

# The Genealogies of Matthew and Luke

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The genealogy of Jesus in Lk. 3:23-38 goes from Adam to Jesus in reverse order. The genealogy of Jesus in Mat. 1:1-16 goes only from Abraham to Jesus, so there is nothing in Matthew's list that corresponds to Luke's genealogy from Adam to Terah.

## Lineages of Jesus

according to **Matthew** and **Luke** (mutual names in purple)

Adam  
Seth  
Enosh  
Kenan  
Mahalalel  
Jared  
Enoch  
Methuselah  
Lamech  
Noah  
Shem  
Arphaxad  
[Cainan]<sup>1</sup>  
Shelah  
Eber  
Peleg  
Reu  
Serug  
Nahor  
Terah

Abraham  
Isaac  
Jacob  
Judah  
Perez  
Hezron  
Ram<sup>2</sup>  
Amminadab  
Nahshon  
Salmon<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Some manuscripts of Lk. 3:36 include an extra generation ("Cainan") between Arphaxad and Shelah. It seems likely, however, that "Cainan" was not in the original of Lk. 3:36. It is omitted in P75, a papyrus manuscript from the 3rd century (one of the oldest copies of this text), and in D, a 5th century uncial. Given the presence of "Cainan" (Greek for Kenan) in Lk. 3:37, it is understandable how a scribe could have repeated it accidentally in Lk. 3:36. See, Darrell Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 358-359.

<sup>2</sup> Between Abraham and David, there are textual uncertainties in the manuscripts of Luke regarding the descendants between Hezron and Amminidab. Some manuscripts match Matthew in listing only Aram (equivalent of Matthew's Ram) between Hezron and Amminidab. These are followed by such notable English versions as NKJV, HCSB, and NIV. Other manuscripts mention only Arni and Admin as descendants between Hezron and Amminidab, and still others have additional variations. A decision as to which is original is difficult.

	Boaz	
	Obed	
	Jesse	
	David	
Solomon		Nathan
Rehoboam		Mattatha
		Menna
Abijah		Melea
Asa		Eliakim
		Jonam
Jehoshaphat		Joseph
Jehoram		Judah
		Simeon
Uzziah		Levi
Jotham		Matthat
		Jorim
Ahaz		Eliezer
Hezekiah		Joshua
		Er
Manasseh		Elmadam
Amon		Cosam
		Addi
Josiah		Melchi
Jeconiah		Neri
		Shealtiel
Shealtiel		Zerubbabel
Zerubbabel		Rhesa
		Joanan
Abihud		Joda
Eliakim		Josek
		Semein
Azor		Mattathias
Zadok		Maath
		Naggai
Akim		Esli
Elihud		Nahum
		Amos
Eleazar		Mattathias
Matthan		Joseph
		Jannai
Jacob		Melchi
		Levi
		Matthat
		Heli
	Joseph	
	Jesus	

The real difference between the genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke are the generations between David and Joseph. They clearly are different lineages. There are two reasonable ways to understand the differences.

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<sup>3</sup> There is also textual uncertainty in the manuscripts of Luke regarding the name of Nason's son. Some give it as Salmon, which matches Matthew, but others give it as Sala, which is possibly an alternate spelling. The reading "Salmon" is followed by ERV, ASV, NEB, NKJV, HCSB, and NIV. The NAS and NASU accept the Greek text "Sala" but render it "Salmon."

First, Luke's genealogy may be that of Mary. If Mary was the daughter of Heli and had no brothers, her husband, Joseph, would be Heli's "son" in the sense he would be his legal heir pursuant to Num. 36:1-12. The fact Mary wed within the family of David (Joseph also being a descendant of David) would ensure that Heli's inheritance remained among those in the same household. The weakness of this possibility is that Luke stresses throughout the birth narrative that *Joseph* is a descendant of David; he never makes a point of Mary's Davidic descent.

A second possibility is that both genealogies are of Joseph, but Matthew gives his *bloodline*, his biological descent, whereas Luke gives the lineage of Heli, his father *by law*. That would be the case if Jacob and Heli were brothers, Heli married and died childless, and Jacob then fathered Joseph with Heli's widow pursuant to the levirate marriage provision of Deut. 25:5-6. In that case, Jacob "begot" Joseph (Mat. 1:16), was his biological father, but Joseph was "the son of" Heli (Lk. 3:23) by legal right.

This scenario raises the question of how Jacob and Heli could be brothers when Mat. 1:15 identifies Matthan as Jacob's father and Lk. 3:23-24 identify Matthat as Heli's father. This need not mean that Jacob and Heli had different fathers. Matthan and Matthat may be variant spellings of the same name, but even if they are two different individuals, the statement that Matthan "begat" or "fathered" (γεννάω) Jacob need not mean that Matthan was Jacob's literal father, his immediate ancestor. The verb can refer to a more distant ancestor, to a grandfather, great grandfather, great great grandfather, etc. For example, Mat. 1:8 says Joram/Jehoram "begat" Uzziah without mentioning the intervening generations of Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah (2 Ki. 8:25, 11:2, 14:1; 2 Chron. 26:1), and Mat. 1:11 says Josiah "begat" Jeconiah without mentioning Jehoiakim who was between them (2 Ki. 23:34; 1 Chron. 3:16). So Matthew may not identify Jacob's literal father.

But even if Jacob and Heli had different fathers, Matthan and Matthat respectively, they still could be brothers. That would be the case if Matthan married a woman, fathered Jacob by her, died, and then his widow married Matthat to whom she bore Heli. That would make Jacob and Heli half-brothers by the same mother, and as such, Jacob would be required to marry Heli's widow to father a descendant for Heli if Heli had died childless.

Given that the two genealogies are different lineages, it is curious that both include between David and Joseph a Shealtiel whose next reported descendant was Zerubbabel. It is possible they are different persons, a possibility made more likely by the fact a different ancestor is listed for Shealtiel in the two lists. Perhaps Shealtiel was a relatively common name and Luke's Shealtiel chose to name his son Zerubbabel after the famous son of the other Shealtiel (e.g., Ezra 3:2; Neh. 12:1; Hag. 1:1, 12-15) that is mentioned in Matthew's genealogy. If the two Shealtiels (and thus Zerubbabels) are the same individual, Shealtiel may have been the biological descendant of Jeconiah and the legal descendant of Neri pursuant to a levirate marriage. Shealtiel's son Zerubbabel then had two children, Abiud and Rhesa, through whom the lineages again separated.