peculiarity in Luke is the insertion of Rhesa (3:27) and a second Cainan (3:36). Each of these names will be considered. The difficulty with Rhesa is that there is no other mention of him in the Bible. Two explanations have been given to explain his mention by Luke. One would be that, "Rhesa, who is named as Zerubbabel's son (Luke iii. 27), is a title: the text in Luke should run 'which was the son of Rhesa Zerubbabel.'"[26] Rhesa would be an Aramaic title meaning "Prince," and the solution is that some copyist misunderstood and made Rhesa to be the son of Zerubbabel. The major problem with this solution is that it has no manuscript support for it. It is a hypothesis that stands without any objective data supporting it. A second explanation for Rhesa would be that he is the same as Rephaiah. "The sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnon, etc. (1 Chron 3:21), were, it is supposed, branches of the family of David whose descent or connection with Zerubbabel is for us unascertainable. Rephaiah is probably the same as Rhesa mentioned in Luke 3:27."[27] This explanation has the advantage over the former in that it does accept the text as it is. However, even this view admits it is "supposed," and the connection is "unascertainable." Both of these explanations rest on the assumption that the Zerubbabel of the OT, the Zerubbabel of Matthew, and the Zerubbabel of Luke are all the same man. But, if the Zerubbabel in Luke is a *different* man then it is unlikely that his son, Rhesa, would be recorded in any OT genealogy. This may be exactly the situation as will be presented in detail in a later section of this article.

A different type of problem is encountered with the second Cainan (Luke 3:36). This part of Luke's genealogy is also recorded in Gen 10:24, 11:12, and in 1 Chr 1:24. However, the OT genealogies omit this Cainan in all three instances. The problem here is that this name "though found in this place of the genealogy of the LXX, is not found in any Hebrew MS of the O.T., not in the Samaritan, Chaldee, and Syriac versions. . . . It is omitted in the Codex Bezae (D), and

Now, however, he is about to relate the public activity of the Lord. All subordinate personalities are now to be relegated to the background and henceforth he proceeds to place Jesus, the Central Figure in the divine drama, completely in the foreground of his narrative, as it should be. For this reason he regards this as the suitable place to record the genealogical table" (Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968] 150).

[25]L. M. Sweet, "The Genealogy of Jesus Christ," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1915) 2. 1197.

[26]Carr, *Matthew*, 30. Scroggie (*Guide to the Gospels*, 508) also adopts this view.

[27]*Unger's Bible Dictionary*, s.v. "Rephaiah."

there is some evidence it was unknown to Irenaeus."[28] To this it may be added that "it is wanting in the Vatican copy of the Septuagint. . . ."[29] Several possible solutions to this difficulty are given: (1) The first simply states that, "There can be little doubt that the name has somehow crept in by mistake; but whether into the Septuagint first, and from that into the copies of Luke, or *vice versa*, cannot be certainly determined."[30] The problem with this solution is that it fails to take into consideration the vast MS support for the reading as given in Luke. (2) The next solution is "that *Cainan* was a surname of *Sala*, and that the names should be read *together* thus, *the son of Heber, the son of Salacainan, the son of Arphaxad*, etc."[31] This is an ingenious solution, but it again has no explanation for the MS support that gives the reading as it is in Luke. (3) Another possible solution is that, since it is in the LXX, "this may imply an original Hebrew text older than that which we now possess. . . ."[32] This view is better than the preceding in that it readily accepts as genuine the text of Luke. It may very well be the correct solution to the problem. However, at this time it rests on an unprovable hypothesis. On the other hand, much work still needs to be done in the area of textual criticism in the OT. (4) An additional solution would be to rely on Codex Bezae (D), which omits the name, as passing on the true reading of the text. To do this, however, the principles of textual criticism must be set aside. (5) The last possible solution to this problem would be to recognize that the name is omitted in the Hebrew OT and legitimately so, and at the same time recognize it as a valid part of Luke's Gospel. The explanation is that Luke had access to another list (be it the LXX or not), and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit included it, and rightly so, in his Gospel. This would recognize the fact shown before that not all the OT genealogies are complete in giving every name. Since, however, the name does not "appear to have been in the copies of the Septuagint used by Theophilus of Antioch in the second century, by Africanus in the third, or by Eusebius in the fourth [and since] Jerome, in his annotations on the chapter takes no notice of it,"[33] it is possible that it may have been added to the LXX. It is, on the other hand, a perfectly accurate name in the genealogy of Luke.

[28]Frederick William Farrar, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1895) 374.

[29]P. Fairbairn, "Genealogies," *Fairbairn's Imperial Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, (reprint; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957) 2. 351.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Clarke, *St. Luke*, 5. 384.

[32]E. H. Plumptre, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Layman's Handy Commentary on the Bible; reprint ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957) 53.

[33]Fairbairn, "Genealogies," 2. 351.

Luke does not contradict the OT in the least, but rather supplements it. This writer believes that either views (3) or (5) will solve the difficulty in its entirety, but the fifth view seems to be the most satisfactory.

Reconciling the genealogies

Some say that reconciling the two genealogies is impossible. Others say that to harmonize the two genealogies one must make assumptions which cannot be proven. Still others say that reconciliation is possible. "In light of these views one is prepared to face difficulties and to come, perhaps, to no definite conclusion."[34] Farrar comments on whether or not one Evangelist had seen the other's work: "The difference between the two genealogies thus given without a word of explanation constitutes a strong probability that neither Evangelist had seen the work of the other."[35]

There are two main approaches in attempting to reconcile the genealogies. One is to say that both are the genealogies of Joseph and then to attack the problems. The other is to say that while Matthew gives Joseph's, Luke gives Mary's genealogy and then to attack the problems. No matter which approach is used, problems exist. The view that both genealogies are Joseph's will be presented first.

Both genealogies are Joseph's. The view that both genealogies are Joseph's has given rise to two different approaches. One holds that Matthew gives the real (physical) descent and Luke gives the legal descent of Joseph, the other that Matthew gives the legal descent and Luke gives the real parentage. The first perspective is summarized by Robertson:

> By this theory, Heli and Jacob being stepbrothers, Jacob married Heli's widow and was the real father of Joseph. Thus both the genealogies would be the descent of Joseph, one the real, the other the legal. . . . It is argued that Jechoniah's children were born in captivity and so, being slaves, he lost both his royal dignity and his legal status. Stress is laid upon the word "begat" to show that Matthew's descent must be the natural pedigree of Joseph, and upon the use of the expression "son (as was supposed) of Joseph." Hence both Joseph's real and legal standings are shown, for by Luke's account he had an

[34]Scroggie, *Guide to the Gospels*, 505. Barnard is explicit in his opinion as to whether the two genealogies can be harmonized: "we have two independent attempts to establish the Davidic descent of Joseph, and . . . they can be harmonized only by suppositions which are incapable of proof and hardly probable." P. Mordaunt Barnard, "Genealogies of Jesus Christ," *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* (reprint ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973) 1. 639.

[35]Farrar, *Luke*, 374.

> undisputed legal title to descent from David. This is certainly possible, although it rests on the hypothesis of the Levirate marriage.[36]

On the other hand, the first approach here

> . . . derives very great authority from the fact that it is preserved for us by Eusebius (H. E. I. 7) from a letter of Julius Africanus, a Christian writer who lived in Palestine in the third century, and who *professed to derive it from private memoranda preserved by 'the Diosposyni' or kindred of the Lord.*[37]

Some difficulties about the evidence from Africanus are, however, a strange omission of Levi and Matthat, and also that he makes "Matthew's genealogy . . . *partly legal* (as in calling Shealtiel the *son* of Jechoniah) and partly natural (in calling Joseph the son of Jacob)."[38]

The second approach is summarized by Machen:

> The most probable answer is that Matthew gives the *legal* descendants of David—the men who would have been legally the heir to the Davidic throne if that throne had been continued—while Luke gives the descendants of David in that particular line to which, Joseph, the husband of Mary, belonged. There is nothing at all inherently improbable in such a solution. When a kingly line becomes extinct, the living member of a collateral line inherits the throne. So it may well have been in the present case.[39]

Both of these subdivisions hold that Solomon's line failed in Jechoniah; therefore, Shealtiel of Matthew's line took his place. Both of these possibilities, representing the general view that both genealogies are Joseph's, rest on unprovable assumptions.[40]

Luke gives Mary's genealogy. The second approach to reconciling the genealogies is to say that while Matthew presents Joseph's, Luke presents Mary's. In criticism of this solution, Plummer said that

[36]A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels for Students of the Life of Christ* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950) 260.

[37]Farrar, *Luke*, 372.

[38]Ibid., 373.

[39]J. Gresham Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930) 204.

[40]A further refinement in the view that both genealogies are Joseph's is that some adherents would equate the Matthat of Luke 3:24 with the Matthan of Matt 1:15, while others hold to a distinction. The overall view that both genealogies are Joseph's is also advocated by: Fairbairn, "Genealogies," 2. 348-51; Plummer, *St. Luke*, 101-5; Carr, *Matthew*, 29-31; Sweet, "The Genealogy of Jesus Christ," 2. 1196-99; and Lord Arthur Hervey, "Genealogy of Jesus Christ," *A Dictionary of the Bible* (Hartford: S. S. Scranton, 1867) 283-85.

it was "not advocated by anyone until Annius of Viterbo propounded it, c. A.D. 1490."[41] In light of this, some may conclude that this could not be the best solution or else accurate understanding of this matter was unknown to the church for over 1400 years. However, if substantial evidence can be given in support of this view, no overwhelming reason exists why it cannot be correct. The church could have lacked clear understanding on this problem. Then, too, the possibility exists that the view could have been held early in church history and the record of it simply not have come down to us. The point in question is *not* what the church has taught, but what the Bible teaches.

In considering this view, a comparison of Matthew's and Luke's emphasis is in order. Matthew emphasizes Joseph in the first two chapters and Mary is only mentioned as his wife (see 1:16, 17, 20; 2:13, 19, 20). On the other hand, the emphasis in the opening chapters of Luke is on Mary (see 1:26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35; 2:19, 51). This seems to give some value to saying that Joseph's genealogy is in Matthew and Mary's is in Luke.
Mary's is in Luke.

Godet argues forcefully from the wording of Luke 3:23 that Luke does not give Joseph's genealogy:

> With the participle ὢν, *being*, there begins then a transition which we owe to the pen of Luke. How far does it extend, and where does the genealogical register properly begin? This is a nice and imortant question. We have only a hint for its solution. This is the absence of the article τοῦ, *the*, before the name of Joseph. This word is found before all the names belonging to the genealogical series. In the genealogy of Matthew, the article τόν is put in the same way before each proper name, which clearly proves that it was the ordinary form in vogue in this kind of document. . . . *This want of the article puts the name Joseph outside the genealogical series properly so called*, and assigns to it a peculiar position. We must conclude from it—1st. That this name belongs rather to the sentence introduced by Luke; 2d. That the genealogical document which he consulted began with the name of

[41]Plummer, *St. Luke*, 103. Geldenhuys replies to this point: "It is true that we have no example in the old church fathers and of the other oldest Christian writers before the fifth century . . ., where it is stated that Luke gives the genealogical table of Mary. This, however, proves nothing, for the earliest data in connection with the whole problem we only find in Julius Africanus (about A.D. 200). What most likely happened was that in the earliest times the true interpretation of Luke's genealogical table was generally known, so that no problem arose at first. Only when towards the end of the second or the beginning of the third century there was no longer any first-hand connection with the apostles and their contemporaries and first successors did the genealogical data begin to give trouble" (*Gospel of Luke*, 154 n. 5).

Heli; 3d. And consequently, that this piece was not originally the genealogy of Jesus or Joseph, but of Heli.[42]

Plummer objects to this interpretation, arguing that it causes the word "son" to be used in two distinct ways in the same sentence:

> It is altogether unnatural to place the comma after Ἰωσήφ and not before it: "Being the son (as was supposed of Joseph) of Heli;" i.e. being supposed to be the son of Joseph, but really the grandson of Heli. It is not credible that υἱός can mean both son and grandson in the same sentence.[43]

However, the supposed problem which Plummer sees is not as significant as it may first appear. The idea of links being passed over in genealogies was not unusual. Lenski states the explanation concisely:

> The objection that, if Luke is giving us the genealogy of Jesus through Mary, Heli would be the grandfather of Jesus and could not be introduced by τοῦ Ἡλί overlooks the fact that sometimes even several links are skipped in the Biblical genealogies; this is the case in Matthew's list and in Ezra 7:3 where six links are omitted as 1 Chron. 6:7-11 shows. The claim that Mary should have been mentioned as being the daughter of Heli is more than met by Luke's full narrative of how she became the mother of Jesus; every reader knew that ὤν υἱός . . . τοῦ Ἡλί, "being a son . . . of Heli," could mean only one thing: Heli's son through Mary (and certainly not through a *supposed* father). The parenthesis in our versions should be extended to include the name Joseph: "(as was supposed of Joseph)." To shorten it as is done in our versions makes the entire list up to "of God" (v. 38) dependent on "as

[42]Godet, *Gospel of Luke*, 1. 198-99. Barndollar recognizes this same significance: "This omission of the definite article strongly suggests that the *name Joseph also belongs in the parenthesis*. Therefore, a possible literal translation is, 'being the son (as was supposed of Joseph) of Heli, of Matthat,' etc. Thus this translation would suggest that Jesus was not the son of Heli through Joseph. Therefore if He were not, then He must have been the son of Heli through Mary. There is no other alternative. Thus the genealogy would have to be Mary's. . . . If Joseph's name is placed within the parenthesis, then it would make Jesus the 'grandson' of Heli. However there is no conflict with the term 'son,' since it often means *direct* descent and not *immediate* descent" (*Jesus' Title*, 39). See also Geldenhuys, *Gospel of Luke*, 153 n. 4.

[43]Plummer, *St. Luke*, 103. A further objection, and reply, is given by Leon Morris: "Against this approach it is urged that this is not what Luke says and that in any case genealogies were not traced through the female line. Luke, however, is speaking of a virgin birth, and we have no information as to how a genealogy would be reckoned when there was no human father. The case is unique" (*The Gospel According to St. Luke*, [The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976] 100).

was supposed," for there is no way to restrict this clause except by including "of Joseph" in it as a part of the parenthesis.[44]

Yes, Luke does mention Joseph, "but the very manner in which this is done points out his true relation to Jesus and Heli, the living means of connection between these latter being Mary."[45]

> This study of the text in detail leads us in this way to admit—1. That the genealogical register of Luke is that of Heli, the grandfather of Jesus; 2. That, this affiliation of Jesus by Heli being expressly opposed to His affiliation by Joseph, the document which he has preserved for us can be nothing else in his view than the genealogy of Jesus through Mary. But why does not Luke name Mary, and why pass immediately from Jesus to His grandfather? Ancient sentiment did not comport with the mention of the mother as the genealogical link. Among the Greeks a man was the son of his father, not of his mother; and among the Jews the adage was: "*Genus matris non vocatur genus*" (Baba bathra, 110a). In lieu of this, it is not uncommon to find in the O.T. the grandson called the son of his grandfather.[46]

The strength of Godet's argumentation is even recognized by those who hold to the position that both genealogies are Joseph's. For example, Sweet says:

> The authorities have been divided as to whether Lk's genealogy is Joseph's, as appears, or Mary's. Godet makes a strong showing for the latter, and, after all has been said per contra, some of his representations remain unshaken. . . .[47]

[44]Lenski, *St. Luke's Gospel*, 220. Lenski also says: "How Luke could think of appending a genealogy of Joseph after saying that Jesus was only *supposed* to be a son of Joseph, i.e., a physical son, Luke himself having shown at length that this supposition was wrong and that Jesus was a physical son only by Mary, has yet to be made clear by those who find the genealogy of Joseph here" (Ibid., 218-19).

[45]John Peter Lange, *The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ*, (reprint ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958) 1. 300.

[46]Godet, *Gospel of Luke*, 1. 201. Godet also addresses the problem as to what would have been the result had Luke given Joseph's genealogy: "It is not only with Matthew that Luke would be in contradiction, but with himself. he admits the miraculous birth (chap. i and ii). It is conceivable that, from the theocratic point of view which Matthew takes, a certain interest might, even on this supposition, be assigned to the genealogy of Joseph as the *adoptive*, legal father of the Messiah. But that Luke, to whom this official point of view was altogether foreign, should have handed down with so much care this series of seventy-three names, after having severed the chain at the first link, as he does by the remark, *as it was thought*; that, further, he should give himself the trouble, after this, to develope [sic] the entire series, and finish at last with God Himself;—this is a moral impossibility" (Ibid., 202-3).

[47]Sweet, "The Genealogy of Jesus Christ," 2. 1198.

Two additional arguments have been mentioned in support of the view that Luke's genealogy belongs to Mary, but the first is in question. (1) "In the *Jewish Talmud*, written just a few years after the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are told that Jesus was the illegitimate son of Mary of Bethlehem, the daughter of Heli."[48] (2) "If both genealogies are entirely Joseph's there would be no proof in them that Mary was of Davidic descent, and such proof was necessary seeing that Joseph was not Jesus' natural father. . . ."[49] The cumulative weight of the evidence points to the view that Luke presents Mary's genealogy as the better position.

Identifying men in the genealogies

At this time attention will be turned to another difficulty which is noticed in comparing Matthew and Luke. In both Matt 1:12 and Luke 3:27 Shealtiel and Zerubbabel are listed. Two specific questions arise here. Are these the same or different individuals? If the same, then how did the two lines meet at this point? Whether or not the men are identical in Matthew and Luke, Shealtiel and Zerubbabel of Matthew are the same ones that are found in the OT (with one possible exception). This presents a further problem in that Matt 1:12; Ezra 3:2; 5:2; Neh 12:1; Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 23 all agree that Zerubbabel is the son of Shealtiel, but 1 Chr 3:9 says he is the son of Pedaiah, the brother of Shealtiel. This latter problem will be dealt with first. Four possible answers have been given.

The first suggestion is that the problem has no adequate solution with present information. Broadus states this view succinctly: "It is not surprising that there should be some slight differences in these lists of names which, with our imperfect information, we are unable to explain."[50]

The second suggestion hinges around a variant textual reading. Machen is representative of this view:

> In the second place; one may follow certain manuscripts of the Septuagint at I Chron. iii. 18f., instead of following the Hebrew text.

[48]Harry A. Ironside, *Addresses on the Gospel of Luke*, (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1946) 1. 104. Geldenhuys questions this argument: "The Miriam, daughter of Eli, who is referred to in the Talmud (*Chagigah* 77d), has in all probability nothing to do with Mary the mother of Jesus, as is made plain in Strack-Billerbeck (*in loc.*)" (*Gospel of Luke*, 154 n. 5).

[49]Scroggie, *Guide to the Gospels*, 509. For further study supporting the view that Luke gives Mary's genealogy, see: Plumptre, *Matthew*, 1-6; Plumptre, *Luke*, 51-54; Broadus, *Matthew*, 1-7; Robertson, *Harmony*, 259-62; and Geldenhuys, *Gospel of Luke*, 150-55.

[50]Broadus, *Matthew*, 5.

> In that case Pedaiah drops out as the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel may be regarded as the actual son of Shealtiel.[51]

The third suggestion appeals to the practice of levirate marriage in the OT. Keil postulates:

> . . . Shealtiel died without any male descendants, leaving his wife a widow. . . . After Shealtiel's death his second brother Pedaiah fulfilled this Levirate duty, and begat, in his marriage with his sister-in-law, Zerubbabel, who was now regarded, in all that related to laws of heritage, as Shealtiel's son. . . .[52]

The last suggestion is to suppose that there is a different Zerubbabel recorded in 1 Chr 3:19 than from the other references listed in the OT.[53] At first glance this would seem to be doubtful. However, as the children of Zerubbabel of 1 Chr 3:19 are listed it is observed that Abiud (Matt 1:13) is not listed. In 1 Chr 3:19-20 seven sons and one daughter are listed, but none of them have a name anything similar to Abiud which Matthew records in 1:13. This would indicate that a different person is involved here. Therefore, this last suggestion seems to be the most satisfactory.

Upon coming to the question of whether or not the Shealtiel and Zerubbabel of Matthew are the same as those in Luke, two different opinions are faced. Farrar states: "The old suggestion that the Zerubbabel and Shealtiel of St. Luke are different persons from those of St. Matthew may be set aside at once."[54] On the other hand, Broadus writes: "The names Shealtiel and Zerubbabel in the genealogies need not be supposed to represent the same person."[55] Those who hold to the position that the men are identical in the two genealogies have three different ways of explaining it. Some say that Shealtiel was an adopted son of Jechoniah. Some say that Shealtiel was a son-in-law, and others say he was a son by Levirate law. These three views will now be examined.

Since Jer 22:30 says, "Write ye this man (Jechoniah or Coniah) childless," some say he actually had no sons and therefore adopted Shealtiel, who was really the son of Neri (Luke 3:27).[56] This possibility, however, does not adequately meet the problem. The following

[51]Machen, *Virgin Birth*, 206.

[52]C. F. Keil, *The Books of the Chronicles*, (Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament; reprinted; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) 81-82.

[53]Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, vol. 1: *The Four Gospels*, rev. Everett F. Harrison (Chicago: Moody, 1968) 4.

[54]Farrar, *Luke*, 373.

[55]Broadus, *Matthew*, 5.

[56]Scroggie, for example, writes: "In Jer. xxii. 24-30, it is predicted that Coniah (Jehoiachim) would be childless, but it is possible and probable that he adopted the seven sons of Neri, the twentieth from David in the line of Nathan. This seems to be

eight objections to this view have been condensed from Barndollar.[57] (1) To say that Jechoniah had no sons contradicts 1 Chr 3:17 where two sons are listed: Assir and Shealtiel. (2) Jechoniah begat Shealtiel *after* the carrying away to Babylon (Matt 1:12). At the time of the carrying away Jechoniah was only 18 years old (2 Kgs 24:8). His wives were taken with him (2 Kgs 24:15), and when released from prison he was only 55, which is still young enough to have children. (3) The rest of Jer 22:30 explains the first part. Jeremiah is saying that Jechoniah's heirs *will not prosper* if they ever do occupy the throne. He is not saying Jechoniah will not have children. (4) "Begat" as used by Matthew is a word which generally denotes physical descent. (5) There is *no* Scriptural proof that Jechoniah ever adopted any sons. In addition, what point would there be for the Babylonian king to permit Jechoniah (who was in prison) to go through the legal procedure of adoption? (6) From Abraham to David Matthew agrees with Luke and with the OT in listing blood descendants. Thus, what reason is there for considering him to be inaccurate in listing the successors to Solomon? The only fair conclusion is that Matthew accurately recorded Shealtiel and Zerubbabel as blood descendants of both Jechoniah and Solomon. (7) Luke gives a completely different list of names from David to Shealtiel, and from Zerubbabel to Jesus, and the obvious, clearest, and most evident interpretation, with consistency, would be to regard Shealtiel and Zerubbabel as different also. No other procedure would be justifiable without Scriptural warrant. (8) Therefore, the only conclusion that can be given concerning the adoption theory is that it falls short of explaining the identical names.

The second view is to make Shealtiel a son-in-law.[58] Again this could be in the realm of the possible, but it has no better support for it than the adoption theory. Once again, Barndollar points out the deficiency in this view:

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intimated in Zech. xii.12, where we read of 'the family of Nathan apart,' as well as 'the family of David apart.' If this were so, Salathiel would be the posterity of Jechonias by an adoption in the line of Nathan" (*Guide to the Gospels*, 508-9).

[57]Barndollar, *Jesus' Title*, 29-33.

[58]Godet, for example, writes: "If the identity of these persons [Shealtiel and Zerubbabel] in the two genealogies [Matthew and Luke] is admitted, the explanation must be found in 2 Kings xxiv.12, which proves that King Jechonias had no son at the time when he was carried into captivity. It is scarcely probable that he had one while in prison, where he remained shut up for thirty-eight years. He or they whom the passage 1 Chron. iii.17 assigns to him (which, besides, may be translated in three different ways) must be regarded as adopted sons or as sons-in-law; they would be spoken of as sons, because they would be unwilling to allow the reigning branch of the royal family to become extinct. Salathiel, the first of them, would thus have some other father than Jechonias; and this father would be Neri, of the Nathan branch, indicated by Luke" (*Gospel of Luke*, 1. 205-6).

> Scripture does not support the idea that Coniah had no sons, but instead names his sons and Matthew declares that Jechonias *begat* (by physical generation) a son, Salathiel. Furthermore, Jeremiah's prophecy definitely predicts a posterity which would rule out the necessity of suggesting a son-in-law theory. Since the proponents of this view offer no tangible proof in support of their view—it is merely a possibility—it is not commensurate with sound Bible interpretation to espouse the theory, when the weight of Scriptural evidence is against it. Therefore, this theory is no more acceptable than the first.[59]

The third view is to make Shealtiel a son by levirate law.[60] Once more this view is in the realm of possibility, but it has no support for it, either. Barndollar shows the weakness of this view also:

> A third time we must note that no definite Scripture is given in support of the proposal—it is merely a theory at best, and that unproved! It is only conjecture. The Scriptures testify, as we have already seen, that Coniah had at least one son, Salathiel. Thus there was no need for the Levirate law to operate, for even if Coniah begat no children, before or during his imprisonment, still it was in the realm of possibility after his release from prison. This possibility manifestly agrees with Matthew's statement that "Jechonias begat Salathiel" (Mt. 1:12) *after* the Babylonian captivity began.[61]

The position then, that the Shealtiel and Zerubbabel of Matthew are the same men mentioned by Luke fails in all three of its possible explanations. This constitutes a strong argument that the two men of Matthew are indeed distinct from the two men of Luke. However, it may be argued that it seems unusual, at the least, for blood relatives in the same generation to have the same names. This is not a significant objection. This present writer has a first cousin, about the same age, with the same first and last name as his own. Therefore, the identical names need not be an obstacle to recognizing what the Scriptures indicate—that the Shealtiel and Zerubbabel of Matthew are not the same as those of Luke.[62]

[59]Barndollar, *Jesus' Title*, 34-35.

[60]Godet writes concerning this possibility: "An alternative hypothesis has been proposed, founded on the Levirate law. Neri, as a relative of Jechonias, might have married one of the wives of the imprisoned king in order to perpetuate the royal family; and the son of this union, Salathiel, would have ben *legally* a son of Jechonias, but *really* a son of Neri" (*Gospel of Luke*, 1. 206).

[61]Barndollar, *Jesus' Title*, 35.

[62]Barndollar gives a precise summary of the feasibility of this suggestion: ". . . we must consider Salathiel and Zerubabel [sic] in one genealogy as different than the men by the same names in the other genealogy. It is not at all impossible nor unusual for blood relatives in the same generation to have the same names—it has been true in the past and it is true in our own day. In the days of David we read of two descendents from Levi who bore the same name, Elkana. The one was a Korhite known as one of

CONCLUSION

The NT genealogies of Christ in Matthew and Luke may present some difficulties to the student of God's Word, but none of them is insuperable. This article first centered attention on the difficulties that exist between Matthew and the OT, and found that harmonization is possible. Attention then focused on the difficulties between Matthew and Luke, which are greater. The purposes and peculiarities of the two genealogies were enumerated, and suggestions were presented as to how each difficulty may be resolved.[63]

This study demonstrated that the Scriptures are accurate in even the smallest details. Both Matthew and Luke write with remarkable precision, each accomplishing his goal of demonstrating God's design in the birth of his only-begotten Son.

David's 'mighty men, helpers of the war' (1 Chr. 12:1, 6), while the other was a Levite assigned as a door-keeper for the Ark (1 Chr. 15:22, 23). Therefore, the identical names in Matthew's and Luke's genealogies present no great problem, for there is no good reason why they are not different individuals even though having the same name" (Ibid., 36).

[63]A further difficulty connected with these genealogies relates to Jesus' legal right to the throne of David. This subject, however, is not involved with difficulties in the genealogies themselves, but rather in their application to Christ. As a result, it is outside the scope of this study. For a complete discussion of this matter the reader should consult Barndollar, *Jesus' Title*, since the focus of the book centers on how Christ derives his legal right to David's throne.