

# TRINITY

BIBLE CHURCH DALLAS

The Sermon

Dr. Steven J. Lawson

Luke 3:23-38

"The Genealogy of Jesus"

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TRANSCRIPT

We come to the time now to look into the word of God, and I want to invite you to take your Bible and turn with me to Luke chapter 3, Luke chapter 3. And in our journey through this third gospel, we have come to the genealogy of Christ. I've tried to think of another title for this sermon, but I think I'm the one-millionth preacher to call this "The Genealogy of Christ."

Before I read portions of this genealogy, I have just a few comments that I want to make. There are 76 names included in this genealogy here, which is almost twice as many as are in the genealogy of Matthew. Matthew's begins, the gospel of Matthew, because Matthew is to present Jesus as the King of Israel. And so His genealogy actually runs from Abraham, who's the father of Israel, to Christ. But Luke has an entirely different portrait to paint of Christ and we would expect his genealogy to be somewhat different. And so rather than it stretching from Abraham to Christ, it actually stretches from Adam to Christ, because Jesus is the Savior for all who will come to Him beyond even the borders of Israel. This is not a comprehensive genealogy. Though there are 76 names here, there are other generations that are omitted for intentional reasons by Luke. And, obviously, the same would be said for Matthew's genealogy, that there are generations intentionally left out because they do not fit the narrative, they do not fit the portrait that each these biblical authors are painting – 76 links in the chain, and each one sovereignly and strategically placed here by God, as He has appointed the time of each one's birth.

Here in Luke's gospel - and this is still before I read portions of this - over half of these names are not found anywhere in the Bible, so there's really nothing I can tell you. There's nothing you would want me to tell you because there is nothing to tell about most of these names, or at least half of these names. Matthew's genealogy begins with Abraham and then moves forward to Jesus. This genealogy begins with Jesus and moves backwards to the Adam.

So, having made just a few initial comments, I want to read just four verses of this because there are really only four verses that, in a sense, matter for our study this morning. It would be pointless for me to comment on each one of these individuals, as I've already said, because we know nothing about almost half of these individuals. But there's really only four verses here that will occupy our focus today and I will read these four verses. There are verses 23, 31, 34, and 38.

So, verse 23, "When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli." Verse 31, what you need to see is at the end of verse 31, "the son of David." And in verse 34, what you need to see is, really, in the middle of verse 34, "the son of Abraham." And then in verse 38, "the son of Adam, the son of God." That's what you need to know. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank You for this genealogy that is very complex and shrouded with some mystery at certain portions; and yet what we do see in these verses that I've just read is crystal clear. And so I pray that You would give us insight. Help us to, really, gather the meat of this genealogy and understand the intention as Luke has arranged it as he has. And so, Father, give us attentiveness now. Fill me with Your Spirit, that I might be a faithful teacher and preacher of Your word, in Christ's name. Amen. [End]

In these verses we are reminded that Christianity is rooted and grounded in human history. The Christian faith took place in real time and space. It did not take place merely in the realm of some philosopher's mind who's sitting in an ivory tower or sitting in some think tank. No, Christianity was lived out on this earth over many centuries and over many generations, and the Bible records the account of real people who had one real problem, and that is sin, and stood in need of a real historic Savior: Jesus Christ.

Jesus came into this real world. He was born of a real mother, Mary. He was born into a real nation, Israel, at a real time, 6 or 5 BC. He lived a real life of 33 years. He performed real miracles. He died a real death upon a cross. He was raised in a real resurrection from a real grave. He was seen by a real crowd of 500 people after His resurrection, and He ascended back to a real throne in a real heaven. Jesus now offers real salvation to real sinners like you and me, who call upon His name in order to escape a real hell.

In this genealogy there are five designations of this Savior, Jesus Christ, that I want us to see. In verse 23, He is the son of Joseph; in verse 31, He is the son of David; in verse 34, He is the son of Abraham; in verse 38, He is the son of Adam; and in verse 38, He is the son of God. That's basically what we need to know today. That's basically the very heart of the file. This is the center cut of this genealogy.

So, let's begin in verse 23, and we'll spend a little time in verse 23. The first thing that I want you to see concerning Christ is that "Jesus is the son of Joseph." We begin in verse 23, "When He" - Jesus - "began His ministry," - stop right there. We were just introduced last time to the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan, and that's when He inaugurated his public ministry. That's when, after 30-plus years of living and obscurity in Nazareth, He now comes out of the shadows and steps into the spotlight to begin His ministry, and it will take place over slightly more than three years, and it will end at Calvary, it will consummate at the cross.

"When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age." By the way, the name Jesus means Jehovah saves, and it really designates

His mission and His purpose in coming into this world. He was Jehovah in human flesh come to save sinners. This says that he was about thirty years of age.

Luke is a very accurate historian. He has dazzled historians and archaeologists down through the centuries at the precision with which he has researched for this gospel, and already he's given attention to the chronological progression of the Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter 2, verse 7, "He was born." In chapter 2, verse 21, "He was circumcised on the eighth day." In chapter 2, verse 22, "He was purified in the temple on the fortieth day." And in chapter 2, verse 42, "At twelve years of age He was in the temple carrying out His Father's business." In chapter 2, verse 52, it says, "He kept growing in wisdom and stature with God and with man."

And so now we come to chapter 3, verse 23, and "He is thirty years of age." This really lays stress, again, upon the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ; and as Luke is writing his gospel, his principle focus is upon the humanity of Christ, to present Christ to a Greek audience that He is the perfect man – the flawless, ideal, perfect man. He will also stress His deity, but first and foremost, His humanity. And Luke wants us to know that as He begins His public ministry, He now is thirty years of age.

Thirty years of age was an important age because that is when a man would stepped into the office of prophet, priest, and king. In Numbers 4:3, we read that at age thirty the son of Levi would enter into his priestly service in the tabernacle. In Genesis 41:46, Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh and became co-ruler. In 2 Samuel 5:4, we read, "David was thirty years old when he became king." And in Ezekiel 1:1, we read, "Now it came about in the thirtieth year I saw visions of God," and at age thirty Ezekiel enters into his prophetic office.

There's something about this age thirty that a young man was considered to have matured to the point of being ready to assume great responsibility in leadership and in ministry. And so Luke tags this for us that we would see Jesus is now – He has now grown in wisdom and in stature, and in favor

with God and man, and in His humanity He is now ready to be a prophet, a priest, and a king. A prophet: the greatest prophet, Deuteronomy 18:13, the greatest prophet who would ever walk the earth, who would be the messenger of His Father. King: that He would come as Lord, sovereign overall. And Priest: He would be the one who would offer Himself up and make the great sacrifice at the cross.

Now, Luke adds something very important in the middle of verse 23: "When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself" - now watch this - "was about thirty years of age," - here it is - "being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph." What does this mean, "supposed the son of Joseph"? This word in the original, this Greek word for "supposed" means "was thought to be," "was considered." It's used 15 times in the New Testament this verb, and almost every time it's used to mean "wrongly supposed," "a wrong assumption drawn," "mistakenly assumed." In the New American Standard, from which I preach, at the margin reference, it says in my Bible, "as it was being thought." Some of you have the ESV translation and it reads "being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph."

So, what's going on here? Is Jesus the son of Joseph or is He not the son of Joseph? Well, the answer to that is yes. Jesus was the legal son of Joseph but not his biological son. In Jewish court of law Joseph was considered the father of Jesus, but not in the courts of heaven. He's the son of God. And what this strongly affirms - it would be easy to read this and just kind of hydroplane over this, that what this strongly affirms and attests to is the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. I'm sure you're out ahead of me and you know where this is headed, that Mary was his biological mother, but she was impregnated not by Joseph but by the Holy Spirit.

We've already seen in chapter 1, verse 35, that when the angel Gabriel came to Mary, the angel said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." What a beautiful imagery, a very discreet imagery, like a cloud passing over a parcel of land. For that reason - now here it is - "the Holy Child shall be called the son of God." So Jesus was the earthly son of a heavenly Father, and He was the heavenly son of an earthly mother.

When Jesus was born, He was as old as His father and older than His mother, as eternal Deity was joined to sinless humanity in the conception that took place within the womb of Mary. This is why Luke uses the word "supposed" to distinguish the technicality here of including Joseph in the genealogy. Technically, Jesus was not the son of Joseph in that Joseph was not His biological father, but Joseph is included because he is Jesus' legal father on a human level.

And, of course, this had all been prophesied some 700 years earlier through the prince of prophets, Isaiah. And in Isaiah 7:14, just to remind you, it reads, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign that you'll know who the Messiah is. The Lord Himself will give you a sign," - Oh, it'll be a glaring sign - 'Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son.'" Only a miracle could produce that. "A virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel, which means God with us." A virgin will be with child and His name will be God with us: the virgin birth.

So, how important is the virgin birth? Very important. In a sense, the entire person and work of Christ rests upon this virgin birth as it relates to His entrance into this world, because Jesus had to be born sinless in order to live a sinless life; and He had to be born sinless in order to die in the place of sinners and not for His own sin. Therefore, He could not be sired by Joseph, otherwise Jesus would have inherited the sin nature of Joseph, just like you and I was conceived in our mother's womb and there was transmitted to us the sin nature. The only solution to this dilemma, the only solution to this dilemma is the virgin birth; and only the infinite genius of God could have designed the virgin birth. None of us would have thought this up. Mary had to be sired by the Holy Spirit in order for her to have a holy child a holy offspring without a sin nature.

So, let me put it to you succinctly. Jesus had to come as He did to be what He was to do what He did. Jesus had to be born of a virgin in order to be without a sin nature, in order to live a sinless and perfect life under the law, in order to be a sinless substitute, in order to be a sin-bearing sacrifice upon the cross. The whole theological unfolding of these truths, the taproot

of it is the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not incidental, it's fundamental to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So, Luke being the accurate, one, historian but, two, theologian that he is, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, this little word "supposed," there is an entire semi-truck of theology that runs through that little word "supposed." And before I go any further, let me just say this. This should underscore our confidence in the inerrancy of the word of God, that down to individual words, the Bible is true, and that massive doctrines that are primary doctrines hang upon a slender chain of the accuracy of individual words. In fact, Jesus said, "Every jot and every tittle is inspired by God." You are holding in your hand today a book that is flawless, that is inerrant, that is infallible.

The second thing I want you to note, not only is Jesus the son of Joseph, but, second, "He's the son of David." If you would look at verse 31, we see that He is "the son of David." That just leaps out of this genealogy. It rises above the other names like a towering mountain peak above the valleys. "The son of David," this means that Jesus was in the royal line of David. David was Israel's second king. Therefore, Jesus, in the lineage of David, the greater son of David, was the rightful heir to the throne of David. And, Luke, by his arrangement of this genealogy, is intentionally drawing our attention to David. It's interesting that Luke passes over the other kings. He doesn't even mention Solomon, who Matthew includes in his genealogy. No, Luke has myopic vision upon David. He sees David as if through a keyhole. He is locked in on David, he is focused on David, and so he removes from his genealogy even the other kings except for two of them.

And so, David, it had all been prophesied. In fact, it had been told to David himself that there would be a greater heir, a greater son that would come from him who would reign forever. In 2 Samuel 7:12, "I" - God - "will raise up your descendant" - David's descendant - "after you." God says, "I will raise up a descendant after you, who will come forth from you," - meaning he will come forth from your loins, he will be in your direct lineage - "and I will establish his kingdom." Verse 13, "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom" - listen

to this - "forever." This will be a kingdom like no other kingdom. Once He assumes the throne, there are no term limits to when this One assumes the throne, and He'll never be impeached. When He assumes the throne, He will reign forever and ever and ever.

And the psalmist picks up on this in Psalm 132:11, which, by the way, is what Peter quotes on the Day of Pentecost. Psalm 132:11, "The Lord has sworn to David." Let me tell you, when God swears, it will come to pass. He lays His hand upon Himself, for He can take an oath no higher than Himself. "The Lord has sworn to David a truth from which He will not turn back." It's an irrevocable promise made by God.

And what is this promise? "Of the fruit of your body" - David's body - "I will set upon your throne." There will come one in the future, not knowing how many links in this genealogical chain it will be until he will come. But Galatians 4:4 says that "He came in the fullness of time," as God had orchestrated world events in the Roman world, the Greek world, the Jewish world; it was all set up for Christ to come and to be the son of David.

Isaiah also reaffirmed this, Isaiah 9:7. This is right after, "Unto us a child shall be born, unto us a son shall be given. His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." The very next verse, verse 7, we know who this is: "There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and uphold it in justice and righteousness." I wish I had time to read Isaiah 11:1 and following - you can read that when you get home - that He will have the Spirit of God upon Him, and He will rule with wisdom and discernment and insight and prudence." He will be the perfect king who will never make a mistake in the execution of His judgments and decrees.

So this prophecy finds its fulfillment in Jesus, and Luke wants us to see this. It's already been mentioned earlier in this gospel of Luke. If you were not here on that Sunday when we looked at Luke 1:32, it begs to be just stated again. Luke 1:32, the angel Gabriel said to Mary, "He - the one that



will be conceived in your womb - He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High," - that means the Son of God - "and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David," - verse 33 - "and He will reign over the house of Jacob" - meaning Israel - "forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

This is why Luke is, in a sense, isolating "son of David" among the kings of Israel in this genealogy. He wants us to know that as Jesus claims to be who He is, that He is not a self-appointed Messiah. All the lines of history and all the lines of genealogy intersect in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One. He's not a self-deceived individual with a messianic complex.

All of human history - let me say that again - all of human history in the Old Testament is pointing to Him. And it can only be Him. It couldn't be anyone else who would be the son of David. It couldn't be anyone else who would be the Messiah, It couldn't be anyone else. He is the only one who could fulfill this genealogy. C. S. Lewis once said, "There are only three options with Jesus Christ: either He knew He was not God, but He claimed to be, He faked it; or He was a madman with a Napoleonic complex who thought He was God, who should be locked up in an insane asylum; or He was exactly who He claimed to be." There are no other options on the table. Either He was a deceiver or He was deceived or He was Deity. And the weight of the evidence is so overwhelming that Jesus is the son of David.

But more than that, "He's the son of Abraham." We come to verse 34, "He's the son of Abraham." Now, this pushes it back further. Abraham was the father of the nation, Israel, right? You remember at the end of Genesis 11 that Abram was living in Ur of Chaldees, just a pagan land; and he was an idolator, he was a moon-worshiper, and God called him out of hedonism and paganism to a land that He would show him. And there in Genesis 15:6, "He believed God; and God reckoned it to him as righteousness." That's justification by faith alone. And there was the birth.

And in two chapters later, God reissues the Abrahamic covenant that He had given earlier in Genesis 12, but now He spells it out Christologically bit

more. And in Genesis 17:7, God said to Abraham, "I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you" - now, "descendants" is a Hebrew word that means "seed" - "after for you throughout the generations for an everlasting covenant," - this will be unlike the Mosaic covenant, the old covenant that would pass away with the death of Christ. No, this would be an everlasting that would never be rescinded, that would endure throughout time and eternity - "to be God to you and to your seed - to your descendants - after you."

Now, is this to be understood in the plural or the singular: "descendants" (plural) or "seed" (singular)? Well, the apostle Paul helps us on this. And in Galatians 3:16, Paul belabors this point. He writes, "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed." He does not say, "and to seeds" (plural) as referring to many, but rather to one, meaning one seed that would come from the loins of Abraham. And then he adds at the end of verse 16, "and to your seed, that is, Christ."

Jesus is the promised seed of Abraham. He's the promised son of Abraham. The seed would be so potent and so powerful that out of Him would grow an entire bountiful harvest of souls that would come into the kingdom. This one seed, this one little seed would be planted in the ground in His incarnation. Isaiah 53 says, "He grew up from among us from the parched ground." And from this one seed would come myriads and myriads and ten thousands of ten thousands of glorified, redeemed saints who would enter into the kingdom of God. How potent is this one little seed, that there would be forests of believers, you and me, that would come from this one little seed.

He's the son of Joseph, He's the son of David, He's the son of Abraham. Fourth, "He's the son of Adam." And if you'll come to verse 38, this now traces the family tree yet further back to the dawn of human history to the first man. And he says in verse 38, the third name, "He is the son of Adam," Jesus. This is important, because in the New Testament the apostle Paul makes a contrast between Adam and Jesus, and he says in Romans 5:14 that "Adam is a type of the one who is to come," referring to Christ. In other

words, there's really two Adams. There's the first Adam and there's the second Adam.

Adam is a type of Christ in that Adam was the representative of a race of people. He was the federal head, if you will, of an entire race of people; and whatever Adam would do would affect everyone that he represents. It's like in a football game: if one person jumps off-side, the entire team is penalized; if one person scores a touchdown, the entire team is rewarded. What one person does affects the whole. And so Adam as the federal head representative of his people – and who are his people? The entire human race. What he did has been charged to all their accounts. And Adam sinned, and immediately death entered into Adam, and he began the aging process and the dying process. But, immediately, he was cut off from God, and he has thrown the entire human into death. Romans 5:12, "Through one man death entered the world."

But Adam is also a type of Christ, because Christ is the representative of His race, of His people; and His people are those whom the Father chose from before the foundation of the world and gave to Him in the corridors of eternity past; and Jesus came into this world to save His people. "You shall call His name Jesus," – Matthew 1:21 – "for He shall save His people from their sins."

And so what Jesus did in His sinless life and substitutionary death has reversed the curse, has undone what Adam did. In fact, we gain far more in Christ than we ever lost in Adam. And so through Christ we now have forgiveness of sin. It was charged to us because of Adam, but also our own individual acts of sin. But even more – and this is why we gained more in Christ than we lost in Adam – we gain His righteousness and we are clothed with His perfect righteousness. So that is why Luke emphasizes here that Jesus is the son of Adam. He's the second Adam.

Let me just give you some verses. Romans 5:14, which I've already quoted, "Adam is a type of Him" – Jesus – "who was to come." Verse 15, "For by the transgression of the one the many died, much more," – hear that –

"much more, did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many." Verse 16, "The judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation," - and by the way, that's how holy God is. Just one sin against God and the entire human race is condemned. Just one sin against the thrice holy God of heaven, and the entire population that would be brought forth of the human race immediately condemned. What do you think just one sin in your life would do to you if just one sin condemned the whole human race?

The judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. You see, Adam started out at zero, and when he sinned he went into the negative. If all we have is the forgiveness of sin, that only brings you back to zero. You need a positive deposit into your account. Forgiveness only takes away the debt, it doesn't put any capital into your account. That is why justification by faith brings the righteousness of Christ to us, which positions us far beyond wherever Adam was even before he sinned.

One more verse, 1 Corinthians 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." Verse 45, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit." Verse 47, "The first man is from the earth, earthly; the second man is from heaven." I mean, even by Paul's language, there's a first Adam, there's a second Adam. There is the earthly Adam, there is the heavenly Adam. And the whole human race is, really, measured just by two men. Everyone is either in Adam or you're in Christ, there are no other categories. You were born in Adam, you were conceived in Adam, you were declared to be in Adam over 6,000 years ago. When he sinned, his sin was charged to your account before you're even conceived in your mother's womb.

But what Christ has done is to overcome the devastation brought about by the first Adam. The first Adam was tempted in a garden, in a perfect world. And that's why just changing the environment is not going to change the world. Adam was in a perfect environment and he had everything and he was tempted. There was one tree on the entire planet he couldn't eat, and

the devil seduced him and tempted him, and that one act of disobedience has ruined the world.

But Christ was not in a garden, He was in the wilderness – we'll look at it next week. He was tested for and tempted for 40 days and 40 nights. And the second Adam obeyed and triumphed in the wilderness, where the first Adam imploded in a garden. The answer is not change the environment, and it's not change the climate. It's change the heart, change the soul, change what's on the inside.

Well, finally, fifth, at the end of verse 38, "Jesus is the son of God." This now traces the family tree even further back, "son of God." This goes before the creation of the first man. This goes back into eternity past to the eternal generation of Jesus as the Son of God without beginning. This is a genealogy that goes so far back there's no beginning. He's the Son of God from before the foundation of the world.

When it says "the son of God" here at the end of verse 38, this identifies Jesus as co-eternal and co-equal with God the Father, and we know from other passages, and with God the Holy Spirit. This precedes Jesus as the son of Adam. He is eternally the Son of God. This does not mean that there was ever a time when Jesus did not exist. This does not mean that there was ever a time when Jesus came into existence. No, Jesus is the uncreated Creator of everything.

Listen to John 1:1-3. Just drink in these words: "In the beginning was the Word," capital "W." New American Standard capitalizes the "W" to signify "the living Word." For the scriptures, it uses a lower case "w" to distinguish the living Word from "the written word." "In the beginning was the Word," – which means in the beginning the Word was already in existence – "and the Word was with God," – *pros Theon*, face-to-face with God from before the beginning – "and the Word was God" – a distinction between God and the Word, two persons, and yet the Word is God. It speaks to the deity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Verse 2, "He was in the beginning with God." In the beginning He was already with

God. Verse 3, "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." If Jesus was created - and He created everything - that means He would have had to have created Himself. That's nonsense. That's illogical. No, Jesus is God.

Let me just give you some verses as I wrap this up. Colossians 2:9, "In Him" - Christ - "all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." Not some deity, not a lot of deity, "the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." Titus 2:13, "The appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." Who is Jesus Christ? He is our great God and Savior. In Romans 9:5, "The Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen," Christ is God. John 20:28, Thomas in the upper room, "My Lord, and my God!" He was not corrected for saying that. And in 2 Peter 1:1, "Our God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

So, all you need to know from this is that Jesus is the son of Joseph, the son of David, the son of Abraham, the son of Adam, and the son of God. That's His physical lineage. Now let me say this in conclusion. There's also a spiritual lineage. And there are many sons and daughters in this spiritual lineage - those who have been born again by the Spirit of God and who have been made alive in Christ and who have been adopted by God and brought into the family of God. And if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, you are a part of the genealogy of Christ. That is far more important than a physical genealogy. It is a spiritual genealogy that you have been born again.

If you have never been born again, then you are outside the kingdom of God. But today could be the greatest day of your life. Today, if you will seek the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, but confess your sin and believe in this Christ, you may find entrance into the kingdom of God. If you've never believed in Jesus Christ, may today be that day that you would no longer procrastinate, but that you would come running to the Savior; and He will receive you with open arms. I know that He will, for He has received untold millions who would come to Him in humble, saving faith.

[Prayer] Father, Thank You for the record of this genealogy. Thank You for these landmark inclusions in this genealogy. I pray that You would give us careful thought to what we have looked at today. I pray You would bless my brothers and sisters in Christ here today. And for any who are outside of Christ, may they come to You with childlike faith and believe in You. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

Stand for the closing benediction: "To Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood - He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father - to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."