

# "Write This Man Childless!"

## The Crisis in the Davidic Dynasty and the Genealogies of Jesus

by

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### INTRODUCTION

In chapters 21-23, Jeremiah delivers a series of messages denouncing various kings and false prophets.<sup>1</sup> One of the kings denounced in a highly dramatic and spectacular fashion is Jehoiachin:<sup>2</sup>

"As I live," declares Yahweh, "even though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet ring on My right hand, yet I would pull you off; and I shall give you over into the hand of those who are seeking your life, yes, into the hand of those whom you dread, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. I shall hurl you and your mother who bore you into another country where you were not born, and there you will die... Thus says Yahweh, 'Write this man down childless, a man who will not prosper in his days; for no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah.'"<sup>3</sup>

Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin's father, dies in 597<sup>4</sup> and Jehoiachin ascends to the throne in Jerusalem. He is 18 years old<sup>5</sup> and remains in power only three months. Nebuchadnezzar besieges the city of Jerusalem a second time in 597. Jerusalem holds out for three months, but on March 16, Jehoiachin is taken prisoner by the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar carries off all the treasures in the temple and in the king's

<sup>1</sup> "The sayings come from different times and in some cases may be the result of the editorial treatment of some of Jeremiah's original sayings" (J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980], p. 465).

<sup>2</sup> According to C. F. Keil, "Jeremiah, Lamentations," *Commentary on the Old Testament*, p. 344, Jeconiah was probably this king's original name, as recorded in 1 Chron. 3:16; its shorter form was Coniah. He also suggests that Jeconiah's name was changed to Jehoiachin at his accession to the throne to make his name more like his father's, Jehoiakim.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. 22:24-30.

<sup>4</sup> "The exact time is established by comparing the Babylonian Chronicle with II Kings 24:6,8. Jeremiah's scathing predictions, as to the nature of Jehoiakim's death and burial (Jer. 22:18-19; 36:27-32), suggest that he was killed in a battle with one of the marauding bands and in a situation which prevented a normal, honorable burial" (Leon Wood, *SIH*, p. 374, n. 105).

<sup>5</sup> 2 Kgs. 24:8. 2 Chron. 36:9 gives the age as 8, but this must be due to a copyist's error in simply omitting the small Hebrew letter *yodh*, which as a number signified ten (Leon Wood, *SIH*, p. 374, n. 106).

palace. In addition, he takes all the captains and mighty men, all the craftsmen and smiths, 10,000 captives in all, back to Babylon. Only the poorest people remain behind. The prophet Ezekiel is taken in this deportation.<sup>6</sup>

The command of Yahweh to "write this man childless" uses the figure of a national census:<sup>7</sup> in other words, Jehoiachin should be recorded as childless in the census. The meaning is not that he had or would have no sons. It is quite possible that he did have sons.<sup>8</sup> In any event, all expositors agree that the phrase means simply this: "Jehoiachin was childless as far as having a descendant to sit on the throne of David."<sup>9</sup>

This prophecy constitutes a crisis in the Davidic dynasty. In the great Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel 7, God promised David that He would make a house or dynasty for him, and that David's dynasty would last forever:

Yahweh also declares to you that Yahweh will make a house for you...And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.<sup>10</sup>

Psalms 89, a commentary on the Davidic covenant, reaffirms the same promise:

I will establish his [David's] descendants forever, and his throne as the days of heaven...His descendants shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me.<sup>11</sup>

How can the house or dynasty of David endure forever if the royal Davidic line is to be cut off with Jehoiachin?

The prophecy against Jehoiachin not only causes a crisis in the Davidic dynasty, it also raises a serious question about the Messiahship of Jesus. When the angel Gabriel made his announcement of the birth of Jesus to Mary, he said,

He [Jesus] will be great, and He will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and his kingdom will have no end.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ezek. 1:1-3.

<sup>7</sup> R. K. Harrison, *Jeremiah and Lamentations* [Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973], p. 119.

<sup>8</sup> The Babylonian Chronicle appears to refer to five unnamed sons of Jehoiachin (James P. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969], p. 308. Whether the "sons" mentioned in 1 Chron. 3:17-18 are natural sons of Jehoiachin is one of the central issues in this paper. Following a number of scholars to be cited, this paper argues that they are not. Keil, "The Books of the Chronicles," *Commentary on the Old Testament*, pp. 80-81, interprets 1 Chron. 3:16, 17 to mean that Jehoiachin had two natural sons, Zedekiah (not to be confused with Zedekiah the son of Josiah, uncle to Jehoiachin) and Assir.

<sup>9</sup> J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980], p. 485; see also Keil, "Jeremiah and Lamentations" *Commentary on the Old Testament*, p. 347, and R. K. Harrison, *Jeremiah and Lamentations* [Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973], p. 119.

<sup>10</sup> 2 Sam. 7:11,16.

<sup>11</sup> Ps. 89:29, 36.

<sup>12</sup> Luke 1:32-33.

This announcement clearly ties the birth of Jesus to the Davidic covenant: Jesus, as Messiah, is the climactic son of David who will sit on his throne and reign over his kingdom forever, thus fulfilling that covenant. However, according to the genealogy in Matthew 1, Jesus, the legal son of Joseph, is traced back to David through Jehoiachin and Solomon. On the other hand, the genealogy in Luke 3 traces Jesus back to David through Nathan rather than Solomon. Therefore, there not only is the problem of reconciling the two genealogies, but also of explaining how Jesus can sit on David's throne if His line goes back through Jehoiachin, who, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, would have no son to inherit the throne.

These are the issues addressed in this paper.

### *THE DAVIDIC COVENANT*

The Davidic covenant is found in 2 Samuel 7:4-17 and 1 Chronicles 17:3-15. The *occasion* is the response of God through Nathan the prophet to David's intention to build a permanent temple to Yahweh in Jerusalem. This covenant, though it added some new features, was not something brand new in God's revelation but a further development of the covenants made by God with Abraham and later with Israel at Mt. Sinai.<sup>13</sup> However, it is not the connections with previous revelation but the *content* of the Davidic covenant that is important for this study. The main provisions of this covenant can be summarized in five points:<sup>14</sup>

- David is to have a child, as yet unborn, who will succeed him as king (Solomon).
- This son, Solomon, will build the temple instead of David.
- Though David had wanted to build a house (temple) for Yahweh, the Lord will make a house (dynasty) for David.
- The kingdom will not be taken away from Solomon (as it had been from Saul), even though his sins might justify chastisement.
- David's house (dynasty), kingdom, and throne will be established forever.

The next question to address is the *immutability* of the covenant. It is frequently argued that the promises given by God in this covenant to David are conditional and therefore could fail to be fulfilled.

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<sup>13</sup> This connection is developed by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978], pp. 152-153. See also, Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* [Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959], p. 156.

<sup>14</sup> My list is a modification of the summary given by John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959], pp. 195-196.

Six times David's kingdom had been declared eternal (2 Sam. 7:13,16,24,25,26,29). But was this gift to David "a blank check of unlimited validity"? M. Tsevat, along with a host of other commentators, cannot accept this stress of irrevocability or unconditionality as part of the original passage. Rather, they would prefer to treat as normative the theme of conditionality which stressed the "if" clause and the necessity of loyalty and fidelity as found in 2 Samuel 7:14-15; 1 Kings 2:4; 8:25; 9:4-5; Psalm 89:31-38; 132:11-12.<sup>15</sup>

Yet David himself called it an "everlasting covenant."<sup>16</sup> Psalm 89, the commentary on the Davidic covenant, states that it would endure "forever."<sup>17</sup>

However, what if someone in David's royal line forsakes the Lord? Concerning God's promise to David, Psalm 132:12 states that "If your sons will keep my covenant, and My testimony which I will teach them, their sons also shall sit upon your throne forever." Does this "if" imply that the Davidic covenant is conditional and that it is possible for a successor of David to nullify this covenant through disobedience? The Scriptures demand a negative answer. Disobedience on the part of any individual in David's royal line affects his personal participation in the benefits of the covenant, but it cannot negate the unconditional nature of the promise made by God to David. As Kaiser argues,

The "breaking" or conditionality can only refer to *personal* and *individual* invalidation of the benefits of the covenant, but cannot effect the transmission of the promise to the lineal descendants [of David].<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, the unconditional nature of the covenant was not negated even when the throne and kingdom were historically interrupted, as in the Babylonian captivity:

By God's grace these rights [promised in the Davidic covenant], even if historically interrupted for a season, will at last in a *future kingdom* be restored to the nation in perpetuity with no further possibility of interruption (II Sam. 7:1-16; 23:1-5; I Chron. 17:1-14).<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, Kaiser's conclusion rightly summarizes the aspect of the Davidic covenant that applies most directly to the issues discussed in this paper:

The eternally enduring house [dynasty of David] would never lack a descendant to sit on the throne of David.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978], p. 156.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Sam. 23:5.

<sup>17</sup> Ps. 89:28,29,36,37.

<sup>18</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978], p. 157.

<sup>19</sup> Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* [Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959], p. 156.

<sup>20</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978], p. 151.

## THE CRISIS IN THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY

The royal line of David begins with Solomon and is traced through the various kings of Judah until the prophecy against Jehoiachin, "Write this man childless." Keil points out the significance of this judgment:

He will not have the fortune to have any of his posterity sit on the throne of David.<sup>21</sup>

The royal line that began with Solomon is terminated with Jehoiachin, thus also terminating the royal line of Solomon as far as the throne of David was concerned.<sup>22</sup>

The crisis to resolve here is based on 2 Samuel 7:13:

He [Solomon] shall build a house for My name, and I shall establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

How can the promise in this verse be valid if the line of Solomon is cut off with Jehoiachin? Walvoord provides a good explanation.

To Solomon, then, was promised a throne which would be established forever. To David was promised a posterity [dynasty], a throne, and a kingdom to be established forever. The promise is clear that the throne passed on through Solomon to David's posterity was never to be abolished. It is not clear whether the posterity of David should be through the line of Solomon. It will be shown that this fine point in the prophecy was occasioned by the cutting off the posterity of Solomon as far as the throne is concerned...

In proclaiming the [Davidic] covenant, the language of the prophet carefully distinguishes between the seed of David, Solomon, and the throne. David is assured that his seed will reign forever. Solomon is assured only that his throne will continue forever. In this fine point is an illustration of God's intention. In [the] subsequent history of Israel, Solomon's line is specifically cut off from the throne at the time of the captivity of Judah (Jer. 22:30; 36:30).<sup>23</sup>

Since the throne of David passed to Solomon, to say that the throne of David is eternal is equivalent to saying that the throne of Solomon is eternal. However, this throne need

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<sup>21</sup> Keil, "Jeremiah and Lamentations" *Commentary on the Old Testament*, p. 347.

<sup>22</sup> When Nebuchadnezzar carries Jehoiachin captive to Babylon, he places Mattaniah, whom he renames Zedekiah, on the throne in Jerusalem. Zedekiah was Jehoiakim's brother and thus uncle to Jehoiachin. Therefore, the line of Solomon could have continued through Zedekiah's sons. However, when Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king killed all of his sons and took him captive to Babylon (2 Kgs. 25:4-7). At this point, Nebuchadnezzar completely destroys Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah. Therefore, with the judgment on Jehoiachin, there is no way to continue the physical line of Solomon on the throne of David.

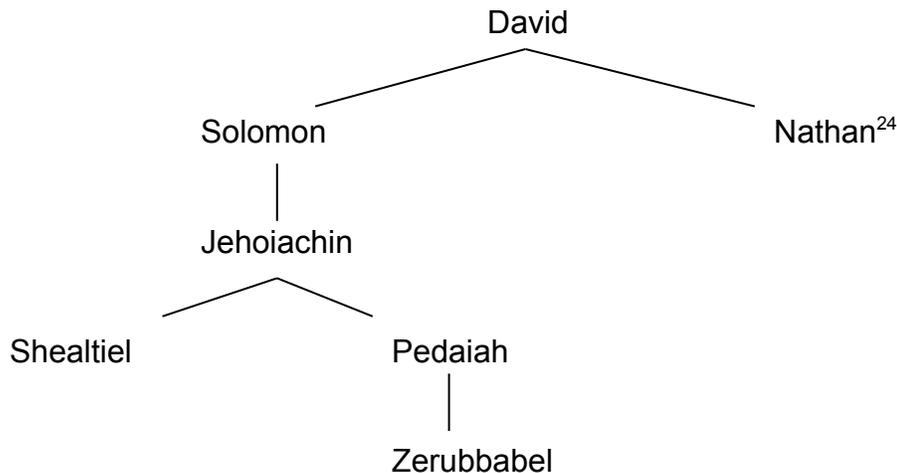
<sup>23</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959], pp. 196, 201.

not be forever occupied by the seed of Solomon. The Davidic covenant specifies only that it will be forever occupied by the seed of David.

Part of the crisis has now been averted. However, the other part of the crisis remains: the line of the Messiah as the ultimate, eschatological fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. Does the Messiah have a direct link to Jehoiachin? However, before that question can be answered, a certain problem in the Old Testament genealogical data must first be resolved.

### RECONCILING THE OT GENEALOGICAL DATA

The issues to resolve here concern the fathers of Shealtiel and Zerubbabel as listed in the three genealogies of the house of David given in Scripture. First, the genealogy in 1 Chronicles 3:17-24 gives the following family tree, with Zerubbabel the son of Pedaiah:



However, numerous OT historical and prophetic passages that discuss the activities of Zerubbabel state that he is the son of Shealtiel.<sup>25</sup>

Next, consistent with the historical and prophetic passages, the genealogy in Matthew 1:1-17 gives a family tree that lists Zerubbabel as the son of Shealtiel:<sup>26</sup> David, Solomon, ..., Jehoiachin, Shealtiel, and Zerubbabel.

<sup>24</sup> 1 Chron. 3:5.

<sup>25</sup> Hag. 1:1,12,14; 2:2; Ezra 3:2,8; 5:2; Neh. 12:1.

<sup>26</sup> Our Greek text of Matt. 1:12 has Salathiel rather than Shealtiel. This presents no problem since the two forms of the name refer to the same man. "In the majority of instances Matthew's spellings of the names is identical with, or bears very close resemblance to, that found in LXX, I Chron. 1-3. In I Chron. 1:3, where the Hebrew has *Israel*, the LXX has *Jacob*. So does Matthew (1:2). Also, both LXX (I Chron. 3:17) and Matthew (1:12) use the form *Salathiel*, where the Hebrew has *Shealtiel*. Dependence to some extent on LXX, I Chron. 1-3, seems probable therefore, whether it be direct or indirect" (William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973], p. 111, n. 125).

Finally, the genealogy in Luke 3:23-38 gives this family tree: David, Nathan, ..., Neri, Shealtiel, and Zerubbabel.

Thus, Luke, like Matthew, records Zerubbabel as the son of Shealtiel, but, unlike Matthew, lists Shealtiel as the son of Neri rather than Jehoiachin.

In summary, these three schemes differ in two fundamental ways: (1) was Shealtiel the son of Jehoiachin or Neri and (2) was Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel or Pedaiiah? Each issue is now addressed.

### *Who Fathered Shealtiel?*

This first question arises only because of the account in Luke. 1 Chronicles 3 states that Shealtiel was the son of Jehoiachin. This is the only statement with regard to the lineage of Shealtiel in the OT, and it is confirmed in Matthew 1. Therefore, to answer this first question, it is necessary to explain Luke's statement. However, the relationship between Matthew's genealogy and Luke's genealogy has its own set of complicated problems that are discussed later in this paper. One of those questions to be addressed in detail is whether Luke gives the genealogy of Joseph or Mary. Suffice it to say here that there are answers to the question of Shealtiel's father on either view of Luke's genealogy.

First, if Luke does give the genealogy of Mary, then the Shealtiel and Zerubbabel in Luke 3:27 are simply not the same as the Shealtiel and Zerubbabel in 1 Chronicles 3:17-19 and Matthew 1:12,13. The former are two men in the line from Nathan to Neri, giving Mary's genealogy, while the other two are the well-known OT characters in the royal line from Solomon to Jehoiachin, giving Joseph's genealogy.<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand, how are the two different fathers of Shealtiel to be reconciled if both Matthew and Luke give the genealogy of Joseph? Keil presents the following reconstruction:<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> This is the view of Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982], pp. 218-219, 316; A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels* [New York: Harper & Row, 1922], pp. 260-261, also suggests that the two father-son pairs are different men. Archer tries to find precedent for this somewhat radical suggestion: "It is, to be sure, quite unusual for the same father-to-son pair to occur in two different family lines; yet there is an interesting analogy to be found back in the time of Ahab and Jehoshaphat. Both kings, during a time of cordial relations between the governments of Judah and Israel, named their two sons Jehoram and Ahaziah (2 Kings 1:17 and 8:16; 1 Kings 2:51; 2 Kings 1:1; 8:25). Thus it is quite conceivable that a descendant of King David named Shealtiel living in the post-Exilic period (i.e., Shealtiel son of Neri) might have decided to name his own son Zerubbabel, in honor of the well-known pair who led the remnant back to Jerusalem at the close of the Exile. In the previous millennium, the Twelfth Dynasty and the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt had a series of Amenemhat-Senwosret kings and Amenhotep-Thutmose kings, respectively. And so there are both precedents and analogies for the recurrence of father-son pairs, so far as names are concerned."

<sup>28</sup> Keil, "The Books of the Chronicles," *Commentary on the Old Testament*, pp. 81-82.

- 1 Chronicles 3:16,17 really states that Jehoiachin had two sons, Zedekiah (distinct from his uncle, Zedekiah, the last king of Judah)<sup>29</sup> and Assir.<sup>30</sup>
- Assir has a daughter, but he dies without a son.
- According to the law, if a man dies with no son, his daughter can inherit but she must marry within her tribe and her son becomes the legal heir of her father (as well as his own father).<sup>31</sup>
- The daughter of Assir marries Neri, a descendant of David through his son Nathan, not Solomon.
- Accordingly, 1 Chronicles 3:17-18 records the offspring of this marriage as Shealtiel, Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.
- Thus Shealtiel in 1 Chronicles 3:17 is the legal heir of Assir, his grandfather on his mother's side, and thus also legal heir of Jehoiachin, his great grandfather on his mother's side, although his natural father was Neri. This satisfies Matthew 1:12 and Luke 3:27.

Keil's scheme is complicated. Not only does it require taking ארסא in 1 Chronicles 3:17 as a proper name instead of an appellative meaning *prisoner*,<sup>32</sup> it also requires several pure assumptions: (1) Assir had no sons but did have a daughter and (2) that this daughter married Neri, mentioned nowhere else in Scripture except Luke 3:27.

Terry presents a simpler scenario based on the work of Lord Arthur Hervey.<sup>33</sup> According to this view, Shealtiel, son of Neri, of the line of Nathan, became legal heir to David's throne as the next nearest heir of Jehoiachin according to the inheritance hierarchy

<sup>29</sup> Others, like J. A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles* [Broadman & Holman, 1994], 9:69, and Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982], p. 217, think the simpler interpretation of 1 Chron. 3:16 is that this Zedekiah was the younger brother of Jehoiachin, both born to Jehoiakim. Keil points out that still a third view interprets the Zedekiah of v. 16 to be the same Zedekiah of v. 15, who became the last king of Judah, being mentioned in v. 16 after Jehoiachin simply because he followed Jehoiachin on the throne. In any event, the identity of the Zedekiah in v. 16 is not germane to the genealogical issues investigated in this paper.

<sup>30</sup> As pointed by the Masoretes, ארסא in 1 Chron. 3:17 would be a proper name, *Assir*. Keil, "The Books of the Chronicles," *Commentary on the Old Testament*, pp. 80-81, follows the Masoretic pointing, as does the KJV: "The sons of Jehoiakim were Jeconiah his son and Zedekiah his son. And the sons of Jeconiah were Assir [ארסא], Shealtiel his son..." However, the NASB and the NIV both take ארסא to be an appellative, *the captive* or *the prisoner*, taking the Masoretic pointing as an error; thus: "And the sons of Jehoiakim were Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son. And the sons of Jeconiah, the prisoner, were Shealtiel his son..." Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982], p. 217, agrees with this assessment. Returning to Keil's view, where would the natural sons of Jehoiachin have been born? Based on the fact that "wives" of Jehoiachin are mentioned in 2 Kgs. 24:15 as having been taken captive with him, Keil believes that at least one son and maybe both were born in Jerusalem before he became king and then carried off to Babylon as infants ("Jeremiah and Lamentations," *Commentary on the Old Testament*, pp. 346-347).

<sup>31</sup> Num. 27:8; 36:8,9.

<sup>32</sup> See footnote 30.

<sup>33</sup> Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974], pp. 523-524.

described in Numbers 27:8-11. Shealtiel is thus considered his son in a legal sense in the genealogies of 1 Chronicles and Matthew.

How was Shealtiel the next nearest heir of Jehoiachin? As a result of God's judgment, Jehoiachin had no sons or daughters, at least in an official or legal sense. Next in line as his heir to the throne of David would be his brothers. No brothers of Jehoiachin are mentioned, with the possible exception of the Zedekiah in 1 Chronicles 3:16. However, since Nebuchadnezzar placed Jehoiachin's uncle Zedekiah, Josiah's son, on the throne after deposing Jehoiachin, the Zedekiah of 1 Chronicles 3:16, if a brother of Jehoiachin at all, was probably dead. Next in line to be Jehoiachin's heir was his father's brother. This would be Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, the man Nebuchadnezzar actually chose to succeed Jehoiachin on the throne. However, after Zedekiah's revolt, Nebuchadnezzar killed all his sons and took Zedekiah to Babylon where he died. Finally, if all these fail to yield an heir, then the final option in the hierarchy is "his nearest relative in his own family." Due to the decimation of the royal line of Solomon, this individual might well have been Shealtiel, son of Neri, of the line of Nathan. Thus, Shealtiel and his descendants "were transferred as 'sons of Jeconiah' to the royal genealogical table"<sup>34</sup> as found in 1 Chronicles and Mathew.

### *Who Fathered Zerubbabel?*

There are at least four possible solutions to this problem.

- Keil<sup>35</sup> suggests the assumption that Shealtiel (on his scheme, the great grandson of Jehoiachin) died childless leaving his wife a widow. Then, on the basis of levirate marriage,<sup>36</sup> Shealtiel's brother Pedaiah marries his widow and Zerubbabel is the offspring of this marriage. According to the law, the firstborn son of a levirate marriage legally continues the line of the dead brother. Thus, Pedaiah was the natural (or biological) father of Zerubbabel (as in 1 Chron. 3:19), while Shealtiel was regarded as his legal father from whom he would inherit (as in Hag. 1:1,12,14; 2:2; Ezra 3:2,8; 5:2; Neh. 12:1; Matt. 1:12; Luke 3:27).
- Keil also points out that Rabbi Kimchi and a few other scholars, both Jewish and Christian, take the six men in 1 Chronicles 3:18 to be sons of Shealtiel.<sup>37</sup> The motive here is to keep Shealtiel and Pedaiah from being brothers so that the lineal descent becomes Shealtiel -----> Pedaiah -----> Zerubbabel. Since it is well known that "son" in Jewish reckoning can mean "grandson," this scheme would reconcile the genealogy in 1 Chronicles 3 with the historical and prophetic references that call Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel. However, Keil considers this scheme artificial and ad hoc and "irreconcilable with the words of the text [of 1 Chron. 3:17-19]."

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<sup>34</sup> Hervey, quoted by Terry (*Biblical Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974], p. 523.

<sup>35</sup> Keil, "The Books of the Chronicles," *Commentary on the Old Testament*, pp. 81-82; modern commentator J. A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles* [Broadman & Holman, 1994], 9:70, agrees with this scenario.

<sup>36</sup> Deut. 25:5,6.

<sup>37</sup> Keil, "The Books of the Chronicles," *Commentary on the Old Testament*, p. 82.

- Archer<sup>38</sup> prefers a scenario in which Pedaiah was the natural father of Zerubbabel, as in 1 Chronicles 3:19 but dies early in life. His older brother, Shealtiel then adopts Zerubbabel, making him legally his son, as in the historical and prophetic passages and in Matthew and (maybe) Luke.
- Archer also suggests another possible scheme that would solve the problem:<sup>39</sup> Pedaiah might have died childless, and then on the basis of levirate marriage, Shealtiel his brother married his widow. Zerubbabel was the offspring of this marriage and thus was the legal heir of Pedaiah while the natural son of Shealtiel. The reader will notice that this is precisely the reverse of the scenario preferred by Keil.

How should a decision be made among these various possibilities? First, note that as in the case of the father of Shealtiel, these solutions also involve assumptions not confirmed anywhere in Scripture. However, making assumptions is not out of order in cases like this. The question is whether the records are contradictory or whether they can be reconciled. If an assumption can be made that reconciles all the accounts, then it is legitimate to suggest that assumption as a possibility.

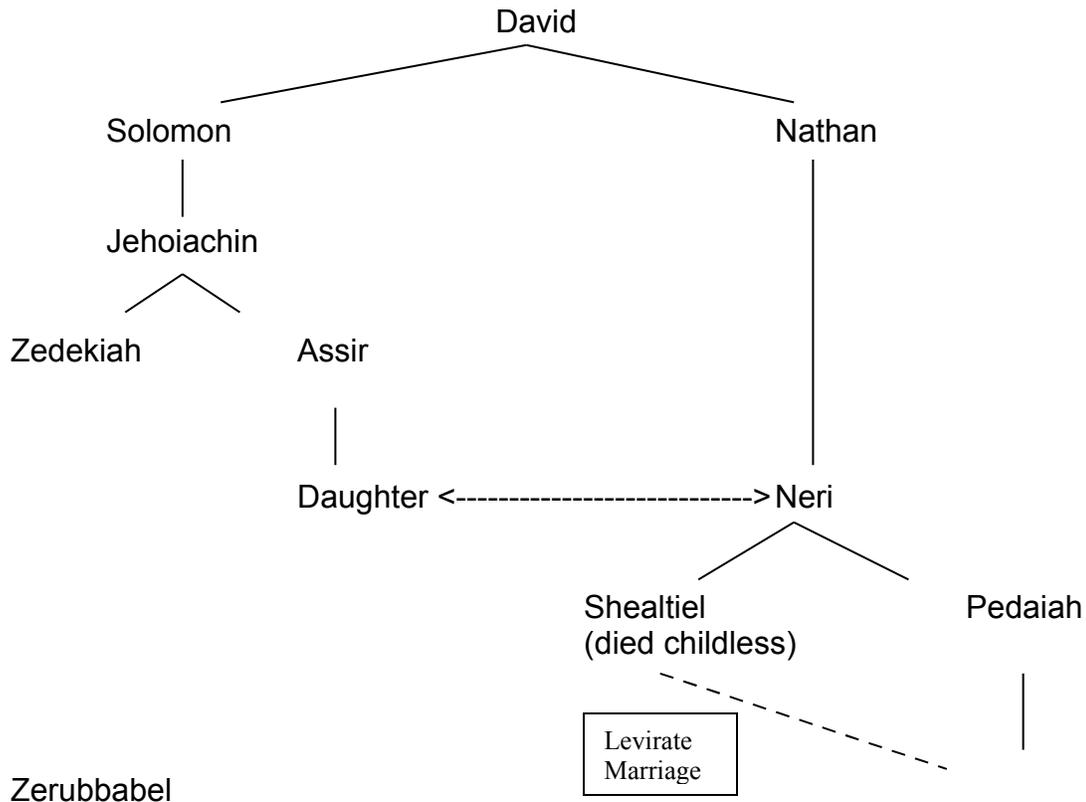
Nevertheless, since all of these solutions do involve assumptions, one cannot say with certainty which, if any, of these scenarios is correct. Nevertheless, I think there are a few general guidelines that can be used to discriminate between more-likely and less-likely possibilities.

Consider the result of putting Keil's solutions for the father of Shealtiel and the father of Zerubbabel together into a single family tree:

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<sup>38</sup> Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982], p. 217.

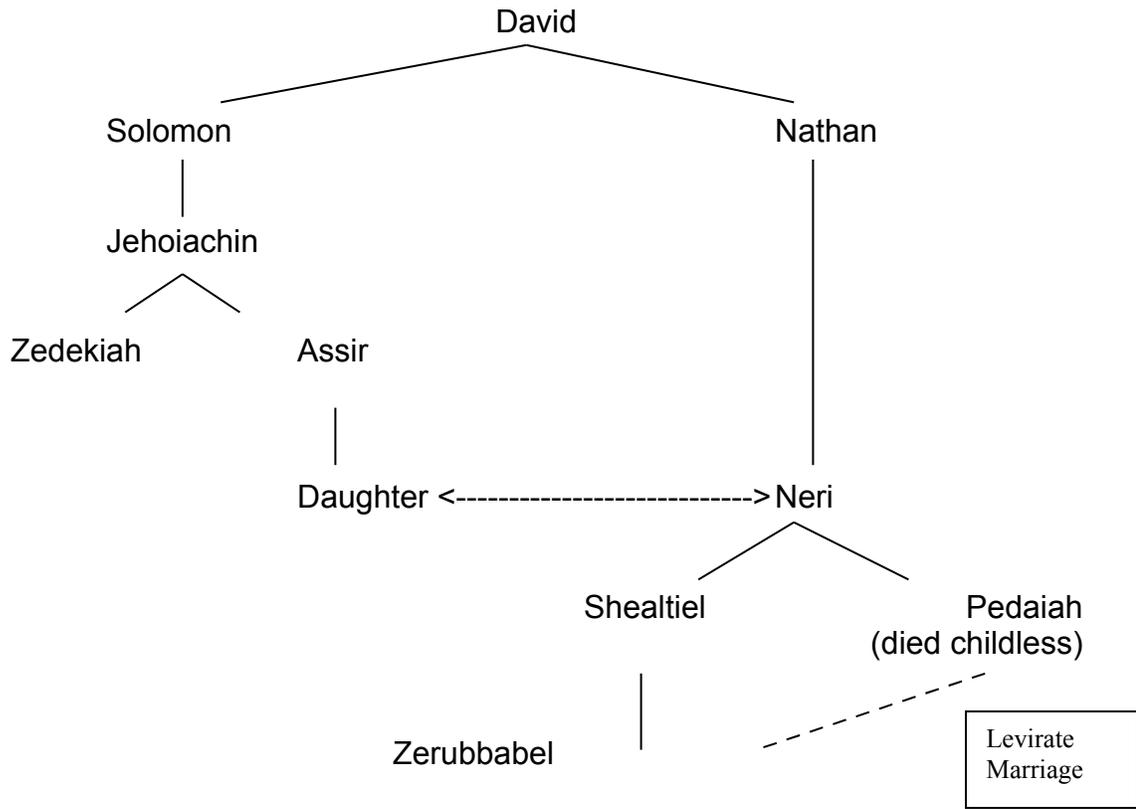
<sup>39</sup> Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982], p. 218.



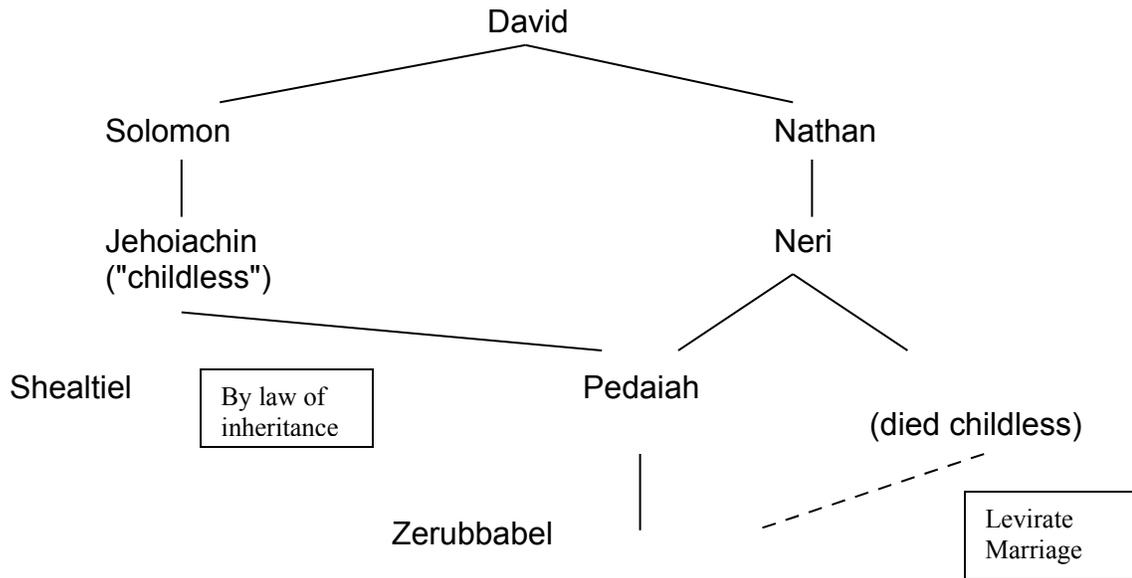
On this scheme, according to the Mosaic law, Shealtiel would be reckoned the legal heir of Jehoiachin, and Zerubbabel would be reckoned the legal heir of Shealtiel. Therefore, on the one hand, the record in 1 Chronicles 3 is made to give the legal father of Shealtiel (Jehoiachin) but the natural father of Zerubbabel (Pedaiah). Should not the record in 1 Chronicles 3 be consistent in tracing either legal lines or natural lines?

Demanding this type of consistency in a single genealogical record can possibly provide a guiding principle to be used in choosing among possible scenarios. One could make the record in 1 Chronicles 3 to consistently trace legal descent by incorporating Archer's second suggestion on the father of Zerubbabel with Keil's suggestion on the father of Shealtiel.<sup>40</sup> Making this composite would give the following family tree:

<sup>40</sup> Archer simply assumes without discussion that this Shealtiel is the son of Jehoiachin, since he takes Luke's record to be the genealogy of Mary and the Shealtiel in that account to be a different Shealtiel from the man in 1 Chron. 3:17.



A second guiding principle might come from Occam's razor. According to this principle, the better theory is the one that involves fewer assumptions. Keil's view on the father of Shealtiel involves a dubious interpretation of אסר in 1 Chronicles 3:17 as well as several assumptions. Hervey's view, endorsed by Terry, is simpler and therefore, on the principle of Occam's razor, better. Combining this view with Archer's second suggestion for the father of Zerubbabel produces the following simpler tree:



In summary, this scheme has Shealtiel as the legal heir of Jehoiachin by the Mosaic law of inheritance and Zerubbabel as the legal heir of Pedaiiah by levirate marriage. It represents the simplest way to make the record in 1 Chronicles 3 consistently trace legal descent. It also has Shealtiel as the natural son of Neri, as in Luke's genealogy, and Zerubbabel as the natural son of Shealtiel, as in the historical and prophetic passages and as in Matthew's genealogy.

If reconciling the OT data were the only problem faced, this solution would seem to be the best. However, it creates a problem in the New Testament. Therefore, the previous scheme is modified later in this paper.

### THE GENEALOGIES OF JESUS

The relationship between the genealogies in Matthew 1 and Luke 3 represents the thorniest problem in this study.

Skeptics of all ages, from Porphyry and Celsus to Strauss, have urged the impossibility of reconciling the difficulties in the two accounts of the descent of Jesus. Even Alford says it is impossible to reconcile them.<sup>41</sup>

Before the lists can be reconciled, however, their various peculiarities, as well as where they agree and disagree, must be noted.

<sup>41</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels* [New York: Harper & Row, 1922], p. 259. Alford's statement is found in *The Greek Testament* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1958 (originally published in 1849)], I:473.

## *Comparison of the Two Lists*

The following summary compares the features of the genealogy in Matthew 1 with the genealogy in Luke 3.<sup>42</sup>

### The Lines

- Matthew begins with Abraham, whereas Luke carries his list back to Adam.
- Both lines are in agreement from Abraham to David.
- Both trace a lineal descent from David.
- Matthew follows the royal line from David's son Solomon to Jehoiachin, while Luke follows the line from David's son Nathan through a series of different and unknown names.
- Both lines meet in Shealtiel and Zerubbabel, though Shealtiel is given different fathers in the two lists.
- Zerubbabel is the last name in the NT lists to be found in the OT.
- From Zerubbabel, both lists are composed of unknown names until they meet again in Joseph. Matthew gives Joseph's father as Jacob, while Luke has Heli as his father.

### The Structure

- Matthew states that his list is organized into three groups of fourteen generations each,<sup>43</sup> although the group from the Exile to Jesus has only thirteen generations. Luke does not organize his list into groups but has twenty-two generations for the period from the Exile to Jesus.

### Miscellaneous Details

- Matthew includes an introduction,<sup>44</sup> references to the brothers of Judah and Jehoiachin,<sup>45</sup> and mentions four women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba.<sup>46</sup> Luke has only one editorial comment.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> This summary is based in large part on M. D. Johnson, "Genealogy of Jesus," *ISBE*, II:430.

<sup>43</sup> Matt. 1:17.

<sup>44</sup> Matt. 1:1.

<sup>45</sup> Matt. 1:2,11.

<sup>46</sup> Matt. 1:3,5,6.

<sup>47</sup> Luke 3:23.

- Matthew has the common descending order, while Luke uses an ascending order.
- Matthew uses the active verb *εγεννησεν*, *begat*, while Luke uses the genitive article *του* with the proper names, *the [son] of*.

### *Explaining the Incidental Details*

Several of the points summarized above need an explanation. First, there were more than 3 x 14 generations from Abraham to Jesus. Matthew omits even several well-known kings in Solomon's royal line: first, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah between Jehoram (Joram) and Uzziah, and then Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim between Josiah and Jehoiachin (Jeconiah). "But such omissions were very common in the Old Testament genealogies."<sup>48</sup>

Second, according to Robertson, the claim of a 3 x 14 division when there are only forty-one names also has a reasonable explanation:

But does Matthew say he has mentioned forty-two names? He does say (1:17) that there are three sets of fourteen and divides them for us himself: "So all the generations from Abraham unto David are fourteen generations; and from David unto the carrying away to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the carrying away to Babylon unto the Christ fourteen generations." The points of division are David and the captivity; in the one case a man, in the other an event. He counts David in each of the first two sets, although Jechoniah is counted only once. David was the connecting link between the patriarchal line and the royal line. But he does not say "from David to Jechoniah," but "from David to the carrying away unto Babylon," and Josiah is the last name he counts before that event. And so the first name after this same event is Jechoniah. Thus Matthew deliberately counts David in two places to give symmetry to the division, which made an easy help to the memory.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels* [New York: Harper & Row, 1922], p. 259. See, e.g., 2 Chron. 22:9; "begat" only means real lineal descent. Also compare the more lengthy discussion of this phenomenon in R. K. Harrison, "Genealogy," *ISBE*, II:427-428: "The aim of such genealogies was to establish the general line of descent from given ancestors, and this objective was in no way impaired by the omission of certain generations as long as the line was being traced properly. For purposes of ancient Near Eastern genealogies, all members of a particular line were not necessarily equal in importance, and because of that principle, as well as other reasons, certain names and generations could be omitted from family lists without prejudice to either the intent or the accuracy of content of the genealogy."

<sup>49</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels* [New York: Harper & Row, 1922], p. 259. There have been other proposals to explain the lack of fourteen names in the third group. Irenaeus suggested inserting the name Jehoiakim in Matt. 1:11. But this gives the second group 15 names, and the third group still has only 13 names. Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, II:564, n. 4, makes another suggestion, but still based on the missing king Jehoiakim. Since Zahn thinks Matthew was originally written in Aramaic, he argues that the Greek translator erred in v. 11, where Matthew originally had Jehoiakim, making Jehoiachin, first mentioned in v. 12, the first of the now 14 names in the third group. Similar confusion does seem to exist in the LXX (e.g., 2 Kgs. 24:6: Ἰωακὴμ and Ἰωαχὴμ). William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973], pp. 125-126, and

Third, it is certainly contrary to Jewish custom to include women in a genealogy. Why did Matthew do it? Again, Robertson explains:

[None of the women are] counted in the lists of fourteen, and each one has something remarkable in her case...Three were guilty of gross sin, and one, Ruth, was of Gentile origin and deserved mention for that reason. This circumstance would seem to indicate that Matthew did not simply copy the genealogical history of Joseph. He did this, omitting what suited his purpose and adding likewise remarks of his own. His record is thus reliable and yet made a part of his own story.<sup>50</sup>

Fourth, why does Luke reverse the normal order for genealogies? Godet suggests two possible reasons:

Perhaps this difference of method depends on the difference of religious position between the Jews and the Greeks. The Jew, finding the basis of his thought in a revelation, proceeds synthetically from cause to effect; the Greek, possessing nothing beyond the fact analyzes it, that he may proceed from effect to cause. But this difference depends more probably still on another circumstance. Every official genealogical register must present the descending form [as in Matthew]; for individuals are only inscribed in it as they are born. The ascending form of genealogy [as in Luke] can only be that of a private instrument, drawn up from the public document with a view to the particular individual whose name serves as the starting-point of the whole list. It follows that in Matthew we have the exact copy of the official register; while Luke gives us a document extracted from the public records, and compiled with a view to the person with whom the genealogy commences.<sup>51</sup>

### *The Relationship between Matthew and Luke*

At this point, had it not been for Luke's list, no further difficulties in the genealogy of Jesus would require explanation. However, Luke presents a radically different record, and an explanation to account for this must be attempted.

This initial and greatest difficulty is of material assistance to us because it makes one conclusion certain beyond peradventure. The two lists are not divergent attempts to perform the same task. Whatever difficulties may remain, this difficulty is eliminated at the outset. It is impossible that among a people given to genealogies two lists purporting to give the ancestry of a man in the same line could diverge so widely. There is, therefore, a difference between these lists

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also n. 130, rejects this proposal and like Robertson, counts one of the names twice. Whereas Robertson counts David twice, in groups one and two, Hendriksen counts Jeconiah twice in groups two and three.

<sup>50</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels* [New York: Harper & Row, 1922], p. 260.

<sup>51</sup> Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on Luke* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1981 (originally published in 1887)], pp. 126-127.

which includes the purpose for which they were compiled and the meaning which they are intended to convey.<sup>52</sup>

There are three main theories that attempt to reconcile the two apparently contradictory lists in Matthew and Luke.

- Both genealogies give the descent of Joseph: Matthew his natural (biological) descent and Luke his legal descent.
- Both genealogies give the descent of Joseph: Matthew his legal descent and Luke his natural (biological) descent.
- Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph, while Luke gives the genealogy of Mary.<sup>53</sup>

### *Does Luke Give the Genealogy of Mary?*

No scholar doubts that Matthew presents the genealogy of Joseph. However, there is little point in discussing whether it is Joseph's legal or natural line until it be decided whether or not Luke also traces Joseph's lineage or instead presents the genealogy of Mary.

The view that Luke presents Mary's genealogy goes back at least as far as the Reformation, and probably farther.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, the number of scholars who have taken this view is certainly impressive.<sup>55</sup> Several arguments have been advanced in favor of it:

1. Although Luke uses the name *Joseph*, it alone of all the names mentioned lacks the definite article.<sup>56</sup>
2. In view of the virgin birth, and assuming that Matthew gives the legal descent of Jesus, it seems only fitting that Luke should give the natural descent of Jesus, which necessarily must be through Mary.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Louis Matthews Sweet, "Genealogy of Jesus Christ," [Old] *ISBE*, II:1197.

<sup>53</sup> Incredible as it may seem, Tertullian held just the opposite: that Matthew gave the genealogy of Mary, while Luke gave the genealogy of Joseph (M. D. Johnson, "Genealogy of Jesus," *ISBE*, II:430). This view is not really a serious contender.

<sup>54</sup> This view goes back at least to Annius of Viterbo (ca. 1490), but Lagrange argues that it goes back to the fifth century (B. H. Throckmorton, Jr., "Genealogy (Christ)," *The Interpreter's Bible Dictionary* [New York: Abingdon Press, 1962], II:366).

<sup>55</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels* [New York: Harper & Row, 1922], p. 261, who himself prefers this view, also lists Luther, Bengel, Olshausen, Lightfoot, Wieseler, Robinson, Alexander, Godet, Weiss, Andrews, and Broadus. To this list we can add Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982], p. 316.

<sup>56</sup> Although many use or cite this argument, Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on Luke* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1981 (originally published in 1887)], pp. 126-133, is the scholar who develops it in detail.

<sup>57</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels* [New York: Harper & Row, 1922], p. 261.

3. The narrative of the first three chapters of Luke centers around Mary, whereas the nativity record in Matthew centers around Joseph. Therefore, the genealogy in Matthew would likely be of Joseph, while that in Luke would likely be of Mary.<sup>58</sup>
4. The Talmud calls Mary *the daughter of Heli* (Haghigha' 77:4). "From whence have Jewish scholars derived this information? If from the text of Luke, this proves they understood it as we do [as giving the genealogy of Mary]; if they received it from tradition, it confirms the truth of the genealogical document Luke made use of."<sup>59</sup>
5. Matthew traces Joseph's line back to Solomon through Jehoiachin, no descendent of whom was ever to sit on the throne of David. Luke traces a line back to Nathan. If this is Mary's line, then Jesus can legitimately avoid the curse on Jehoiachin and inherit the throne of David.<sup>60</sup>
6. Matthew is concerned with a theocratic point of view and therefore presents the genealogy of Joseph as the legal father of Jesus. Luke, on the other hand, is interested in universal redemption and thus presents the genealogy of Mary to demonstrate his real human lineage.<sup>61</sup>

The second argument carries very little weight. There is no a priori reason why Luke and Matthew could not both give the genealogy of Joseph. The Gospel records certainly overlap in many areas. Argument three is weakened by the fact that Luke explicitly inserts the name *Joseph* in his list. The fourth argument is interesting but not determinative. Coming from unbelieving Judaism, it could be a deliberate attempt to misread Luke in order to negate a legal claim to the throne of David, which had to come through the father.<sup>62</sup> The fifth argument goes to the central issue of this paper and is discussed later. The sixth argument is discussed in the last section of this paper.

The first argument, then, is the one true exegetical argument and is examined here in detail. Godet is the scholar who develops this argument at length. For the purpose of presentation, I divide his argument into *phases*. Since it is based on a detailed analysis of the Greek text, the *first phase* of the argument is to decide between two textual variants.

### Phase One of the Argument

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<sup>58</sup> G. Coleman Luck, *Luke: The Gospel of the Son of Man* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1960], p. 41.

<sup>59</sup> Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on Luke* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1981 (originally published in 1887)], p. 130.

<sup>60</sup> *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, edited by E. Schuyler English [New York: Oxford University Press, 1967], pp. 991-992, 1081.

<sup>61</sup> Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on Luke* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1981 (originally published in 1887)], pp. 131-132.

<sup>62</sup> That a legal claim to the throne of David had to come through the father is argued more fully later in this paper.

There are two different word orders in the Greek manuscripts for Luke 3:23. The text generally accepted today, known as the critical text, is as follows.<sup>63</sup>

23 Καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν Ἰησοῦς ἀρχόμενος ὡσεὶ ἐτῶν τριάκοντα,  
ὧν υἱός, ὡς ἐνομίζετο, Ἰωσήφ τοῦ Ἡλὶ

24 τοῦ Μαθθαὶ τοῦ Λευὶ τοῦ Μελχὶ τοῦ Ἰανναὶ τοῦ Ἰωσήφ

Notice that every name except Joseph is preceded by the masculine, singular, genitive article του (*of the*). υἱος, *son*, occurring only at the beginning of the list, is to be supplied for each succeeding name. Literally:

Jesus...being son, as was supposed, of Joseph of the Heli of the Matthat of the Levi of the Melchi of the Jannai of the Joseph...

Based on this word order, the NIV translates the Greek as follows:

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, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melki, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph...

The Byzantine text, also called the received text and the text on which the KJV is largely based, has a different word order:

Critical text:           ων υἱος , ὡς ἐνομίζετο , Ἰωσήφ

Byzantine text:       ων , ὡς ἐνομίζετο , υἱος Ἰωσήφ

Based on the Byzantine reading, the KJV translates the Greek as follows:

Jesus...being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, who was the son of Heli, who was the son of Matthat,,,

The difference in the Greek word order, reflected in the NIV and KJV translations, is whether or not "son" is separated from "Joseph."

Godet argues for the former word order and against the Byzantine word order. This part of his argument can be granted without hesitation. So certain are modern scholars that the Byzantine word order is incorrect that the United Bible Societies critical text does not

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<sup>63</sup> This is the reading found in the United Bible Societies critical text.

even have a footnote on this variant reading.<sup>64</sup> The significance of the word order for Godet's argument is explained in phase three of the argument.

### Phase Two of the Argument

The *second phase* of the argument is this:

This word [the article του] is found before all the names belonging to the genealogical series. In the genealogy of Matthew, the article τον [masculine singular accusative] is put in the same way before each proper name, which clearly proves that it was the ordinary form in vogue in this kind of document...The want of the article [before Joseph in Luke] puts the name Joseph outside the genealogical series properly so called, and assigns it to a peculiar position. We must conclude from it--1st. That this name belongs rather to the sentence introduced by Luke; 2d. That the genealogical document which he consulted began with the name Heli; 3d. And consequently, that this piece was not originally the genealogy of Jesus or Joseph, but of Heli.<sup>65</sup>

### Phase Three of the Argument

The *third phase* of the argument is the most technical: it hinges on this question: on what does the genitive του Ἡλι (of Heli) precisely depend?

On the name Ἰωσηφ [Joseph] which immediately precedes it? This would be in conformity with the analogy of all the other genitives, which, as we have just proved, depend each on the preceding name [making the translation, Joseph [son] of Heli]. Thus Heli would have been the father of Joseph, and the genealogy of Luke, *as well as that of Matthew* [italics original], would be the genealogy of Jesus through Joseph. In that case we should have to explain how the two documents could be so totally different. But this view is incompatible with the absence of the article before Joseph. If the name Ἰωσηφ had been intended by Luke to be the basis of the entire genealogical series, it would have been fixed and determined by the article with much greater reason certainly than the names that follow. The genitive του Ἡλι, of Heli, depends therefore not on Joseph, but on the word son. This construction is not possible, it is true, with the received reading [the Byzantine Greek text], in which the words son and Joseph form a single phrase, son of Joseph. The word son cannot be separated from the word it immediately governs: Joseph, to receive a second and more distant complement.

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<sup>64</sup> Godet, however, supplies the following argument for what he calls the Alexandrian reading: "There is internal probability that the copyists would rather have been drawn to connect the words son and Joseph, in order to restore the phrase frequently employed in the Gospels, son of Joseph, than to separate them" (*Commentary on Luke* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1981 (originally published in 1887)], p. 128).

<sup>65</sup> Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on Luke* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1981 (originally published in 1887)], p. 128.

With this [Byzantine] reading, the only thing left to us is to make του Ἡλίου depend on the particle ὡν [*being*]: "Jesus...*being* ...[born] of *Heli*." An antithesis might be found between the real fact (ὡν, *being*) and the apparent (ενομιζέτο, *as was thought*): "being, as was thought, a son of Joseph, [in reality] born of Heli." But can the word ὡν signify both *to be* (in the sense of the verb substantive) and *to be born of*? Everything becomes much more simple if we assume the Alex. reading, which on other grounds has already appeared to us the more probable. The word *son*, separated as it is from its first complement, *of Joseph*, by the words *as was thought*, may very well have a second [complement], *of Heli*. The first is only noticed in passing, and in order to be denied in the very mention of it: "Son, as was thought, of Joseph." The official information being thus disavowed, Luke, by means of the second complement, substitutes for it the truth, *of Heli*; and this name he distinguishes, by means of the article, as the first link of the genealogical chain properly so called. The text, therefore, to express the author's meaning clearly, should be written thus:  
 "being a son--as was thought, of Joseph--of Heli, of Matthat..."<sup>66</sup>

From this intricate textual and grammatical argument, Godet concludes:

This study of the text in detail leads us in this way to admit--1. That the genealogical register of Luke is that of Heli, the grandfather of Jesus; 2. That, this affiliation of Jesus by Heli being expressly opposed to His affiliation by Joseph, the document which he has preserved for us can be nothing else in his view than the genealogy of Jesus through Mary.<sup>67</sup>

I have quoted Godet's complete argument in order to give it as much weight as Godet himself could muster for it. It seems, however, to consist simply of the following six points:

- By the analogy of all the other genitive articles in Luke's genealogy, του Ἡλίου (*of Heli*) should be connected with the preceding name, which would imply the meaning *Joseph son of Heli*. This would settle the case that Luke gives the genealogy of Joseph.
- However, this connection is inconsistent with the missing article on the name *Joseph*. If Luke had wanted Joseph to be part of this genealogy, then he would have put the article in front of the name *Joseph* as he did for every subsequent name in the list. This is equivalent to saying that if he did not put the article in front of *Joseph*, then he did not consider Joseph part of this genealogy.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on Luke* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1981 (originally published in 1887)], p. 129.

<sup>67</sup> Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on Luke* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1981 (originally published in 1887)], p. 129.

<sup>68</sup> This sentence is simply the contrapositive of the previous sentence and is therefore logically equivalent to it.

- Therefore, the phrase του Ἡλίου must be connected to the word υἱός (*son*) and not του Ἰωσήφ.
- Godet then admits that this connects υἱός with its second grammatical complement, *Heli*, not its first, *Joseph*. Godet admits that the Byzantine word order would virtually require connecting υἱός with Joseph.
- The first complement, *Joseph*, is in the sentence only for the purpose of denial: Jesus was not the son of Joseph, as was thought, but rather the son of Heli.
- Therefore, by omitting the article in front of Joseph, he establishes Heli as the first link in the genealogy.

If the reasoning in these six steps is valid, then the conclusion seems inevitable: if Joseph is not in this genealogy, it must be the genealogy of Mary with Heli as her father.

### Critique of this Argument

The problem with this argument is not that the conclusion fails to follow from the premises. Indeed, that certainly seems to be the case. The question is whether the premises themselves are true. Here serious doubt enters.

Terry makes the following observation:

The hypothesis, quite prevalent and popular since the time of the Reformation, that Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph, and Luke that of Mary, is justly set aside by a majority of the best critics as incompatible with the words of both evangelists, who alike claim to give the genealogy of Joseph.<sup>69</sup>

The entire argument really hinges on the absence of the definite article on Ἰωσήφ. Prima facie, that is a mighty small syntactical feature on which to begin an intricate line of reasoning and on which to base such a monumental conclusion. However, the foundation of this argument is made even more precarious when it is noted that we really do not completely understand the use of the article in Koine Greek. Robertson comments on the use of the article with proper nouns:

But, as a matter of fact, no satisfactory principle can be laid down for the use or non-use of the article with proper names...Moulton (*Prol.*, p. 83) admits the inability of scholars to solve "completely the problem of the article with proper names."<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974], p. 521.

<sup>70</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 4th ed. [Nashville: Broadman Press, 1923], p. 761.

I submit that the most one can say of Godet's argument is that it is circumstantial, that is, the absence of the article before Ἰωσηφ is consistent with his conclusions but does not demand those conclusions. Further, the syntactical juxtaposition of Ἰωσηφ and του Ἡλι seems to be far more significant a grammatical feature than the lack of the article. To the extent that this assessment is correct, then the meaning, *Joseph son of Heli*, is to that same extent more probable than the meaning Godet assigns to this grammatical construction.

### Difficulties With the Theory That Luke Gives Mary's Genealogy

In addition to the general weakness of the only real exegetical argument for this view, the following points also stand against it.

- A genealogy of a woman is without precedent in both Greek and Hebrew literature.<sup>71</sup>
- The unprecedented nature of giving a mother's ancestry would seem to make it absolutely incumbent on Luke, especially when he explicitly uses the name *Joseph*, to make it also explicit that he is in fact giving Mary's genealogy, rather than to expect his readers to know he is doing such a highly unexpected thing simply by the omission of the definite article in front of the name *Joseph*. As other scholars have pointed out, it would have been very easy for Luke to do this.<sup>72</sup> When seen in this light, the theory of Mary's genealogy seems highly improbable indeed.
- Alfred argues that this could hardly be a genealogy of Mary when Luke seems clearly to transfer the beginning of his list to Joseph by the phrase *ως ενομιζετο* (*as was supposed*).<sup>73</sup>
- The name *Joseph* is explicitly mentioned and immediately followed by *of Heli*, making the series seem clearly to be "son...of Joseph of Heli of Matthat..."

<sup>71</sup> Advocates of this view would argue that this is precisely why Luke did not include Mary's name even though he traces her lineage. Instead, according to the theory, Luke makes Jesus the "son of Heli" in order to trace his natural genealogy. However, whether Mary's name is mentioned or not, this view has Luke presenting a mother's genealogy, which inherently is highly unlikely.

<sup>72</sup> Alexander Balman Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," *The Expositor's Greek Testament* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970], I:485: "Some regard this expression [*ως ενομιζετο*] with Ἰωσηφ following, as a parenthesis, making the genealogy in its original form run being son of Eli, etc., so that the sense, when the parenthesis is inserted, becomes: being son (as was *supposed* of Joseph but *really*) of Eli, etc., Eli being the father of *Mary*, and the genealogy being that of the mother of Jesus (Godet and others). This is ingenious but not satisfactory. As has been remarked by Hahn, if that had been Lk.'s meaning it would have been very easy for him to have made it clear by inserting *οντως δε* [*but really*] before του Ἡλι [*of Heli*]. We must therefore rest in the view that this genealogy, like that of Mt., is Joseph's, not Mary's..."

<sup>73</sup> Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1958 (originally published in 1849)], I:473: "The two genealogies are *both the line of Joseph*, and *not of Mary*. Whether Mary were an heiress or not, Luke's words here preclude the idea of the genealogy being *hers*; for the descent of the Lord is transferred putatively to Joseph by the *ως ενομιζετο*, before the genealogy begins."

- If Luke's line is not that of Joseph, it is difficult to explain how the famous father-son pair, Shealtiel and Zerubbabel, appears in both lists.<sup>74</sup>

### *Does Luke Give the Genealogy of Joseph?*

Several positive arguments can be given in favor of the view that Luke, like Matthew, records the genealogy of Joseph:

1. Luke explicitly uses the name Ἰωσήφ (*Joseph*).
2. Syntactically, the name Ἰωσήφ is immediately connected to τοῦ Ἡλίου making the meaning *Joseph son of Heli* highly probable by analogy with the remaining names in the list.<sup>75</sup>
3. This view does not require the reader to deduce by some elaborate line of reasoning that Mary is really meant when her name is not used and the name *Joseph* is used.

An additional argument is given in the concluding section of this paper that discusses the question of the legal right to the throne of David.

The earliest extant explanation of the two genealogies was given by Julius Africanus, and he believed both Matthew and Luke give the genealogy of Joseph. Born ca. 200 A.D., he was a student in the Alexandrian School<sup>76</sup> around 228 to 232. In a letter to

<sup>74</sup> There are basically two possible explanations that maintain the theory of Mary's genealogy. The first is the one given by Archer that they are simply a different father-son pair that happen to have the same names as the famous father-son pair from Israel's history; see footnote 27. The other explanation is more subtle: "Their being common to both lists is easily explained by the fact that during that troubled period [post-Exilic times] a number of collateral family branches might be narrowed down to one or two common representatives" (Louis Matthews Sweet, "Genealogy of Jesus Christ," [Old] *ISBE*, II:1197). Godet himself offers several possible explanations for the two names appearing in both genealogies (*Commentary on Luke* [Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1981 (originally published in 1887)], p. 132). First, he states that the suggestion that the two in Luke are not the same men as the two in Matthew "is not impossible." However, he recognizes the problem with this suggestion: "...these two names, in the two lists, refer so exactly to the same period, since in both of them they are very nearly half way between Jesus and David." If the Shealtiel-Zerubbabel are the same men in both genealogies, Godet suggests two possible solutions to the problem: (1) Shealtiel might have been the natural son of Neri but an "adopted" son of Jeconiah to keep the royal line from extinction; (2) Neri might have married one of Jeconiah's wives to give him a son by levirate marriage. The second suggestion seems to me highly unlikely due to the general significance of taking a king's wife (cf. 1 Kgs. 2:13-25). The first of these two suggestions is very close to the view of Shealtiel presented in this paper. But with this explanation, the lines in Matthew and Luke are united at Zerubbabel. To maintain Godet's view of Mary's genealogy, somewhere after Zerubbabel the two lines must split. However, part of the argument for Mary's genealogy was the separate line to David through Neri and Nathan rather than Jeconiah and Solomon. With this suggestion, that part of the argument is completely lost. No, if Luke is giving Mary's genealogy, the only good option is to say with Archer that the Shealtiel and Zerubbabel in Luke are two different men from those in Matthew. However, this is open to the criticism recognized even by Godet. Therefore, the presence of these two names in Luke's list remains a problem for the view of Mary's genealogy.

<sup>75</sup> Note that even though Godet argued that the Byzantine reading would secure this interpretation, it is also the very likely meaning of the usual word order, as in the critical text.

<sup>76</sup> Alexandria was a city founded by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C. in the west corner of the Nile Delta. "For a time Alexandria was the intellectual center for the Christians, as it had been for the Hellenists and for the Hellenistic

Aristides he gives his answer to the alleged discrepancies in the two genealogies of Jesus based on his view that they both belong to Joseph. Why are they so different? His answer can be summarized as follows.

For whereas in Israel the names of their generations were enumerated either according to nature or according to law,--according to nature, indeed, by the succession of legitimate offspring, and according to law whenever another raised up children to the name of a brother dying childless...whereas, then, of those entered in this genealogy, some succeeded by legitimate descent as son to father, while others begotten in one family were introduced to another in name, mention is therefore made of both--of those who were progenitors in fact, and of those who were so only in name. Thus neither of the evangelists is in error, as one reckons by nature and the other by law. For the several generations, viz., those descending from Solomon and those from Nathan, were so intermingled by the raising up of children to the childless, and by second marriages, and the raising up of seed, that the same persons are quite justly reckoned to belong at one time to the one, and at another time to the other, i.e., to their reputed or to their actual fathers. And hence it is that both of these accounts are true, and come down to Joseph, with considerable intricacy indeed, but yet quite accurately.<sup>77</sup>

That was his explanation in general terms of how both genealogies can apply to Joseph. These general principles furnish the basis for the two possible methods of reconciliation.

- Both genealogies give the descent of Joseph: Matthew his natural (biological) descent and Luke his legal descent.
- Both genealogies give the descent of Joseph: Matthew his legal descent and Luke his natural (biological) descent.

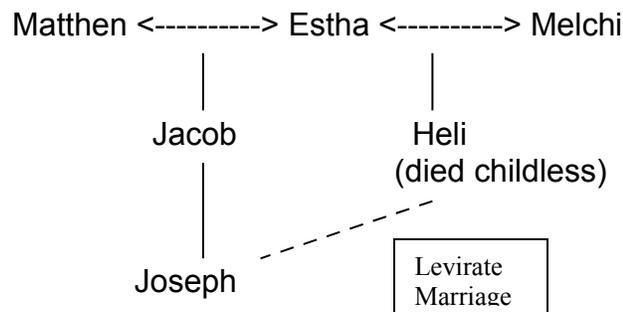
### *The View that Matthew Presents the Natural Line of Joseph and Luke the Legal Line*

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Jews. The Christian School in Alexandria, called the Didaskaleion (Eusebius *HE* v. 10), produced some of the greatest scholars of the early Church, notably Clement and Origen. They had to face perversions of Christianity by Gnostics like Valentinus and also attacks on Christianity by Neoplatonic philosophers like Celsus. In the early 4th cent. A.D., both the heretical leader Arius and the champion of the true deity of Christ, Athanasius, were Alexandrians" (J. Alexander Thompson, "Alexandria," *ISBE*, I:94. Alexandria was also the city where the Jews earlier produced the Septuagint (LXX). Also two of the most important MSS of the NT were written in Alexandria, the Codex Vaticanus (B) and the Codex Sinaiticus (א), both of the 4th. cent. A.D.

<sup>77</sup> Julius Africanus, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978], VI:125-126. This letter was actually preserved by Eusebius (ca. 260-340 A.D.). After Africanus, Jerome (ca. 398) took a similar approach. According to Terry, "The Emperor Julian attacked these genealogies on the ground of their discrepancies, and Jerome, in replying to him, observes that if Julian had been more familiar with Jewish modes of speech he might have seen that one evangelist gives the *natural* and the other the *legal* pedigree of Joseph" (Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974], p. 522).

Africanus himself takes Matthew's account as the natural genealogy of Joseph and Luke's as the legal. He suggests the following. Matthan, in Matthew's account, marries a woman, whom Africanus claims was traditionally called Estha, and begets Jacob. The Mosaic law did not prevent a widow or divorcee from remarrying within her tribe. So then as a result of death or divorce, Estha remarries the Melchi in Luke's account from another family within the line of David. Heli is the offspring of this marriage and is thus a uterine half-brother of Jacob. Next, Heli marries but dies childless. Then by levirate marriage, his brother Jacob marries Heli's widow and begets Joseph. On this scenario, Joseph is the natural son of Jacob but the legal son of Heli.



There is, of course, a problem with this reconstruction by Africanus. He seems to ignore, or perhaps was unaware of, the two names between Melchi and Heli in Luke's list, namely, Levi and Matthat.<sup>78</sup> This matter is addressed shortly.

In addition to Africanus, some modern scholars also take the view that Matthew's genealogy is the natural line of Joseph, while Luke's is the legal.<sup>79</sup> The main argument for this view is the use of the verb *εγεννησεν*, *begat*, in Matthew's list, implying natural or biological descent.

### *The View that Matthew Presents the Legal Line of Joseph and Luke the Natural Line*

Grotius points out a problem with the previous view:<sup>80</sup> Matthew's list gives the *legal* succession from Solomon to Jehoiachin in the sense that he recounts those who obtained the throne of David. Moreover, the scheme suggested in this paper for the data in 1 Chronicles 3, based on the work of Lord Arthur Hervey, has Shealtiel as the natural son of Neri and Zerubbabel as the natural son of Shealtiel. This biological sequence, Neri -----> Shealtiel -----> Zerubbabel, is what Luke has. Therefore, taking Luke to be the natural line of Joseph is consistent with what this paper suggested as the best way to take the OT data. Finally, as others have also pointed out, "it would seem

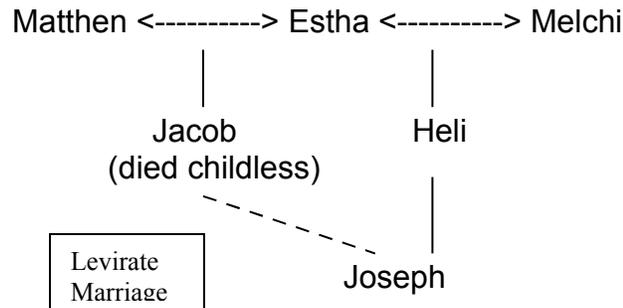
<sup>78</sup> The editor of this edition of Africanus, E. Cleveland Coxe, offers this suggestion: "It may be that these two names were not found in the copy [of Luke] used by Africanus."

<sup>79</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels* [New York: Harper & Row, 1922], p. 260, lists McClellan and Waddy.

<sup>80</sup> Cited by Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974], p. 523.

proper that Matthew should give the *legal* descent of Jesus, since he wrote chiefly for Jews."<sup>81</sup>

The scheme of Africanus can be converted as follows, making Joseph the legal son of Jacob, as per Matthew, and the natural son of Heli, as per Luke:



This scheme, however, still has the problem of the two missing names between Melchi and Heli. How is it to be solved?

This paper has followed Hervey's suggestions in its analysis of the data in 1 Chronicles 3. Hervey is also perhaps the best known defender of the view that Matthew gives the legal genealogy of Joseph and Luke the natural.<sup>82</sup> His reconstruction of the NT genealogies differs from both of the previous schemes based on Africanus.<sup>83</sup>

The genealogies of Matthew and Luke have to this point been reconciled down through Zerubbabel. From this point forward, Hervey argues that the two lists are united in the following way; horizontal arrows indicate different names for the same man, according to Hervey.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>81</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels* [New York: Harper & Row, 1922], p. 261.

<sup>82</sup> Hervey is cited at length in Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974], pp. 523-524. In addition to Hervey, A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels* [New York: Harper & Row, 1922], p. 260, lists Mill, Alford, Wordsworth, Ellicott, Westcott, Fairbairn, and McNeile.

<sup>83</sup> Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1958 (originally published in 1849)], I:4, comments as follows on Hervey's work: "I cannot but recommend to the student the perusal of Lord A. Hervey's work. Whether or not we may be inclined to adopt his conjectures on so intricate and uncertain a subject as the reconciling of the genealogies, too much praise cannot be given to this spirit of combined Christian reverence and enlightened critical courage in which it is treated throughout."

<sup>84</sup> Alford states that "it was common among the Jews for the same man to bear different names" (*The Greek Testament* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1958 (originally published in 1849)], I:473. This is obvious to all students of Scripture and hardly needs defense. Consider Jehoiachin, Jeconiah, and Coniah, to name just one example from the OT. In the NT a key example is Paul and Saul. The unfortunate aspect of this phenomenon is that we do not always know when this is the case. A particularly sticky issue is whether Sheshbazzar of Ezra 1:8 is another name for Zerubbabel. Since this question is not germane to the issues addressed in this paper, it is pursued no further here; for a discussion, see, e.g., Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982], pp. 217-218. In the case of the two genealogies of Jesus, Hervey's several associations of two, even three, names with the same man are, of course, speculation in order to achieve a harmonization.

1 Chronicles 3

Matthew

Luke

Zerubbabel	Zerubbabel	Zerubbabel (= Rhesa)
Hananiah	<----->	Joanan
[several generations]	[skipped generations]	[skipped generations]
Hodaviah	<----->	Joda
	Abiud	
	Eliakim (oldest son)	Josech (younger son)
	[different men]	[different men]
	Eleazar (childless)	Levi
	Matthan (legal son)	<-----> Matthat (natural son)
	Jacob (childless)	Heli
	Joseph (legal son)	Joseph (natural son)

In words, here is what Hervey has suggested. Rhesa is taken as a title for Zerubbabel and not actually a son.<sup>85</sup> Hananiah, the son of Zerubbabel in 1 Chronicles 3:19, and Joanan, the son of Zerubbabel in Luke 3:27, refer to the same man. Matthew lists Abiud as the son of Zerubbabel, but on this scenario, Matthew has skipped several generations, as he had done elsewhere in his genealogy. Next, the Hodaviah of 1 Chronicles 3:24, the Abiud of Matthew 1:13, and the Joda of Luke 3:25 all refer to the same man. This man, Hodaviah/Abiud/Joda, begets Eliakim, his oldest son and therefore possessor of his legal line as given in Matthew, and Josech, a younger son as given in Luke. Then the lines of Eliakim and Josech continue separately as listed in Matthew and Luke, respectively. Eleazar of Eliakim's line dies childless. According to levirate marriage, Levi of Josech's line marries Eleazar's widow and begets Matthan, reckoned as the legal son of Eleazar as per Matthew's account. This same son, called Matthat in Luke, is there listed as the natural son of Levi. Matthan/Matthat then has two sons, Jacob his oldest listed in Matthew and Heli a younger son listed in Luke. Jacob dies childless, and again according to levirate marriage, Heli marries his widow and begets Joseph. Thus, Joseph is the legal son of Jacob as listed in Matthew but the natural son of Heli as listed in Luke.<sup>86</sup>

This scheme is indeed ingenious. It reconciles the two genealogies and has Matthew consistently trace the legal line of Joseph, while Luke consistently traces his natural line. There is, of course, an immense number of speculations in this reconstruction of Joseph's line: different names are taken to refer to the same man in several instances, as well as several claims of levirate marriage. However, the point made earlier in this paper must be remembered. The question is simply whether a scheme might exist that harmonizes the data in the two genealogies. The scheme proposed by Hervey answers this question in the affirmative. Whether these speculations are true, there is no way of knowing. Those scholars with a high view of Scripture believe that these two

<sup>85</sup> Indeed, it could be a title--but of Zerubbabel or his son? More on this later in the paper.

<sup>86</sup> Hervey also thinks that "Mary, the mother of Jesus, was, in all probability, the daughter of Jacob, and first cousin to Joseph, her husband. So that in point of *fact*, though not of *form*, both genealogies are as much hers as her husband's" (cited by Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974], pp. 523-524).

genealogies are both accurate and therefore can be reconciled, but we simply do not possess enough data to determine the correct harmonization free from speculation.<sup>87</sup>

Since we do not have this data, the best we can say is that there does exist one, or possibly several, ways to harmonize these two accounts. However, since speculations are involved in devising such harmonization schemes, no one can claim that any particular scheme is certain. Terry makes this point well:

In the absence of certain information, no hypothesis can well claim absolute certainty...<sup>88</sup>The fact is that while no one should affirm that Hervey's hypothesis is perfectly certain (for in the absence of sufficient data no theory is entitled to such a claim) no one can prove that it is not correct. All that can well be asked for in the case is a hypothesis which will exhibit how both genealogies may be true, and that which holds Matthew's to be the legal (royal) line and Luke's the natural seems on the whole to be most entitled to credit.<sup>89</sup>

Unfortunately, there is one small problem in the scheme suggested by Hervey. He takes Rhesa in Luke 3:27 to be a title of Zerubbabel. However, Luke's consistent grammatical structure throughout his list would definitely imply that he thought Rhesa was the son of Zerubbabel. One could argue that Luke just copied from his source material, and if that material contained this small error, Luke simply copied verbatim. Unfortunately, one way or the other, taking Rhesa to be a title of Zerubbabel gets uncomfortably close to positing an error in Scripture.

Robert Dick Wilson suggests another interpretation of Rhesa. To be sure, *Rhesa* is still a title, but a title given to the *son* of Zerubbabel:

According to 1 Ch 3:19, he [Zerubbabel] had one daughter, Shelomith, and seven sons, Meshullam, Hananiah, Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah and Jushab-hesed. In Mt 1:13 he is said to have been the father of Abiud (i.e., Abihud [*father of Hud*]). As it is the custom in Arabia today to give a man a new name when his first son is born, so it may have been, in this case, that Meshullam was the father of Hud, and that his name was changed to Abiud as soon as his son was named Hud. In Lk 3:27, the son of Zerubbabel is called Rhesa. This is doubtless the title of the head of the captivity, the *resh gelutha'*, and would be appropriate as a title of Meshullam [son of Zerubbabel in 1 Chron. 3:19] in his capacity as the official representative of the captive Jews [the position also held by his father, Zerubbabel].<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> This point was made quite cogently by Alford: "Here, as elsewhere, I believe that the accounts might be reconciled, or at all events good reason might be assigned for their differing, if we were in possession of data on which to proceed; but here as elsewhere, *we are not*" (*The Greek Testament* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1958 (originally published in 1849)], I:473).

<sup>88</sup> Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974], p. 523.

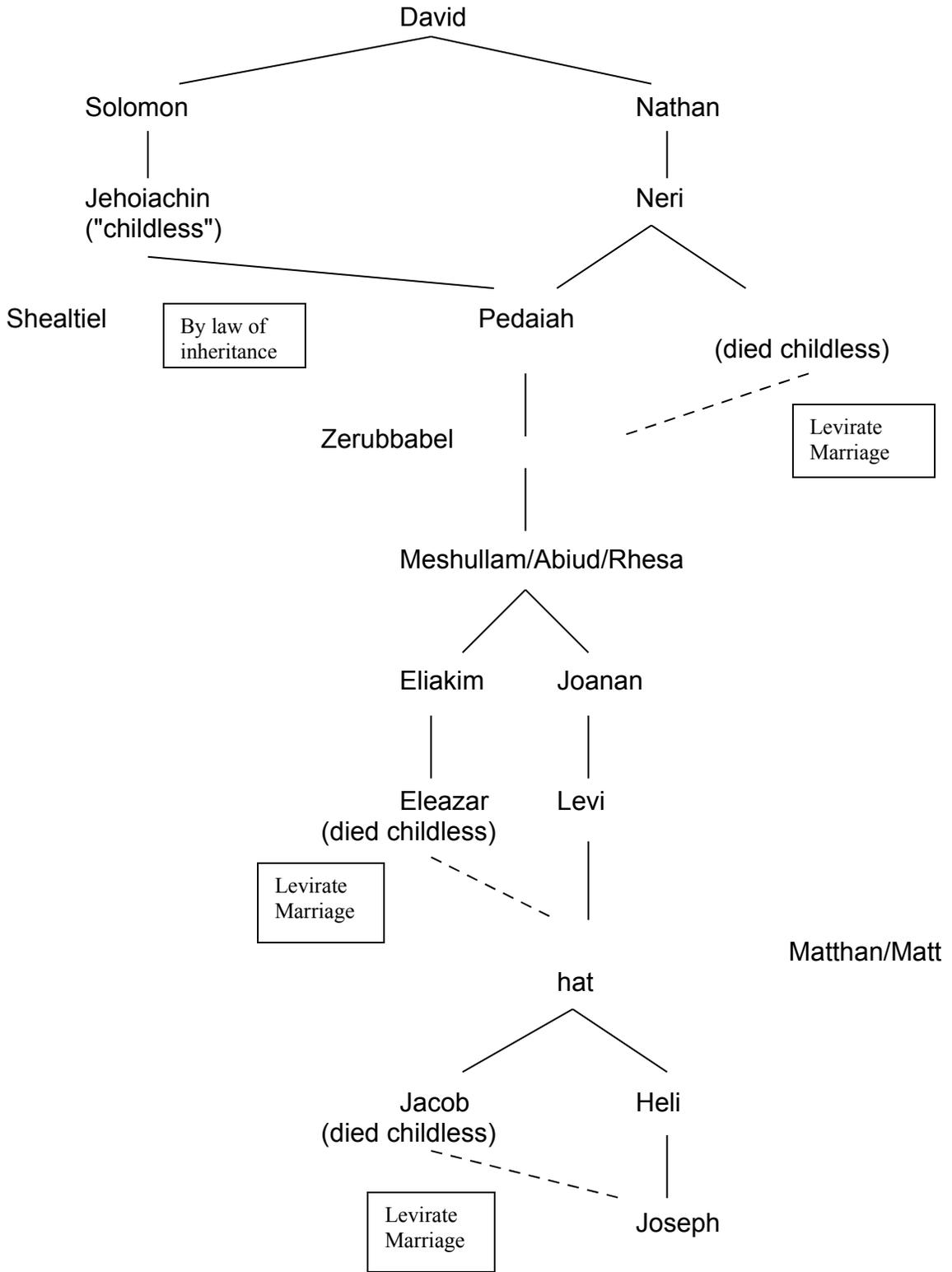
<sup>89</sup> Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974], p. 524, n. 1.

<sup>90</sup> R. Dick Wilson, "Zerubbabel," [Old] *ISBE*, V:3147.

These suggestions preserve the syntactical integrity of Luke's list. If they are to be accepted, the top part of Hervey's scheme must be modified, although the bottom part can remain intact. The modification of the top part actually represents a simplification. Thus, there are two benefits to adopting Wilson's suggestions. The picture now takes the following form:

<u>1 Chronicles 3</u>		<u>Matthew</u>		<u>Luke</u>
Zerubbabel		Zerubbabel		Zerubbabel
Meshullam (Not listed)	<----->	Abiud	<----->	Rhesa
		Eliakim		Joanan
		[different men]		[different men]
		Eleazar (childless)		Levi
		Matthan (legal son)	<----->	Matthat (natural son)
		Jacob (childless)		Heli
		Joseph (legal son)		Joseph (natural son)

In words, here is the scheme. Meshullam, Abiud, and Rhesa all refer to the same son of Zerubbabel, presumably his oldest. At least three sons are born to Meshullam/Abiud/Rhesa: Hud (presumably the oldest because he occasioned the name change), Eliakim, and Joanan. If Hud died unmarried, then Eliakim becomes the legal heir of Meshullam. The lines of Eliakim and Joanan continue separately and are traced in Matthew and Luke, respectively. At this point, Hervey's scheme can be incorporated. The result can be summarized in the following tree.



However, there still remains a small inconsistency in the interpretations of the two genealogies suggested by this reconstruction.

- Matthew's legal line: Joseph the legal son of Jacob, the legal/natural son of Matthan, the legal son of Eleazar, the legal/natural descendant of Eliakim, the legal/natural son of Meshullam, the legal/natural son of Zerubbabel, the ***natural*** son of Shealtiel, the legal heir of David, Solomon, and Jehoiachin and the legal heir to the throne of David.
- Luke's natural line: Joseph the natural son of Heli, the natural son of Matthan, the natural son of Levi, the natural descendant of Joanan, the younger natural son of Meshullam, the legal/natural son of Zerubbabel, the ***natural*** son of Shealtiel, the natural son of Neri, the natural descendant of Nathan, the natural son of David.

The two genealogies come together in Matthan and then again in the Shealtiel, Zerubbabel, and Meshullam stream. That is, both Matthew and Luke have the Shealtiel, Zerubbabel sequence and neither have Pedaiah as the father of Zerubbabel. Recall that there were two ways to solve the problem in the OT data regarding the father of Zerubbabel:

1. Shealtiel died childless, making Zerubbabel the legal son of Shealtiel and the natural son of Pedaiah
2. Pedaiah died childless, making Zerubbabel the legal son of Pedaiah and the natural son of Shealtiel.

The second method made the record in 1 Chronicles consistently trace legal descent and is therefore prima facie to be preferred based on OT data. However, this solution in the NT makes Matthew slip into a natural descent in naming Shealtiel as the father of Zerubbabel. On the other hand, the first method makes Luke slip into a legal descent in naming Shealtiel as the father of Zerubbabel rather than Pedaiah. Therefore, the simple fact seems to be that neither solution for the OT data gives a consistently legal and consistently natural line for both Matthew and Luke. Since both Matthew and Luke name Shealtiel as the father of Zerubbabel, neither scheme preserves total consistency.

As much as I would like to keep solution two for the OT data, it does not work in the NT. If Shealtiel is the legal heir to the throne of David, which is the only possible interpretation of the data in 1 Chronicles 3, and if Matthew indeed gives the legal descent of Jesus, which also seems unavoidable, then Zerubbabel must be the legal son of Shealtiel in order to continue legal heirship down to Joseph in Matthew's list. If Zerubbabel were really the legal son of Pedaiah, Zerubbabel and therefore Joseph, could not be legal heir to the throne of David.

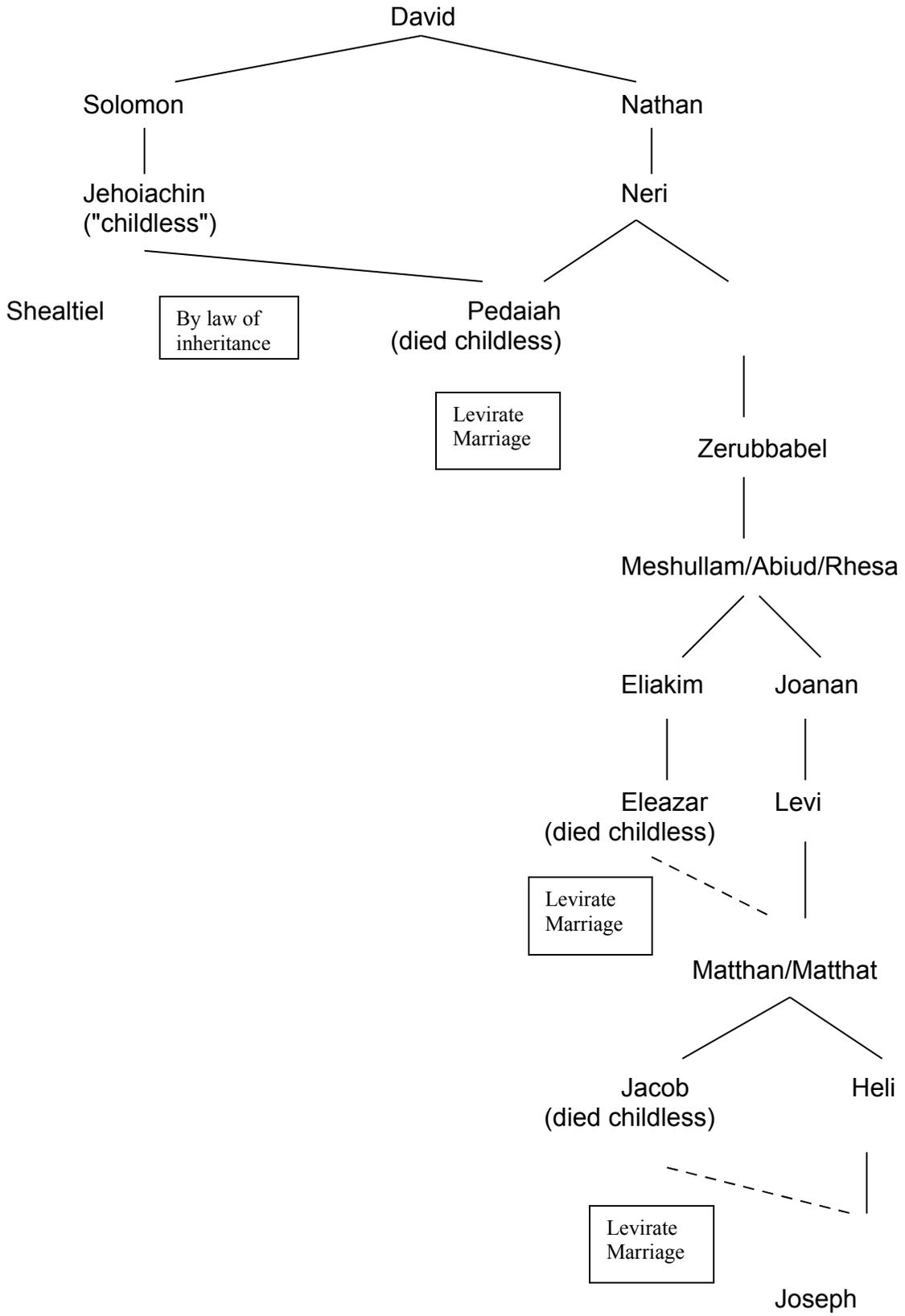
Therefore, we must take solution one for the father of Zerubbabel. This makes the line in 1 Chronicles have a mixture of legal and natural descent, and it makes Luke give one legal sonship by mentioning Shealtiel rather than Pedaiah. A reason can be found that

might explain this. Both men would go back to Neri, but in the OT Shealtiel is always named as the father of Zerubbabel with the one exception of 1 Chronicles 3:19.<sup>91</sup> Perhaps Luke simply followed this much more familiar pattern. Why the writer of 1 Chronicles used the natural father of Zerubbabel rather than his legal father is more difficult to guess. Perhaps because without it, the fact about the levirate marriage would never have been known.

Therefore, the final conclusion reached in this paper can be presented as follows:

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<sup>91</sup> See footnote 25.





The genealogies of Matthew and Luke can now be interpreted as follows:

- Matthew's legal line: Joseph the legal son of Jacob, the legal/natural son of Matthan, the legal son of Eleazar, the legal/natural descendant of Eliakim, the legal/natural son of Meshullam, the legal/natural son of Zerubbabel, the **legal** son of Shealtiel, the legal heir of David, Solomon, and Jehoiachin and the legal heir to the throne of David.
- Luke's natural line: Joseph the natural son of Heli, the natural son of Matthan, the natural son of Levi, the natural descendant of Joanan, the younger natural son of Meshullam, the legal/natural son of Zerubbabel, the **legal** son of Shealtiel, the natural son of Neri, the natural descendant of Nathan, the natural son of David.

## THE CRISIS IN THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY AVERTED

What about the crisis in the Davidic dynasty? The following points have already been made:

- The crisis in the Davidic dynasty was the divine/legal judgment in Jeremiah 22:30 that no son of Jehoiachin would reign on the throne of David.
- Whether Jehoiachin had any natural sons is a mute point. Even if he did, the clear meaning of Jeremiah 22:30 is that no natural son or natural descendant of Jehoiachin could sit on the throne of David. Did this mean the end of David's royal line?
- The Davidic covenant promised that the throne and dynasty of David would endure forever.

How have the reconstructions in this paper averted the crisis, preserved the royal line of David, and kept the Davidic covenant from failing?

- The crisis was averted *in part* by the law of inheritance in Numbers 27:8-11. Due to the divine/legal judgment in Jeremiah 22:30, Shealtiel, a natural descendant of David through Nathan but not a natural son or descendant of Jehoiachin, becomes legal heir of Jehoiachin and thus the heir to the throne of David.
- Zerubbabel as the legal son of Shealtiel becomes the next heir to the throne of David. There is no question but that the Scriptures recognize Zerubbabel as such.<sup>92</sup>
- The crisis was *fully* averted in that Joseph is the legal heir of Zerubbabel, as demonstrated by Matthew. Thus, Jesus, as the eldest **legal** son of Joseph,<sup>93</sup> has a

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<sup>92</sup> See, e.g., Hag. 2:20-23; see also R. Dick Wilson, "Zerubbabel," [Old] *ISBE*, V:3147.

<sup>93</sup> Both Matthew and Luke clearly teach the virgin birth (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38). Therefore, neither Gospel writer considered a genealogy of Jesus inconsistent with his virgin birth, and both writers include wording to ensure

legal claim to the throne of David, a requirement of the Messiah as the climactic fulfillment of the Davidic covenant.<sup>94</sup>

This analysis removes the fifth argument delineated in this paper for the idea that Luke gave the genealogy of Mary. Some scholars have used the Mary interpretation as the answer to the problem created by Jeremiah 22:30. For example, a note in the *New Scofield Reference Bible* states the following:

Had our Lord been the natural son of Joseph, who was descended from Jeconiah, He could never reign in power and righteousness because of the curse [of Jer. 22:30]. But Christ came through Mary's line not Joseph's. As the adopted son of Joseph, the curse upon Coniah's seed did not effect him.<sup>95</sup>

In another note, this same reference Bible states the following:

[The view that Luke presents Mary's genealogy] avoids the judgment spoken of in Jer. 22:28-30.<sup>96</sup>

These simplistic statements seem unworthy of scholars of the caliber of those who wrote the notes in the *New Scofield Reference Bible*. Only the standing of Jesus as legal son of Joseph mattered in determining his legal claim to the throne of David. Whether this legal standing resulted from natural birth, legal adoption, or levirate marriage is irrelevant. It is also irrelevant whether or not Mary was a descendant of David.

The right to "the throne of David his father" (Luke 1:32) must, according to all Jewish precedent, ideas, and usage, be based upon a *legal ground of succession*, as of inheritance; and therefore his genealogy must be traced backward from Joseph the legal husband of Mary.<sup>97</sup>

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that no one would draw the conclusion that Jesus was the natural son of Joseph (Matt. 1:16, where  $\eta\varsigma$  is feminine singular, and Luke 3:23). What mattered was that Jesus was the *legal* son of Joseph, and therefore both Matthew and Luke present a genealogy of Joseph, Matthew Joseph's legal line and Luke Joseph's natural line. It is always the *legal* status of a son that is important in inheritance issues, and this was Matthew's concern.

<sup>94</sup> According to M. D. Johnson, *ISBE*, II:428, "It was not the unanimous Jewish opinion in the early church period that the Messiah would stem from David. On the basis of the OT concept of the perpetuity of the priesthood along side the office of king (1 S. 2:35; Jer. 33:17-22; Zec. 4:14; cf. Sir. 45:6f., 15, 23-25; 1 Macc. 2:54), the expectation of a priestly Messiah came to be reflected in various Jewish sources, e.g., the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and rabbinic materials. Rabbinic sources have clear and numerous traces of discussions between the partisans of each expectation. It was argued that the Davidic line was tainted by the illegal marriage of Judah and Tamar, the gentile status of Ruth, the Bathsheba affair, and the fact that the mother of Rehoboam was Naamah the Ammonitess (1 K. 14:31). The rabbinic writings were generally concerned with explaining these difficulties and at the same time charging that the priestly line was tainted in similar ways." However, based on the theology of the Davidic covenant and the NT commentary on it in Luke 1:32-33, it is quite clear that the Messiah must have legal right to the throne of David and thus be a descendent of David.

<sup>95</sup> *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, edited by E. Schuyler English [New York: Oxford University Press, 1967], pp. 991-992.

<sup>96</sup> *The New Scofield Reference Bible*, edited by E. Schuyler English [New York: Oxford University Press, 1967], p. 1081.

<sup>97</sup> Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974], p. 521.

[Making Jesus the legal heir of the throne of David] could be done only on the basis of Joseph's genealogy, for whatever the lineage of Mary, Joseph was the head of the family, and the Davidic connection of Jesus could only be established by acknowledgment of Him as legal son by Joseph.<sup>98</sup>

Therefore, as far as establishing a legal claim to the throne of David, Mary's genealogy is quite irrelevant, whether it goes back to David through Nathan or not at all. Luke would have no reason to list her line as the means to avoid the problem of Jeremiah 22:30 or in order to establish some sort of legal claim to the throne.

But what about Jeremiah 22:30? It cannot mean that *no one* has a legal claim to the throne of David, for that would be the end of the Davidic dynasty and a broken covenant with David. What it does mean is that the legal and royal line be transferred from the natural sons of Jehoiachin (if any) to someone else. That someone else was Shealtiel.

Now, according to Jer. xxii, 30 (comp. xxxvi, 30), Jechonias was sentenced to become childless. In that case the right to the throne of David would devolve upon the next nearest heir, which was probably Shealtiel, the son of Neri, whose direct lineage Luke traces up to Nathan, another son of David (Luke iii, 27-31).<sup>99</sup>

From Shealtiel, it passed to Zerubbabel (Hag. 2:20-23), from him to Joseph, and from him to Jesus.

### *The Purpose of the Two Genealogies*

In view of the conclusions already drawn, what is the purpose of each of the two genealogies? Concerning Matthew's genealogy, one can surely say that its purpose was to establish Jesus has a legal heir to the throne of David. As a matter of course, in Jewish thinking, if one was to claim Messiahship, a genealogy demonstrating a legal right to the throne of David must be given.<sup>100</sup>

What is the purpose of Luke's genealogy? It has already been noted that Godet argues that Matthew is concerned with a theocratic point of view and therefore presents the genealogy of Joseph as the legal father of Jesus, while Luke is interested in universal redemption and thus presents the genealogy of Mary to demonstrate his real human lineage. Godet's statement concerning Luke's interest is probably accurate, but it does

<sup>98</sup> Louis Matthews Sweet, "Genealogy of Jesus Christ," [Old] *ISBE*, II:1198.

<sup>99</sup> Lord Arthur Hervey, cited by Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974], p. 523.

<sup>100</sup> However, this point may be more subtle than it at first appears. The unbelieving Jews never questioned the royal descent of Joseph. So the genealogy might not have been included solely to prove that lineage. Instead, the claim was made that Jesus was the illegitimate offspring of Mary. Therefore, the intent of Matthew's genealogy may have also been to show that Joseph in marrying Mary "gives her the protection of his stainless name and royal lineage" (Louis Matthews Sweet, "Genealogy of Jesus Christ," [Old] *ISBE*, II:1197). Then ipso facto Jesus inherits a legal right to the throne by Joseph taking him as his legal son. Sweet has taken this view of the matter from Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, II:533-537.

not follow that Luke reports Mary's genealogy. In fact, one could easily argue the opposite. Michael Wilcock makes the following general observations about Luke's genealogy:

It reminds us that Jesus was commonly supposed to be the son of Joseph; that was his legal parentage, a fact which is not effected by the doctrine of the virgin birth. He belonged to the family of the carpenter of Nazareth, "where he had been brought up" (4:16), a villager among villagers and a Galilean among Galileans. He was also, along with many hundreds of others, a son of Zerubbabel the prince and a son of David the king, a member of the royal house of the tribe of Judah. At a still deeper level, he was by that very fact a son of Abraham, an Israelite, and the genealogy proclaims his solidarity with all other Jews who have ever lived. And Luke (for this is a characteristic interest of his) takes us even further back. Jesus is not simply one with the whole Jewish race: he is one with the whole *human* race, for he is a son of Adam.

Having shown us, as one aspect of the story of the baptism [the passage just preceding Luke's genealogy], a Jesus who ranges himself alongside sinful men, Luke now underlines this truth by showing us a Jesus who is indeed one with the rest of humanity, who really belonged to the human race, to a particular nation and tribe, and even to an actual human family in an actual Palestinian village.<sup>101</sup>

Yes, "real human lineage" was essential to Luke's purpose. However, rather than start with Mary and trace her line, it seems more appropriate for Luke to start with a real family, the family of *Joseph*, and trace this family all the way back to Adam. However, since Luke is emphasizing the humanity of Jesus, and his identification with the human race, rather than his legal right to a specific throne, Luke traces the *natural* line of Joseph rather than his legal line.

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<sup>101</sup> Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Luke* [Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979], p. 57.