

Unlike Matthew, Luke waits until after Jesus' baptism to list His genealogy. And there are many other differences.

For one, Luke follows the Roman practice of working backwards through the generations. Matthew goes forward in accordance with the Jewish convention. Matthew also starts with Abraham, emphasizing the Lord's Israelite heritage, while Luke goes all the way back to God Himself through Adam.

There is also the obvious fact that the genealogies do not agree. Some differences can be explained by generations being skipped in both books. But the parentage of Joseph presents difficulties. Matthew says he is the son of Jacob; Luke the son of Heli.

One possible explanation is that Joseph's *natural* line of descent is different than his *legal* line of descent. Suppose, for example, the widow of a deceased man marries her husband's brother per the Levirate law and they have a son together. That son would be the *natural* son of the second husband but the *legal* son of the first, able to claim his inheritance.

Why does scripture give us both lines of descent? You may notice that Jesus descends from David through Solomon in Matthew but from David's lesser known son Nathan in Luke. Solomon was David's immediate heir. But Solomon's line passes through

Jechoniah in Matthew 11. And in Jeremiah the line of Jechoniah is cursed and cut off from David's inheritance. Just as is done in royal families today, if one branch is cut off, the line is traced back up the tree until another living branch is found. This would explain the line of Solomon giving way to the line of Nathan. Thus Jesus has both a natural and legal claim on the throne of David.

Why does Luke go back all the way to Adam? Matthew focuses on the Lord's title as Messiah over the nation of Israel. Luke goes farther back, just as the book of Hebrews does in Chapter 7. There Jesus is called a high priest of the order of Melchizedek, an older and more senior priesthood than that of Aaron (to which Jesus did not belong by natural descent).

By tracing Jesus back to Adam, Luke characteristically portrays Him as Savior of all humanity. And there is an implicit contrast between Adam, a son of God by virtue of creation and Jesus, the unique sinless Son of God. He was the only One who could redeem Adam's heirs. *"Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous"* (Romans 5:18-19).

Questions:

1. Why do you suppose Jesus waits until He is over the age of thirty to begin His ministry?
2. What names do you recognize in the genealogy of 3:23-38?

3. What is the significance of the number forty in verse 4:2?
4. How would you categorize each of the temptations that Satan presents to Jesus?
5. How are these temptations seen again in the Lord's life on earth?
6. What can we learn from our Lord's response to temptations?