

01-Jan-2012

Chronology and Prophecy

Dear Emilio,

You inquired about the perceived inconsistencies of Bible Chronology between Matthew and Luke. Knowing from experience the painstaking and grueling effort required to engage in such research, I am impressed that you have studied this issue and congratulate your scholarship. You wrote the following:

“According to Luke 3 'which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri...' but in Matt 1 'Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel', then how is it that Salathiel was begat of Jechonias and considered the son Neri?”

“And according to Matt 1 'and Matthan begat Jacob; And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary...' but in Luke 3 'Joseph, which was the son of Heli, Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi', then how is it that Joseph was son of Matthat but Jacob begat Joseph?”

“As I was writing this letter perhaps the answer lies in the usage of the word 'son' and 'begat' reinforcing your inspiration and teaching around the usage of the word 'begotten' in John 3:16 to highlight that although Jesus was considered the 'son' of Joseph, Jesus was the "begotten" of the Father which has very significant meaning and understanding. Just like your recent email on the word 'virgin' and 'young woman' which people use indiscriminately.” — Your E-mail, Saturday, December 31, 2011 5:14 PM.

There are several genealogical accounts in the Bible, and, in our eyes as we can now behold, they do not all agree. My recollection from my studies is that 1Chronicles has some real head scratchers also —especially pertaining to the lineage and place of Bethlehem, Ephrata, and Hur in 1Chron2.

Vinnette and I have been studying and praying for nearly 15 years or more; however, little clarification has come. This is for a good reason for, of all of the Bible aspects to be studied, chronology and genealogy ranks least for the concerns of the saints today. This is due to many of the other revelations brought forth by the MSC's light. The Lord has used it to open up the doctrine of the resurrection, just as promised by Paul in *Heb six*, and by so doing, the diligent and dedicated student can have the assurance of shortly meeting again the characters of the Bible so as to uncover from them all the details pertaining to their lineage, posterity, and heritage. Those who are disingenuous and shallow in their advances in the truth, this issue, of who begat whom, will be the least of their concerns. This is so because they stumble over the very plain revelation like John 3: 16 and 5: 58.

Before directly commenting on your question, I must deal with the complexities of ancestry. Bethlehem Ephrata is one genealogy which is married to prophecy that I have found strikingly puzzling. In it we find the promise of *Mic five*, “***But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel***”; it seems to challenge all attempts to measure it from chronological accounts. To illustrate, apparently, this prophecy is referring to —not the city of Bethlehem as formerly presumed, but—the man who engendered David. From the chronology of 1Chron 2 & 3, we are made knowledgeable of David's ancestry: His father was Jesse who descended from Obed, Boaz, Salma, Nahshon...**CALEB** whose father was Hezron. Caleb was linked to Judah through his, Judah's illicit, sexual escapade with his daughter in-law, Tamar, who gave to him twins, one of which was Pharez. Pharez was Caleb's (grandfather) paternal who was three generations after Judah and approximately eight generations before David. He, Caleb, is important because he is directly involved in this prophecy; yet, it is difficult to trace David through Bethlehem to him. When his wife, Azubah died, he “took unto him Ephrath, (AKA Ephratah [1Chron 3: 50]).” This is important because somehow, in a way that is difficult to account for, Bethlehem, a man, was

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engendered through Caleb and Ephratah's son, Hur. It seems that he was their grandchild. He, Bethlehem, again, not the city, was "little among the thousands of Judah". In affirmation of this perception, we can know that although the land of Judah had thousands of his descendants, it did not have multiple thousands of cities. There were probably not a plurality of thousands of cities in all of Israel or, I dare say, Canaan. When considered in this light, though much more study is required, all can discern that lineage is more dimensional than we first perceived. If the line of David came out of Bethlehem and his grandmother, Ephratah, such a prophecy does not even mandate that it be a genetic lineage; it could be adoptive. This brings me to an additional dimension that we may need to consider regarding Bible genealogy, one that could be related to this puzzle, that of theoretical parentage. Of old, often, when a man died childless, his brother was, by law, required to 'give seed' unto him by marrying his widowed wife. **"And Judah said unto Onan, go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother"** —Gen 38: 8. The Gospels also validate the prevalence of this practice —see Matt 22: 24-28. Could such seed be chronicled to the lineage of the deceased brother? If so, to whom would the genealogical records give credit for the child? Two accountants could disagree; yet, both could be right. There is no legal standard of publication that has been made known, no court-house protocol, no hospital records, no unbiased witnesses, etc., to impose a standard that we could point to so as to predicate an analysis of accuracy. Onan was so gripped with this question that, instead of heeding his father's mandate, **"he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother."** —Gen 38: 9.

In retrospective analysis, what hazard was Onan really trying to avoid? Were the ancients really that ignorant about genealogy? We must not arrogantly laud our achievements in this age of enlightenment against those with less scientific advantage. But, at least from this prospective, you can understand the confusion that existed. Your theory, the distinction between "begat" and "was the son of", is also worthy of inclusion into our study; yet, it still leaves room for wonderment. Another point of consideration is that Matthew is counting generations (see Matt 1: 17), and this may prove to help our understanding. In the final analysis, all Bible doctrines and accounts, including genealogies, must be made clear. But, we being the age invited to the Kingdom, the tree which will lodge the ancient saints in our branches, we can shortly clarify all records with our more precise accounting and genetic skills. But clarification, leave it to a matter of certainty, will be done on the Lord's schedule and will take a back seat to doctrines which directly pertain to our salvation. Case in point —it is only now, today, that we see the saving lesson of David's lineage through Nathan and Solomon.

I disdain promoting confusion, but such can be legitimized when we need to know the things that we do not understand. After all, it is better to acknowledge the limits of our intellectual powers than to challenge the accuracy of the Bible. In this vein, remember also, the book of Chronicle says that Jesse had seven sons (1Chr 2: 13); yet, *1Samuel 16* gives him eight. This could possibly be explained by virtue of some degree of infidelity on the part of Jesse's wife (wives?), causing the engenderation of the son included by Jesse in *1Sam 16* but excluded by the chronicle given in *1Chron2*. Remember, in *1Sam 16*, Jesse —while initially excluding David— presented to Samuel the seven sons whom he so esteemed and honored as legitimate and not necessarily those whom the Lord defined as his actual, genetic sons. He, as proven by his willful exclusion of David, evidently had a propensity to make false assumptions. If his eighth son, excluded in *1Chron 2*, was intentionally or unintentionally adopted, then the Bible could still correctly credit him with having eight sons —the term being deployed both literally and figurative— yet lists his posterity by naming only seven. These things, now, are a matter of speculation in wisdom; only the Lord knows for sure. But we must be ever mindful of the fact that "hanky-panky" among wives is not merely a blithe on human morality which has afflicted this generation; it has been with us since our beginning. Beyond that, when children are born from such embarrassing iniquity, even the mothers who know or suspect the truth pertaining to their children's posterity often take such knowledge with them to the grave. Even on their death beds do they guard their secrets. This explains, in part, the severe penalty given to women of licentiousness. To show the pervasiveness of our secret sins, consider David's dark conspiracy with Bathsheba: If his servant, Uriah, her husband, would have

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heeded David's command and slept with her when she discovered that she was impregnated by David, then she would have had a child which Uriah would have presumed to be his and which he would have naively counted amongst his heritage. However, the Bible would have been obliged to do our dirty work and give the accurate and contrary account. Who can venture, with the impulse of infidelity that exists amongst us, to deny that much of those devious machinations did not happen in the past?

But, in final analysis, *Luke three* does reinforce the theme of our study and the essence of *Psalms* 89, the casting down of the throne of David. *Luke three* reinforces Jeremiah's prophecy and that of *1 Kings 11*; thus, I consider it to be foundational for doctrine. When a disagreement in the Bible exists, you must always go with prophecy over chronologic or typologic renditions and accounts. This we can rest assured by remembering Father's legitimization of all OT prophecies, by His assurance that all shall be fulfilled, *Matt five*. Until the Bible, by inspiration, resolves a dispute we can only recline in the prophetic revelations. Speaking of such, Jeremiah promised that Jehoiakim would not have a son to sit on the throne of David; *1 Kings 11* gave a similar punishment to Solomon; thus, we must accept that pronouncement for, if antitypical David were to emerge from their lineage, then they would indeed, in their resurrection, behold the violation of prophetic pronouncement. They would glory in the son of David who now sits on the throne of David, which was likewise their former throne, and reverse their prophetic punishment by receiving the very grace or thrill that the Lord sought to withhold from them. Such a transaction would make a mockery of His judgments. **"Therefore thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim...He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David..."**. Examine closely Solomon's punishment:

"³¹And he said to Jeroboam...I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee. ³²But he shall have one tribe for MY SERVANT DAVID'S SAKE, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel). ³³Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians...³¹But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always(s) before me in Jerusalem. ³⁹And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not forever." "—*1 Kings 11*.

As Promised, Jeroboam's (not to be confused with Jehoiakim) part in Solomon's punishment was not to endure forever; however, Solomon's penalty was. This we know because all ten tribes were removed from him—without the promise of return—and given to his servant, Jeroboam. This penalty occurred after Solomon's death; consequently, the penalty could only have been reserved for Solomon upon his last-day resurrection. He lost the throne, just as did Adam, and both men, though eternally saved, will have reason for regret. Meanwhile, Judah was retained to Solomon's sons until his son, Jehoiakim, lost even that blessing. Since that day, there has been no throne in Jerusalem. Yet, the temporary continuation of dominion over Judah and Benjamin until the day of Babylonian captivity was a grace that was given, not for Solomon's, but for the Lord's servant, David's sake. Consequently and in final analysis, the honor of a son on the throne was conveyed to David, and then to Zerubbabel only. It was a blessing which the Lord, in the resurrection, wanted them to have. Resultantly, if it were taken from Solomon and given to his brother, Nathan, such would be an eternal penalty for Solomon but not for David. David, in the resurrection, when "before him" he sees his "throne established forever" (parlance of *2 Sam 7*) will rejoice. With them, Mary's husband, Joseph, the son of David through Zerubbabel, and his son, Jesus's brother, James (*Gal 1: 19*) may also be included in the same rejoicing chorus. Will Solomon, in humility, give due praise to his younger brother (*2 Sam 12*) Nathan, over whom he was anciently exalted to the throne; will he give to him a spiritual "high five" for his ultimate victory? Since the time of Cain and Abel, brothers have always been competitive, but Solomon's congratulations to Nathan's victory will depend upon his maturity. He will have an eternity to thereby grow. Until he does, his rejoicing will be limited to the miracle of his salvation and redemption won for him by Christ—the very same miracle that all others in the Kingdom will likewise celebrate. Yet, while so advancing in spirituality, he will know how the Lord felt when he, Solomon, betrayed Christ by his idolatry.

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Jeohoiakim will also lament. But, along with Nathan, David who spent a career extoling the wisdom, judgment, and justice of Christ will rejoice with his son Nathan and the posterity that they produced which ran parallel to Solomon. If David were to feel pity for Solomon, his hand-picked successor of yesterday, he could be at least consoled that, for nearly 500 years, Solomon's seed reigned in Jerusalem. A gift from Christ that was afforded to Solomon—but only for David's sake. Resultantly, as the disciples today have their circle in the Family of God, Solomon and all of his kingly sons, can likewise have their eternal circle of honor: They can be seated in the Kingdom as men of distinction who have been honored to serve the Lord as kings in Jerusalem. This they can do despite the cessation of their lineage after Jehoiakim. (Remember, the *mustard seed* and the disciples are promised to receive a hundred mothers and fathers—see Matt 19: 29.) In other words, the Kingdom was “rended”(sic) away from Solomon but not from David. When his son receives it again, he will not only inherit Judah, but also all 12 tribes. If this was not to be the outcome of the inheritance, if Solomon's son were to be seated upon the eternal throne, then it would be as if he were never punished for his seed would likewise, after his awakening from sleep, have dominion again over all the Children of Israel.

Therefore, I embrace the lineage of *Luke three* when I need to account for chronology; it affirms prophecy. Remember, Matthew and Luke were New Testament converts. Like Peter, Paul, VTH & EGW, they fall under the aegis of partial prophecy. We accept as immoveable and inerrant those words delivered to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John from the lips of Jesus. We also include in it, the message to Mary, given to her from Gabriel, “who stands in the presence of God.”—Luke 1: 19. This is how we “rightly divide the word of truth”—2Tim 2: 15. God would not have sent Gabriel if he could not be trusted.

You sought to search the website for the edited studies and wanted to know how to discern between the edited and non-edited studies. A list of the edited versions of the audio studies will shortly be published. Remember, my work product has to match that of the website designer for it to reflect on the website. I send to him five a week.

Sincerely,

Derek