

**'Son of Adam and Son of God'**

*Jesus made it possible for the entire human race to be saved.*

.....**Luke 3: 23 – 37**.....

***“Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph. The son of Heli, <sup>24</sup>the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melki, the son of Hannai, the son of Joseph, <sup>25</sup>the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, <sup>26</sup>the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, <sup>27</sup>the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, <sup>28</sup>the son of Melki, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, <sup>29</sup>the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, <sup>30</sup>the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Elikaim, <sup>31</sup>the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, <sup>32</sup>the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, <sup>33</sup>the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, <sup>34</sup>the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, <sup>35</sup>the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, <sup>36</sup>the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, <sup>37</sup>the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Kenan, <sup>38</sup>the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.”***.....

This past week I had quite a discussion with God! When I began studying the Gospel of Luke with you on Sunday mornings, it sounded like a good idea. That was, until we came to today’s reading of Luke’s genealogy of Jesus. I said, ‘Dear God, how will reading all these names bring hope to people’s lives right now?!’ And, as God always does, He opened my eyes to see that they do!

No doubt as we read through the names in Luke’s list together, you heard some names that were familiar and some that definitely were not. I also was interested to hear the names of some people that I personally know. My son has a friend named ‘**Kenan.**’ I wonder if he knows that his name is in the Gospel of Luke? I believe that someone in our congregation is related to a ‘**Meleah.**’ It’s fun to recognize names that come from the Bible.

Much more than just something interesting to read, Luke put his genealogy at this particular place in his gospel for a reason. Luke, as we have already established, was a careful historian, who wanted to present Jesus and his life in the most accurate way possible.

Genealogy was very important in Israel. It was much more than a hobby or a curiosity like it is to us who enjoy searching ‘*ancestry.com.*’ A person’s reputation or place in society was determined by who their ancestors were. In many ways, that is still true for us today.

Detailed lists of descendants were kept in the Temple in Jerusalem. The most important reason for the ancestry records was that the only people who could be priests in the Temple

were the descendants of Aaron, the brother of Moses. They were from the 'Levitical' priests who were descendants of Levi, one of Jacob's sons. (*Numbers 18:2-6*)

One of the tragedies when former priests returned to rebuild Jerusalem from exile in Babylon was that they could not prove their ancestry and so they were excluded from serving in the Temple. Genealogies proved legitimate rights to property and family privileges.

Matthew stated Jesus' ancestry right up front, the very first thing, in his gospel of Jesus. He did it to establish how Jesus had come through the right ancestry to fulfill prophesy and to validate him as the promised Messiah and King of Israel.

Luke placed his genealogy in a different place than Matthew, waiting until after Jesus' baptism and before Jesus' temptation by Satan in the wilderness. Why did Luke do this? Luke wanted to make a different point in his version of Jesus' family line.

If we were to compare the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, we would immediately notice that they start at different places. For instance, Luke began by telling us '**it was thought**' that Joseph was the father of Jesus. Luke, precise as he is in his writing, *knew* that Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus. He knew that Jesus was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit.

Luke has many more names in his genealogy than Matthew, and many of the people that Luke mentions are mysterious. They are not known anywhere else in the Bible. For instance, scholars for many years have wondered about who '**Heli**' (*Hee-Lie*) was, the person Luke listed as the father of Joseph.

Luke began his genealogy by tracing Jesus' heritage through different people than Matthew did. Some have thought that '**Heli**' may have been an adopted father of Joseph. Others have wondered if Luke was following Jesus' lineage through his mother, Mary. Is that why Luke began by saying that Joseph was the '*supposed*' father of Jesus?

To use a mother's ancestry would have been unheard of. It would be like tracing your lineage not through your father's parents, but through your mother's. Both are interesting propositions, but not something that anyone truly knows the answer to.

Luke does, however, reach back like Matthew, to establish that Jesus descended from David. Matthew focused on linking Jesus to Solomon, David's son who was the King after David. But Luke traced Jesus back to Nathan, a different son born to David and Bathsheba. (*1 Chronicles 3:5*)

The reason why both writers chose different persons to highlight in Jesus' ancestry is not certain. It is important, however, that both Luke and Matthew traced Jesus' lineage back to King David, to whom God had made a promise. In *2 Samuel 7:16*, God had said to David: '**Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.**' Both Luke and Matthew established that Jesus was a rightful heir to King David's throne.

The second similarity is that both Luke and Matthew establish that Jesus was the fulfilment of God's covenant to Abraham. In Genesis, the reading Lee Ann read for us earlier, God told Abraham, '**I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you...and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.**' (*Genesis 12:2-3*)

Luke, however, goes back even further in Jesus' ancestry, all the way back to Adam, the very first human that God created. Luke makes a point that we do not want to miss. Not only was Jesus the fulfillment of promises God made to Israel, Jesus also brings the hope of God's blessing to the entire human race.

We all, descended from Abraham or not, men and women, people of every nation and language, traditions and customs, are all linked to Jesus through a common bond of human origin. Luke wants us to understand that Jesus was born to be the Savior of every single person on the earth.

So, you see, Luke's genealogy is put right here to emphasize that the temptation that Jesus is about to face, he does as a representative of the entire human race. By linking Jesus to Adam, Luke will show that Jesus is the other **'son of God,'** who will stand up to Satan's temptations in a way that Adam failed to do.

Adam was created **'in God's image,'** but sadly, God's image in him was marred because of his sin. The relationship with God that was supposed to give eternal life to Adam and his children, instead brought separation from God and spiritual death.

Jesus, as the Apostle Paul liked to point out, became the **'Second Adam,'** sometimes called the **'Last Adam,'** in order to bear God's image in the correct way and restore humankind to eternal life as God originally intended. (1 Corinthians 15:45)

When Satan enticed Eve and Adam to disobey God, their actions brought an end to humanity's life in Eden and sent their children (*which includes us!*) into the realm of darkness, separated by sin from God.

Jesus came to reverse that **'curse,'** to set humanity back in a **'right'** relationship with God again. In order to do this, Jesus would need to pass several tests. First, Jesus would need to successfully stand up against Satan's temptations and not give in to sin. That part of the story in Chapter Four (4) of Luke will be our discussion next week.

What hope can we gain for our lives today from Jesus' ancestry record in Luke?

**1) JESUS IS THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD** Luke shows us that Jesus alone is uniquely qualified to bring us into the Kingdom of God. By being the divine Son of God, Jesus fulfills the promises God made to David, to Abraham and to Adam.

In the Garden, God cursed Satan for his treacherous lies and promised that **'the offspring'** of the woman **'will crush your head,'** and you **'will strike his heel.'** (Genesis 3:15) One of my Bibles even uses a capital, **'He'** for this particular **'offspring,'** indicating the identity of the divine person God was referring to who will vanquish Satan. (NKJV) There has been no other human who was holy enough to successfully stand in our place before God. Only Jesus, who is at the same time fully God and fully human, is able to rescue us from our tragic predicament.

Jesus would certainly suffer many **'strikes at his heel'** from tormentors during his ministry, but Jesus decisively **'crushed'** Satan's power over sin by dying for us on the cross.

Biblical prophecy maintained that the Messiah would come from the line of King David and that **'all the peoples of the earth'** would be blessed through him. Jesus has blessed

everyone who has been born, inviting both big and small sinners, to turn to him and be admitted into the Kingdom of God.

Jesus was born, and lived, and died so that he could invite us to join him in the family of God. We are only able to come to God through our connection to Jesus, who alone makes us *'right'* before God, and takes away the sin that keeps us separated from Him.

2) **GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER HISTORY** We aren't able to understand why God works in human history the way He does. It is a mystery why God allowed so many generations to pass before He sent Jesus to correct the consequences of Adam's sin.

Luke gives us seventy-seven (77) generations between Adam and Jesus. That represents a lot of people through a lot of years! God's sense of time is different than ours. Psalm 90 reminds us that *'a thousand years in (God's) sight are like a day that has just gone by.*

For reasons only known to God, He chose a particular time in history to send Jesus. Paul wrote in Galatians, *'But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, ... to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.'* (Galatians 4:4)

I also take heart that Luke listed many unknown people in Jesus' heritage. That says to me that every single person has the opportunity to influence history, even if they seem unimportant to the world.

Who today are like those people from Luke's list whom history knows nothing of? How did they shape the faith of others through how they lived their lives? My mother's father's mother's mother's father was a minister way back in the very early 1800s. (*That's five generations ago*) I have to believe that his faith was shaped by one of his ancestors, just as his faith has come down through the generations to me.

The legacy of faith that God has entrusted to us does matter in ways that we are not able to comprehend right now. We just need to be faithful in whatever relationships God has placed us in to share with others what God has done for us in Jesus.

To realize that God did provide a Savior just like He said He would, even though it took thousands of years, should give us confidence that God is active right now in our world to complete the rest of what He has promised.

Even though our world seems so chaotic to us right now, especially now, under the dark cloud of the Coronavirus, we can trust that God will save those who belong to Him through faith in His Son Jesus.

God promises one day to make the earth new again. It will be a recreation of the Garden of Eden and we who have trusted in Jesus as our Lord and Savior will live in it. The Bible promises that God will make His dwelling place with us and we *'will be His people.'* There will be *'no more death or crying or pain'* and *'He will wipe every tear from (our) eyes.'* (Revelation 21:3-4) Joy and peace will be ours forever and ever.

We give thanks to God for all that He has graciously done for us. God sent His one and only Son, to live a perfectly holy life on our behalf. Because of Jesus' faithfulness, we can become God's adopted sons and daughters and citizens of His Kingdom, forever. Amen.