

## Why are there differences in the genealogies of Matthew and Luke?

Most Bible scholars say that Matthew's genealogy is of the earthly stepfather, Joseph. Matthew shows the Savior to be the legal heir to the promises given to Abraham and David.

Luke's genealogy is through Mary, His mother. Luke shows the Savior's blood line descent according to the flesh (see Romans 1:3). By Jewish custom, Mary's genealogy was in her husband's name. According to Luke 3:23, Joseph was "the son of Heli," but that means Joseph was the son-in-law of Heli. Heli was Mary's father. Joseph's father was Jacob, Matthew 1:16.

You will notice that Matthew's genealogy goes back only through Abraham, while Luke's goes all the way back to Adam. You will also notice that both the lists from Abraham to David are the same; the lists are different after David, touching only with Shealtiel and Zerubbabel. You can check these genealogies in the first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles.

[NOTE: Because King David and the kingly tribe of Judah were important in Jewish history, Chronicles repeats their accounts. 1 Chronicles is a repeat of David's life (King David's life is found also in 1-2 Samuel). 2 Chronicles is a repeat of the kings of Judah after David (David's descendants). The earlier books of 1-2 Kings had given the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel after the split in addition to the kings of Judah.]

**MATTHEW:** Matthew's genealogical record goes through David's son Solomon, the king of Israel, and then through the kings of Judah until the captivity by Babylon, when there were no more kings--no more nation for awhile, and never any more kings. Even Zerubbabel, who returned to Jerusalem from the captivity at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, was of a princely line. As you study Matthew closely, you will see that he emphasizes the KINGDOM. If you mark the words "king" and "kingdom" in Matthew (maybe draw a crown or use a colored highlighter pen in green or yellow), you will see that "kingdom" is one of Matthew's major themes. The book of Matthew is called "the gospel of the kingdom."

Matthew seems to direct his account to the Jews. Another phrase he repeats constantly is "so that it might be fulfilled." So he makes reference to the Old Testament and how the Savior fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament. Because of this, Matthew's book is a good link between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Matthew was also the tax collector. He knew how to keep records, and many scholars think he was taking notes (maybe in shorthand) while he was a

disciple of Jesus. He methodically planned his gospel so that people would remember important sections. Thus, he grouped all the miracles of the Messiah in a separate section. He put all the Savior's teachings in a separation section: the parables are grouped together in chapter 13; His teaching on humility and forgiveness is in chapter 18; His discourses on the last days are grouped in chapters 24-25; chapter 23 condemns hypocrites with 8 "woes." This grouping is not chronological; it is put together so that it can easily be remembered.

In the same way, he grouped the genealogy so it could be easily remembered. His genealogy is shortened; that is, some names are omitted, so that he has an orderly list: 42 generations, 3 groups of 14 each. Each group begins and ends with significant people or events in Jewish history. The first group covers about 1000 years, from Abraham to David (2000-1000 B.C.). The second group, from King David until the Babylonian captivity, covers about 400 years (1000-590 B.C.). The third group, from the captivity until the first century A.D., covers about 600 years (590 B.C. to 30 A.D.).

**LUKE:** Luke was the only writer of the gospels who was a Gentile (non-Jew). He was a companion of Paul, and he gathered his information about Jesus as a historian would do, obtaining details from eye-witnesses and other sources and documents. He links the life of the Savior with names of governors, places, historical events. As a doctor and a Greek, he presents the Savior as the ideal "Son of Man" in history. (To the Greeks, "son of man" meant a perfect or ideal man, but to the Jews, the term "Son of Man" meant God--they took the term to mean one who was Deity. Luke knew both meanings, so he used the term to refer to the Savior as both the ideal, perfect man and the Son of God--God Himself.) Luke seems to direct his account to Greeks, who idealized man with statues of a beautiful human body--"the ideal man" physically--and with humanistic philosophy--the ideal man intellectually and morally (that man on his own can achieve perfection). The Greek scholar would appreciate that the Savior was the "son of Adam," the first man, who was created in the image of God. So Luke continues the genealogy all the way back to Adam, the son of God.

In addition, Luke emphasized the Savior's compassion, his kind humanity to other human beings, especially when He healed people who had been overlooked by society. That aspect of the Messiah would have appealed to Greeks and certainly appealed to the physician Luke.

I hope this answers your question. If my answer raised other questions, please send them to me.

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