



THE GOSPEL OF  
**Luke**

***SESSION OBJECTIVE: LUKE 3:23-38***

To understand more about the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

## “Skip Intro”

If you use virtually any of the streaming platforms these days (Netflix, Disney+, Hulu, HBO Max, etc.), you are familiar with the helpful little button that pops up at the start of almost every episode you watch: “Skip Intro.” It allows the user to bypass the introduction sequence so they can get right into the meat of the show. While intro sequences of TV shows are not integral to understanding the plot or the direction the show is heading, intro sequences to books or even chapters often are. One way Scripture develops these so-called “intro sequences” is through genealogies, and boy, do we (mostly) love to skip over them.

While Matthew’s Gospel begins with a genealogy, Luke waits until the third chapter to unravel his. While it might be tempting to browse past this genealogy and “get back to the story,” this segment of text is crucial for several reasons, many of which we will explore in this week’s study.

## Similarities

As mentioned above, both Luke and Matthew provide a genealogy for Jesus Christ. Both of them share several similarities. We will examine them below.

***THE DAVIDIC CONNECTION***

Both genealogies share several things in common. For one, they both trace Jesus back to at least David. Part of the messianic requirements was to be a descendant of David (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Is. 11:1). Both genealogies

succeed in showing Jesus' claim to the Davidic throne. While each of these genealogies likely serve a different purpose (more will be said on this below), they both make the critical connection to David.

### **SEVERAL IDENTICAL NAMES**

Both genealogies also include several of the same names. While there are some marked divergences in the way these genealogies go, they do also share some of the same names.

## **Differences**

While Luke and Matthew's genealogies share some details in common, there is much to discuss with regard to the differences.

### **THE END POINT**

For one, Matthew traces Jesus' lineage back to Abraham, whereas Luke goes all the way back to Adam. There is a good explanation for this. Matthew develops two motifs through His Gospel whereby he connects Jesus to David and Abraham. David symbolizes the messianic promise of God, and Abraham acts as a representative for God's people, both of which are found in Jesus Christ. Luke, on other hand, demonstrates how Jesus is the perfect Son of God. He more than anyone else explores the radically divine manner in which Jesus is conceived, making Him the Son of God. He ratifies this by tracing Jesus' lineage all the way back to "Adam, the son of God" (Lk. 3:38). By doing this, Luke shows that Jesus is not simply the fulfillment of the hopes of Jewish people, but *all* people.

### **THE ORDER**

Another difference is the order in which the genealogies are formed. Matthew begins with Abraham and works his way down to Christ, which follows the traditional ordering of a Jewish or ancient near-eastern genealogy. Luke, on the other hand, begins with Jesus and moves his way down to Adam.

### **A DIFFERENT DAVIDIC DESCENDANT**

The primary divergence between these two genealogies is the direct descendant mentioned after David. In Matthew's reading we get, "And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah" (Matt. 1:6). By contrast, Luke writes, "the son of Nathan, the son of David" (Lk. 3:31). Why Nathan instead of Solomon? Both of them are born of David and Bathsheba, making them full-blooded brothers. Because of this difference, the names that follow in verses 28 through 31 are entirely different than Matthew's account.

Several suggestions have been made regarding this difference. Some have argued that Luke's account is Mary's genealogy while Matthew's is Joseph's. This certainly makes sense thematically; Luke begins his story from the perspective of Mary while Matthew begins his from the perspective of Joseph. However, the problem occurs in that both genealogies connect to Joseph. Some have argued that the wording, "the husband of Mary" in Matthew's Gospel is meant to show a connection to Mary, but it is still a genealogy connect to Joseph all the same. Others have suggested that the phrase "being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph" in Luke 3:23 is somehow in play, but this has more to do with Luke's goal of demonstrating that Jesus is not the son of Joseph, but the son of God (Lk. 3:38).

Perhaps the best explanation for this is that Matthew's genealogy could be seen as royal genealogy and Luke's is Jesus' actual genealogy. There are several reasons why this makes sense. For one, it fits with Matthew's motif of connecting Jesus to the Davidic kings; Matthew mentions a lot more of them than Luke does. Luke also includes several more generations in places that Matthew seems to bypass. It's not uncommon to bypass some lesser known names in genealogies, so long as the big connections are made. If

Matthew seeks to connect Jesus to a royal line, he certainly succeeds. Luke, on other hand, is showing Jesus' actual line through Joseph (his supposed but, more importantly, *legal* father), and even it connects Him to David, as well as establishes Him as the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45).

## A Note On Adam

An additional point should be made here, because of Luke's connection between Jesus and Adam, that Adam is viewed at least by Luke as a historical figure. There have been attempts through the years to see the Adam and Eve sequence in Genesis as a more of a myth that explains in symbolic ways the way God created man and woman (Gen. 1 and 2), while also providing an explanation for why bad things like death happen (Gen. 3). However, Adam is not a mythical figure but one that Jesus has a direct lineage to, and thus Adam should be viewed (along with all of Genesis 1-3) as a literal account of both creation and fall.

## What About Now?

There are several applications that can be made from this passage. For one, since Jesus' lineage can be traced all the way back to Adam, it means He is the Savior of all peoples, not just the Jewish people. This makes sense given what God said about His ultimate plan of salvation for all peoples (Is. 52:10; Ps. 67:2-4; Zech. 8:22). God has always desired to bring all peoples to Himself, and Jesus is the way He accomplishes this. Another takeaway is the importance of knowing where you come from. Good or bad, it's helpful to know where you descend from. In western culture, this is not a high value and I believe that is to our detriment in many ways.

## Study Questions

### Day One

1. Read Luke 3:23-24. Write down all of the names mentioned in these two verses. Does anything strange stand out to you?

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2. Read Luke 3:25-26. Write down all of the names mentioned in these two verses. Does anything strange stand out to you?

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### Day Two

1. Read Luke 3:27-28. Write down all of the names mentioned in these two verses. Does anything strange stand out to you?

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2. Read Luke 3:29-30. Write down all of the names mentioned in these two verses. Does anything strange stand out to you?

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### Day Three

1. Read Luke 3:31-32. Write down all of the names mentioned in these two verses. Does anything strange stand out to you?

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2. Read Luke 3:33-34. Write down all of the names mentioned in these two verses. Does anything strange stand out to you?

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### Day Four

1. Read Luke 3:35-36. Write down all of the names mentioned in these two verses. Does anything strange stand out to you?

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2. Read Luke 3:37-38. Write down all of the names mentioned in these two verses. Does anything strange stand out to you?

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## Week 12 Discussion: The Lord Of All

In Luke's genealogy for Jesus, Jesus' line is traced all the way back to Adam. This means that, in a sense, Jesus' dominion as Savior is genealogically tied to all people. He is truly the Lord of all. Talk as a group about what this means with regard to missions, both domestic and international, and how it might better motivate you to witness beyond your own sphere of influence.

1. Icebreaker: Have you ever been on a mission trip? If so, share a little about it.
2. What is the value of traveling to countries and experiencing ministry in cultures that are vastly different than your own?
3. Do you support any international ministries or missionaries? If so, which one/s? If not, why not?
4. How does Jesus' Lordship over all people groups inform the way you should love other people groups?
5. How interested should the church be in sharing the Gospel, or at the bare minimum partnering with organizations that share the Gospel with non-English speaking people?
6. How interested would you be in going on an international mission trip?

### Takeaways:

1. Jesus' genealogy is both similar and different to Matthew's genealogy, but for specific reasons.
2. Jesus is connected not only to David and Abraham, but Adam, making Him both theologically and genealogically the Son of God.