

July 15, 2018
Sunday Morning Service
Series: Luke
Community Baptist Church
643 S. Suber Road
Greer, SC 29650
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SON OF ADAM, SON OF GOD
Luke 3:21-38

Hugh, Earl of Ross began construction of Balnagown Castle in the early 1300's. It still stands near the town of Kildary in the Highlands of Scotland. This is the place where the clan Ross began. Ross is my mother's maiden name and, therefore, my heritage.

Actually, the beginning of the Ross clan goes back in history well beyond 1300. According to my cousin's genealogical study (and I am assuming he is accurate), the Ross lineage can be traced back to Thorstein "The Red" Olafson, who was born in Dublin, Ireland in 858. His posterity eventually connected through marriage with the Duncans in Scotland also known as the Kingdom of Alba. In 1040, Macbeth killed Duncan I, who was king of Alba (Scotland). You might have heard about this in a play from Shakespeare. More accurately it was not murder but death in battle. Malcolm III de Ros, son of Duncan I, returned the favor a few years later and killed MacBeth and reigned as king of Scotland until 1093.

Zoom ahead in history to the late 12th century and we discover that Robert DeRos was one of the Barons who pressured King John of England to sign the Magna Carta. Things were going well for the Ross family. Now move ahead in history through several John Rosses and we come to 1651 where we find James Ross fighting for Charles II, King of Scotland, against Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector of England. He was a Covenanter, a Presbyterian who thought the whole world should be Presbyterians and was willing to fight to bring it to pass.

At the battle of Worster, September 3, 1651, Cromwell's forces overran the Covenanters and took several thousand of them prisoner. Ultimately, Cromwell would send 21,000 such prisoners to the

Caribbean Islands from where they would be sent in slave ships to the New England Colonies to be sold as slaves. That is how my family lineage came to America. In 1652, James Ross was purchased as a slave (not an indentured servant) in Sudbury, MA, where he went to work at the Hammermill.

Within a hundred years that line of the Ross family moved to Eastern New York. About forty years later a line of the family moved to Erie County New York. In 1828 James Russell Ross moved to Corry, PA. In 1906, Charles Elmar Ross birthed Cecil Ross who was my Grandfather, who brought nine children into this world, one of whom is my mother.

I find this genealogy very interesting because it helps me know where I came from. I am intrigued to discover that I am the product of kings and barons, as well as slaves and probably horse thieves. No doubt some of my ancestors were famous, some were successful, and probably a lot of them were ordinary at best or losers at worst. One thing I have in common with all my ancestors. All of them were born, all of them sinned, and all of them died just like I am dying. That does not sound very encouraging.

Oh, but there is good news for all of us. Luke recorded the lineage of Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary, and thought to be the son of Joseph. His lineage is special because it is linked unarguably to King David which made Jesus a legal heir to the throne of Israel. More than that, you will notice that Luke didn't stop with David but followed the line all the way back to Adam. And he didn't stop there. Luke reminded us that Jesus was indeed the son of Adam like we all are. But Jesus was also Son of God which unique relationship opens the way for us to become children of God in a lesser way.

A cursory reading of this passage leaves us to wonder how a list of strange, unrecognizable names could possibly be a blessing. Let's look more closely and learn the wonderful news that God reveals in this hodgepodge of names.

Jesus Was Son of Adam.

Anyone who has read much in the Bible might realize at the reading of Luke's genealogy that it is different from what Matthew wrote in his first chapter. Why the difference between Matthew's

genealogy and Luke's? First, it is obvious Matthew traced Jesus' lineage through Joseph to Abraham. Also, we know that Matthew wrote his Gospel account of Jesus to Jewish readers in order to present Jesus as the rightful king of the Jews. Therefore, Matthew needed to draw the connection to Abraham, father of the Jewish nation. To Abraham, God promised to make a nation from this one man. God also promised to bless all the world through Abraham's seed, saying *"I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"* (Genesis 12:3).

Also, because he was presenting Jesus as King of the Jews, Matthew needed to connect Jesus to David the king to whom God promised an eternal kingdom. The devout Jews even in Matthew's day remembered God's promise to David: *"When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever"* (2 Samuel 7:12-13). Jesus was the "offspring of David" who God the Father raised up. Therefore, Jesus of Nazareth has a legal right to the throne of Israel.

It is interesting to notice that Matthew came down to the birth of Jesus with these words, *"... and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ"* (Matthew 1:16). Jesus was born of Mary. Joseph was Mary's husband but not Jesus's father. But notice especially that Joseph's father was **Jacob**. That becomes an issue as we read Luke's account.

Luke traced Jesus's lineage through Mary to present Jesus as the Savior for all races of people. We need to remember that he wrote to Theophilus who was almost certainly a Gentile. Okay, but that certainly doesn't explain the discrepancy where Matthew named Joseph's father as Jacob, but Luke wrote that his father was Heli, does it? No. There is an explanation though.

In the Bible the title "son of" does not always mean the actual son of the object stated. For example, Daniel 5:2 indicates that King Belshazzar was Nebuchadnezzar's son. But we know from secular history that at best he was a grandson. Also, Jesus is called, "Son of David" when He is obviously several generations removed from David. But Jesus is the relative of David.

Also, pay close attention to how Luke explained this relationship. *Jesus . . . being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli (v.23)*. The issue here is **Jesus** who was assumed to be the relative of Joseph, was the relative of Heli, was the relative of Matthat and so on. Therefore, Heli was not Joseph's father but the supposed grandfather of Jesus. Heli, therefore, was Mary's father. That makes an important point here to establish that Mary's lineage also was connected to David. That means that even as a human, Jesus had a right to the throne of Israel.

It is very interesting that Luke's account traced Jesus back to David through his son Nathan instead of his son Solomon like Matthew recorded. The difference is that Matthew showed how Jesus's **legal** father came from David's line through Solomon, who also reigned on Israel's throne. Luke, on the other hand, showed how Jesus was actually human, related to Nathan, the non-king, all the way back to Adam. It is important to know that Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Savior, was not only God the Son, but God having taken on human flesh to become one of us.

Luke's very human lineage of Christ is an accurate presentation of human nature. Many of the ancestors were special people. Of course, it is also true that we have no idea who about half of these people were. Known or not, they were important enough to God that He ordained that their name should be listed. But the majority of these names are lost in history like almost all of us will be. In that there is Good News! You don't have to be remembered by fellow humans in order to be a recipient of God's eternal blessings.

Many of the people listed also are known because they played an important role in God's work with His nation Israel. For example, Seth was the third son of Adam and Eve. He virtually was the replacement for Abel who Cain murdered. The Old Testament story also reveals that the line of God-fearing people came through Seth.

It is interesting to compare the genealogy given by the Chronicler and see Adam, Seth, Enosh, and so on instead of Adam, Cain, and so forth (1 Chronicles 1:1). Seth was second in line of the whole human race.

Then there is Enoch. Cain had a son named Enoch, but this is not him. This man named Enoch walked in fellowship with God. He was one of the few humans who did not taste death but who went immediately into God's eternal presence (Genesis 5:24).

Methuselah is famous for living longer than anyone in history – having survived for 969 years. He was Noah’s relative and maybe even his grandfather. It is very likely that Noah knew him. He must have died shortly before Noah began building the ark or possibly was destroyed by the flood.

Then we read about these three closely related folks: Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech. Shem was father of the people group who settled in the Middle East. We can contrast to him and his posterity, Japhath whose posterity moved north, and Ham whose people settled south and east for the most part.

Again we read about five well-known people who were closely related: Nahor, Terah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah. It is possible that Nahor was born 500 years after the flood. Terah might have been his son or it is also possible that he was just a distant “relative” which would make a time line a difficult undertaking. Abraham was definitely Terah’s son and received God’s special promises and covenant for the nation of Israel. Isaac continued the blessing of God and fulfillment of His promise, begetting two sons (Esau and Jacob) who will forever illustrate distinction in God’s choices and work. Jacob was the father of the twelve sons who make up the tribes of Israel. Judah was the father of the tribe through whom God saw fit to send the promised Messiah, Savior, King.

Almost 900 years lapse before we come to Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David, and Nathan. Boaz was the gentleman and farmer who befriended Ruth the immigrant and eventually married her. Obed was David’s grandfather. And almost anyone who attended Sunday School knows that Jesse was David’s father and David was the ultimate human king of Israel. And yet we come to Nathan, one of David’s sons who was never a king and seemingly unimportant. But being named in the lineage of Jesus was important in order to make the human connection.

All of those ancestors of the human Jesus were in one way or another pretty well known or down right famous. But every single one of Jesus’s ancestors, known or unknown, were sinners. That is because Jesus was *the son of Adam* (v.38b). More precisely we would say that Jesus was the relative of Adam. This is the same Adam who threw God’s perfect creation into sin because of his rebellion. As a result all creation, all people have been plagued by sin ever since. Paul put it like this: *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and*

death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned (Romans 5:12).

All of Adam’s other relatives repeated his sin against their Creator. Many of the specific sins of these people are not mentioned. But it is significant when God points out that someone was righteous. God stated that Noah was found to be a recipient of His grace. The same is not said of his father Lamech or even his grandfather Methuselah (assuming that link), both of whom likely lived long enough to perish in the flood. And even Noah who God saved from the flood sinned by getting drunk. His son Ham dishonored his father. Abraham lied. Isaac lied in the same way about the same thing. Jacob committed too many sins to list. Judah was an adulterer. David was a murderer and adulterer.

And we are no better. None of us are righteous by nature. We all must have the same self-analysis Paul had. *The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost (1 Timothy 1:15).*

Being fully human, Jesus was identified with sinful humanity. He experienced the same kind of temptations we experience that in us lead to sin. But though He was human, Jesus never sinned. The writer to the Hebrew Christians reminds us, *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).* Jesus could not sin and still be our Savior from sin. He could not be less righteous than “God” and pay the price to appease God. Identifying fully with humans, Jesus paid the price for our offenses against Him by shedding His blood on the cross. It was only possible for Jesus to do that because of who He is.

Jesus Was Son of God.

That Jesus was the Son of God was affirmed at His baptism (vv.21-22). In baptism, God the Son identified with us. Luke wrote, *Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized (v.21a).* All the people were going to John to be baptized for repentance. John was preaching the need to repent of sin because the King had arrived representing His kingdom of righteousness. Many of

the people acknowledged their sin, repented, and were baptized in order to publicly acknowledge that they had repented.

But Jesus could not be baptized for repentance of sin. He never sinned. Then what was His baptism all about? Jesus's baptism identified Him with sinful humanity who He came to save. This event happened at the outset of His ministry. Up to this point, Jesus had been maturing physically and in favor with God and fellow humans. From this point on Jesus would be proving almost daily that He was God the Son who took on full humanity in order to save us from sin's penalty. More times than we know about, Jesus taught the truth He received from the Father, truth He established in eternity, in such power that the people were astonished. More times than we read about, Jesus performed miracles of healing, raising dead people, casting out demons, feeding thousands, controlling weather.

Jesus did these things in order to prove who He was. Beginning with His baptism, Jesus gave multiple reasons for people to believe. John wrote, *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:30-31)*. I have learned an important truth in recent days while continuing to read through the Bible daily. All through the four Gospel accounts and *Acts* we are challenged to have faith. We are challenged to believe that Jesus is who He said He is, God the Son, the Savior, who died and rose again to pay the price for our sins. Then beginning in *Romans* through the rest of the Epistles, we are challenged to live a life that indicates we have faith.

We have every reason to believe because also at His baptism, God the Father identified God the Son. Luke told us that when Jesus came out of the water *and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased" (vv.21b-22)*.

Matthew and Mark described the event in similar words: *And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice*

from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17).

In the miracle, God the Father publicly affirmed that Jesus was not merely a man. God spoke audibly to attest that Jesus the man was the eternal Son of God. God publicly stated that He was delighted with the voluntary sacrifice the Son was making. God publicly sent a symbol of the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity, who abode with the Son throughout His ministry.

Now having affirmed by His human lineage that Jesus was fully human and by the Father's statement that He was fully God, *Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age (v.23)*.

But Luke made one very important point before moving on with the story about the Good News. That Jesus was God is stated at the pinnacle of His genealogy (v.38b). Notice the concise words Luke used to end this section: *the son of God (v.38b)*. This is an astonishing claim to make. Jesus taught indirectly that He was the Son of God. Satan challenged Jesus to prove He is the Son of God, but Jesus didn't bite. The demons regularly declared that Jesus was the Son of God when He cast them out. The religious leaders crucified Jesus because He made Himself to be the Son of God. Luke's whole point was to establish that Jesus, the man with such a traceable lineage, was actually more than a man . . . He is the Son of God.

This is especially astonishing to say about a "man." Jesus looked like, talked like, walked like, and in most ways acted like the disciples who hung out with Him. This reality is what makes Peter's confession later in the ministry so remarkable. He looked right at Jesus, the man from Nazareth, with whom Peter and the others have been working together for at least two years and said, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*. Through God's revelation, Peter began to grasp the miracle of the incarnation, a miracle that no human fully comprehends.

In order to pay the penalty for humans' sins, the Savior had to be fully identified with us, fully familiar with our temptations and trials. In order to reconcile human sinners to the Divine God, the Savior had to be fully God, perfect and without sin. Only by trusting this truth completely will we receive forgiveness for sins. Trust is not the same as comprehension. Trust is believing what God says. The book we call *Luke* is God's message of Good News to us.