

INTRODUCTION

There is a human fascination with genealogy and knowing where you came from. There are industries built around it. "23 and Me" is a company that does DNA testing in order to tell you about your ancestry. On their website there is a video of a 76-year-old woman who tells her story. She was adopted from birth and always knew this. In her video biography she said, "You always wonder, you know, who does make you who you are?" As a young adult, she didn't feel complete and always felt that something was missing. This launched her on a 40-year search for her birth parents. She obtained her adoption file and scoured it for leads that she could follow up on in the hopes that one of those leads my lead her home. After many years of searching, she gave up, resigned to the fact that she would go to her grave not knowing who she was.

I don't think this story is unique to this 76 year old adopted woman. We all want to know where we came from because somehow we think it will help explain who we are. We think that knowing our genealogy will orient us to the world and help us make sense of our lives or find peace for all our inner angst.

Today we are going to look at the genealogy of Jesus Christ as it is told by Luke.

Our text today is Luke 3:23-38.

Luke 3:23-38 *Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, the son of Maath,*

the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah,

*the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, **the son of David**, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez,*

*the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, **the son of Abraham**, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch,*

*the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enos, the son of Seth, **the son of Adam**, the son of God.*

Before we get into this genealogy, it is good to remind ourselves about who Luke is and why he is writing. Luke is a Gentile believer and traveling companion of the Apostle Paul who was called to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. Luke tells us right at the very beginning that he is writing to a man named Theophilus who we presume to be a Gentile magistrate, and he is earnest for this man to be certain about the things he has been told about Jesus.

In his letter to Theophilus, Jesus includes this genealogy of Jesus, but he seems to place this genealogy in his narrative in a very arbitrary place, and he tells this genealogy in a very non-traditional way.

THESIS

What I want to show you is that Luke tells the genealogy of Jesus the way he does in order to draw our attention back to the Garden of Eden so that the reader can see that Jesus is the saviour of all mankind and God's divinely appointed solution for mankind's greatest problem.

BODY

So let's take a look at Jesus's genealogy...

First Point: Luke tells the genealogy of Jesus counter-chronologically.

Luke tells the genealogy of Jesus counter-chronologically. This is a very unusual way of relating a genealogy. If you look at any other genealogy in the Bible, it is told chronologically. When a genealogy is told chronologically it causes the reader to look forward in time so that when the reader gets to the end he says, "Okay, what's next!" But Luke tells the genealogy of Jesus counter-chronologically and this causes the opposite effect. It's as if Luke is saying, "Okay, we've arrived, now let's look back and remember how we got here."

We see this backward-looking behaviour anytime we reach one of life's milestones. Last fall I attended the celebration of a 50th wedding anniversary. Every speech I heard and every conversation I participated in was reminiscing about the past; we remembered hard times and good times, and successes and failures. This, I think, is what Luke is wanting us to do here, to look back and remember. But what is it that he wants us to remember?

Second Point: Luke tells the genealogy of Jesus back to Adam.

I think we get our first clue from the fact that Luke follows the genealogy of Jesus all the way back to Adam. If you were Jewish, what was important to you is that you were a descendant of Abraham, this is because God made very specific and important promises to Abraham about his offspring. And if you were waiting for the Messiah to come, as many devout Jews were doing at the time, the important thing that you were looking for is that the Saviour was a descendant of David because God made very specific promises to David that the Saviour would come from his offspring.

But these promises that God made, particularly God's promise to Abraham about his offspring, created a separation between the Jews and the Gentiles. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians called this separation "*the dividing wall of hostility*".

But Luke, being a Gentile, tells the genealogy of Jesus pushing through the lineage of David and through the lineage of Abraham all the way back to Adam who was the father of all mankind. So Luke, in the way he tells the genealogy of Jesus wants us to look back and remember that there is no one, Jew or Gentile, who is not a direct descendant of Adam.

Third Point: Luke places the genealogy of Jesus right after Jesus's baptism.

If we look at what Luke says immediately before the genealogy of Jesus, we find that he places Jesus' genealogy immediately after Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist.

Luke 3:21-22 *Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized 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."*

As Jude told us last week, we have the heavens being torn open and the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus in bodily form and God giving his seal of approval on Jesus saying, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." When ever you are looking at a passage of scripture you always have to put it in the immediate context of what the writer is saying. I believe that Luke intentionally placed the genealogy of Jesus here because he wants us to remember Adam in the Garden of Eden and the seal of approval that God declared over him.

Genesis 1:26-31 *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created*

him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." [...] And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good...

So, Luke has us looking back and remembering the creation of Adam who was given dominion over the earth and was to be the life-giving spring of all mankind.

Fourth: Luke places the genealogy of Jesus immediately before Jesus' testing in the wilderness. And that brings us to what Luke says after he tells us the genealogy...

Luke 4:1-2 *And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil...*

In telling Jesus's genealogy immediately before his being led into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, Luke is clearly wanting us to see the parallel between Jesus's testing in the wilderness

and Adam's testing in the Garden of Eden. Of course, we know the results of Adam's testing; Adam fell into transgression and Paul tells us that,

Romans 5:12 *sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—*

Fifth Point: Luke tells the genealogy of Jesus according to the line of Mary.

The final point I want to make with respect to Luke's telling of the genealogy of Jesus, is that he appears to be following the genealogical blood line of Jesus back to Adam, specifically through his mother, Mary. Not coincidentally, there are exactly 77 generations from Jesus to Adam. In the Bible the number seven is considered the number of divine perfection or completeness or something that is finished. I believe that Luke tells the genealogy of Jesus through Mary's line because the very first promise that God made regarding a saviour was to Adam, who represents all mankind, and Jesus is the perfect fulfilment of that Promise.

Genesis 3:14-15 *The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life;*

And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

Jesus is the seed of the woman, Mary, and he would be the one to bruise the head of the serpent!

RESTATE THESIS

Luke's intent in all of this, is to draw the readers attention back to the Garden of Eden and to help the reader see that **Adam is a type of Christ**. Indeed, that is what Paul tells us. In Romans 5:12-21, Paul gives a detailed and confusing explanation of the relationship between Adam and Christ and he clearly tells us that Adam is a type of Christ. Some of you may be wondering what a "type" is. Here is a working definition:

"A type is a real happening, or real person, in the Old Testament which was divinely ordained by God to be a foreshadow of the good things to come in The New Testament."

If we boil down Paul's detailed explanation of the relationship between Adam and Jesus, Adam is a type of Jesus in that just as Adam's actions had consequences for all mankind (bringing death to all) so Jesus' actions would have consequences for all mankind (bringing life to all who believe).

Romans 5:20. *For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

CONCLUSION-APPLICATION

I think it would be profitable for us to go back to Genesis and spend some time remembering where we came from just as Luke suggests that we do. Let's pick up the story in Genesis 3, immediately after God created Adam and Eve and gave them their dominion mandate...

Genesis 3. Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'? And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you? And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." [...] And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

There is no greater explanation for who we are than that we are descendants of Adam. Our relationship to Adam explains our greatest longings and our greatest fears, our sinfulness, our guilt, our shame, our blame shifting and accusing, our hiding, our covering up, our fear of being known and our longing to be known, our frustration and our sense of futility in life, our anger, our bitterness, our resentment, our sorrow and our grief. We have no greater explanation for who we are than that we are all descendants of Adam. This is our greatest problem!

God made a promise to Adam that he would provide a solution for the problem he created, not just for himself, but for all mankind. And for seventy-seven generations the world waited, until the fullness of time had come, and God sent his beloved Son with whom he was well pleased, a new and better Adam, to do what the first Adam, weak as he was through the flesh, could never do.

There is no other solution to our problem than the solution that Luke holds out in his Gospel, that Jesus, the seed of the woman, the new and better Adam, came to earth, was born of a

virgin, lived a perfect life, felt the sting of death on the cross, and rose again so that he could destroy the works of the devil, that serpent of old.

At the beginning of this sermon I told you the story of a 76-year old woman who was desperate to figure out her genealogy in the hopes of figuring out who she was. Of course, in her old age she decided to have her DNA analyzed by *23 and ME* and found out that she had a half nephew. The discover of this half nephew led her home. How satisfied do you think she would have been if she had stopped her pursuit of answers at receiving the information she had on a piece of paper telling her that she had a half nephew? Would she have felt the connection and resolution she was looking for if she'd only read the results from 23 and Me without ever getting on a plane and building relationships with her family?

Now what about us? How much peace does it give us to understand academically that we are descendants of Adam? We learned that Christ is the Saviour of all mankind and the solution for mankind's greatest problem. Does that knowledge alone give us the peace and the sense of belonging we are desperate for?

Maybe you've never heard this information before. Maybe you have never considered that you are part of the "all mankind" that Jesus came to save. You have a choice to make today. Will you leave what you've heard today as merely interesting facts and knowledge, or will you take what you've learned about your family history in Adam and run to Jesus as your Saviour and solution to your greatest problem?

To you believers who continue to struggle with all the problems you have because of your relationship to Adam, are you continuing to flee to Christ and to find in him the solution to those problems? The gospel is not only for unbelievers to come to Christ for the first time but for each of us to apply daily to every problem that we have!