

Jesus' Ancestry

Key Verse: *“The women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.”*
—*Ruth 4:17*

Selected Scriptures: *Ruth 4:9-17; Luke 3:23-38*

IN OUR MODERN CULTURE

many families have little sense of heritage. We may have some family traditions, but most do not even know the names or history of those prior to their grandparents. Modern genealogy research is primarily reserved for hobbyists. In contrast, genealogies were a deeply integral part of Jewish culture at the time of Jesus. Land and other possessions were inherited based on family lines, and those who could not prove their ancestry

in Israel were considered outsiders.

As incredible as it may seem, the biblical lineage found in Luke 3:23-38 traces Jesus' ancestry back 4 millennia to the first man, Adam. In this is provided a crucial fulfillment of prophecy. Adam's sin brought judgment and death into the world, but a Savior was promised—the “seed” of the woman who would strike the head of the serpent. (Gen. 3:15) Jesus Christ is the “last Adam,” the promised seed, concerning which Paul speaks of, saying, “As by the offence of one [the first Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [Jesus, the last Adam] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”—I Cor. 15:45; Rom. 5:18

In addition to Jesus being the “seed” of Adam, he was also of the seed, or lineage, of David. Paul confirms this when he speaks of “Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” (Rom. 1:3) Matthew states that Jesus was a direct descendant of Abraham and David through Joseph, Jesus’ legal father, through the line of David’s son, Solomon. (Matt. 1:1-16) When Solomon was king, he married women from foreign nations who seduced him into worshipping foreign gods against the commands of Jehovah. As a result, Solomon and his successors eventually had the kingdom of Israel taken away. (I Kings 11:6-13; Ezek. 21:25-27) Centuries later, Jesus wept over Israel’s refusal to accept him as their Messiah days before his death and cast them off as a nation.—Matt. 23:37,38; Luke 19:41,42

In contrast with Matthew’s account, Luke traces Jesus’ ancestry from Mary, the daughter of Heli [Joseph being Heli’s son-in-law] back to David through his son Nathan. (Luke 3:23-31) In this regard, the Scriptures are clear in declaring God as Jesus’ true father, not Joseph. Luke describes the angel of the Lord telling Mary of this very fact: “Thou shalt ... bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. ... The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”—Luke 1:31,32,35

In today’s Key Verse, Naomi’s neighbors expressed their hopes that her grandson, Obed, would nourish, comfort, and assist her. Obed means serving or servant, which foretells the character that would describe Jesus as the world’s Savior. Let us be comforted by this promise: “We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.”—I John 4:14

