

A Royal Rescue

Luke 3:23-38

1. Introduction.

- a. There are many great mysteries within the Christian faith.
 - i. In fact, every major doctrine ultimately concludes in mystery.
 - ii. The reason for this is because God is an infinite reality, yet we are finite.
- b. Perhaps the most mysterious doctrine is the doctrine of God Himself. It's the greatest of all possible topics in theology, yet the largest and most difficult to grasp.
 - i. This is where many can become frustrated, or give up.
 - ii. Others will conclude that if they can't fully understand God, then they shouldn't have to worship Him.
 - iii. Yet this is the opposite of Paul in Romans 11:33-36. For Paul, it's precisely because God is incomprehensible that He is worthy of praise.
- c. One of the greatest mysteries of our faith is the doctrine of the hypostatic union (i.e., Jesus is fully God, yet fully man).
 - i. We've seen this at Jesus birth in ch. 2, yet this is a major implication of the passage before us.
 - ii. In 3:21-22 we saw the divinity of Jesus. Now in the genealogy we will see the humanity of Jesus.
- d. Structure.
 - i. 3:21-4:15 is a section formally known as "Jesus' preparation for ministry."
 1. It's broken into 3 units.
 - a. Jesus' baptism (3:21-22).
 - b. Jesus' genealogy (3:23-38).

- c. Jesus' wilderness testing (4:1-15).
 - 2. The entire section is showing Jesus' divine Messianic Sonship.
 - a. At Jesus baptism we see that Jesus is the divine Son.
 - b. In the genealogy we see He's the Dividic Son and anointed Messiah, Who's come to save the entire human race.
 - c. In the wilderness temptation we see Him prove Himself to be this true son (c.f., 4:3).
 - 3. The point of the section is to show forth exactly Who Jesus is.
- 2. The Genealogy.
 - a. The genealogy between Matthew and Luke are radically different. This can be troubling for some people, but also an issue many bring up to try and discredit the Gospels.
 - b. There are multiple views on how to reconcile the differences, but there are two main views that make a lot of sense of the details.
 - c. Structure of the genealogies.
 - i. Mathew begins with Abraham and moves forward to Jesus, whereas Luke begins with Jesus and moves backward all the way to Adam.
 - ii. Matthew begins with Abraham because it's a very Jewish book.
 - 1. For the Jew, Abraham is what is most important in terms of figuring out Who the Messiah is. They understood that the Messiah was to be the fulfillment of the great Abraham promise, and that the Messiah must come through the line of Abraham, and subsequently, David.
 - 2. Genesis 15:1-5.
 - 3. Abraham is the great patriarch, and where everything begins for the Jews.
 - iii. Luke, on the other hand, is writing to Gentiles.

1. Gentiles wouldn't necessarily be as familiar with the Old Testament, nor would Abraham (nor David) mean much to them.
 2. Luke traces the genealogy all the way back to Adam because his main burden with his Gospel is to show that Jesus is not merely the Savior of Jews, but the entire world. As such, he goes all the way back to the head of the human race—Adam.
 3. So while Abraham and David are still vital for the Messianic lineage, Luke mentions them, but then keeps going all the way back to Adam.
- iv. There are some very important reasons for the two different structures. Matthew is writing to Jews. Luke is writing to Gentiles. As such, each genealogy is accommodating their respective purposes for their intended audiences.
- v. Neither genealogy is intended to be exhaustive. They're both condensed and abridged. The goal is not to give a strict chronology, but communicate a theological message.
1. Matthew's consist of 42 names.
 - a. 3 groups of 14 names:
 - i. Abraham to David.
 - ii. David to the Babylonian Exile.
 - iii. Babylonian Exile to Jesus.
 - b. This was done to for the purpose of being able to memorize the lineage in an oral culture.
 2. Luke's consists of 77 names. Attempt to identify a structure have been made (i.e., 11 sections of 7 names), but nothing is truly convincing.
- d. Differences in the Genealogies.
- i. Apart from Luke's genealogies going all the way to Adam, both genealogies agree from Abraham to David. However, there's virtually no

agreement from David to Joseph (Jesus' earthly father). In fact, only 2 names agree. So how do we reconcile this?

ii. Two main views:

1. View 1: Mathew and Luke are both tracing Jesus' lineage through Joseph's line. However, they're doing it in two different ways.

a. Since Matthew is interested in showing Jesus' connection to the Davidic throne, He's beginning with Abraham and moving forward to show all the people who have a legal right to the throne. He traces this line through David's son Solomon.

b. Since Luke's genealogy is much longer, He starts with Jesus (moves backward) and shows the exact lineage from Jesus to Adam.

c. The point to understand with this view is that both lines are understood to be following the lineage of Joseph, but in 2 different ways.

2. View 2: Matthew is following Joseph's line, whereas Luke is following Mary's.

a. This view has much more support and leaves virtually nothing unanswered.

i. V. 23 states that Jesus was the "supposed son of Joseph," indicating that Luke is emphasizing that Joseph wasn't Jesus' literal father, but adoptive Father.

ii. Eli is also seen in extra-biblical sources to be Mary's father.

iii. Luke has had an enormous amount of focus on Mary so far in the Gospel, whereas Joseph has been virtually unmentioned.

- b. While Mary isn't mentioned in the genealogy, we know that genealogies are always traced through the husbands and Fathers.
 - i. So while Joseph is said to be the son of Eli, this would have been very typical, even though Eli is actually the father of Mary.
 - ii. Son-in-laws were simply regarded as full-fledged sons.
- iii. What's the significance of these two genealogies?
 - 1. To be adopted was to be a full-fledged son, where you inherit all the rights of any blood-born son. You become a legal heir to all that belongs to a particular family.
 - a. As such, since Joseph is a literal decedent of David, the point to understand is that Jesus becomes a legal heir to the Davidic throne.
 - i. This is very important because all the Old Testament prophecies indicated that the Messiah had to come from the line of David.
 - ii. Again, this would have been especially important for the Jews, which is why Matthew begins with his genealogy. If Jesus wasn't seen to be of Davidic descent, then nothing else in the Gospel matters.
 - b. The point, then, is that Matthew's genealogy shows how Jesus is a true legal heir to the Davidic throne, thus making him a legitimate candidate to be the Davidic Messiah.
 - 2. Luke, on the other hand, shows Jesus to be a blood-descendent of David.
 - 3. The significance of these two genealogies together, is that they show that Jesus has a double right to the throne—both a legal and blood right.

3. Conclusion.

- a. Luke waits until chapter 3 to include his genealogy because it doesn't function to give a mere chronology. Rather, the entire point is to show forth Jesus as the true Son of God. It comes in a section in which Luke is showing exactly Who Jesus is.
- b. What is essential to see with Luke's genealogy is that He doesn't actually end with Adam, but God Himself (38).
 - i. Luke traces the lineage back to God, but by using sonship language.
 - ii. The point, then, is to understand that Luke is trying to show forth Jesus as the great Son of God.
 1. The bible is clear that we are all sons of Adam, which means we inherit Adam's guilt. He is our father, and we are his children.
 2. So in a section in which Luke is showing Jesus as the true Messianic Savior of the world, he's also showing how Jesus is the new (and better) Son of God.
 - a. Just as Adam was a direct son of God, so also Jesus is a direct Son of God. In this sense, Jesus doesn't come from Adam, but directly from God the Father.
 - b. As such, those who are now in Christ, have a new head and representative, namely, Jesus Christ. They now belong to a new line (and new genealogy). And with this comes a completely new inheritance.
 - c. Adam's inheritance is death, but Jesus' inheritance is eternal life.