

The New Adam

Luke 3:23-38

Prayer: Father, you are the creator of our whole race. We have been given your image to carry into this world. We confess that we follow in the footsteps of our first father, Adam, breaking your image within us, marring ourselves with sin. Yet, we thank you that you are committed so much to your glorious image within us, that you have sent your Son to restore that which is broken and to restore us to as image bearers. It is in your Son, Jesus' glorious name that we pray, amen.

Intro: Good morning, Redeemer! My name is Jacob and I'm a deacon serving Redeemer, mostly working with Community Group leaders and occasionally getting to dig into God's Word with you. I'm glad for the honor of opening the Bible with you, because at Redeemer, we place a high value on God's Word. We agree with what the Bible says about itself, that it is "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,¹" and when the Bible says "All Scripture" it includes passages of the Bible like this genealogy that I just read aloud. Even these passages of Scripture, which we are tempted to gloss over and skip have been given to us in order train us and teach us. The genealogies in the Bible serve an important theological purpose and shouldn't be ignored.

Have you ever found yourself sitting around at a family reunion asking about your parents or grandparents as kids? That's one of my favorite things to do. I love to pepper my grandparents with questions about my mom and dad when they were kids. I ask my grandparents about Great-Granddad Elmer Zongker and his time in Anzio or

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), 2 Ti 3:16.

coming off the Sak Reservation in Oklahoma. I want to know about Isaac Cates and his moving to Texas and the aftermath of the Civil War or Great-Great-Uncle Marvin's death in a POW camp in World War II. I wish I could get a definite answer, but the records fall apart in the early 1500s, but I might be related to the guy who engineered the Gunpowder Plot to destroy Parliament.

We have an innate desire to know where we are from. We want to know what brought us to this place and this time. We want to know that for historical figures and for the early church, no figure dominated their thought like Jesus. They wanted to know about the Lord and Savior and his origins and lineage and Luke was happy to help them.

One big issue to note, is that Luke's genealogy does not match Matthew's genealogy for Jesus. When many people look at the Bible, they see that these two don't line up and it becomes enough of an issue in their mind that they worry they can't trust the Bible. I get it, it makes sense, if the Bible has a big enough contradiction to get Jesus's family wrong, that's troubling. But I don't think we need to be bothered by that apparent contradiction. I think there is a good reason why these two genealogies are different.

Many theologians argue that Matthew was tracking, especially from David to Jesus the *legal* inheritance of the throne, the kingship of Israel. The legal inheritance of the throne doesn't necessarily pass through the same people as a Jesus' biological lineage. It can happen that older brothers don't have kids because they die young or their kids die or their wives are barren. What some theologians think happened is that Jesus biological ancestry that Luke tracks occasionally crosses the legal line of

succession that Matthew tracks, especially with a few key figures and finally at Joseph, Jesus' adoptive and legal father.

Another possibility is that because these genealogies are too short to cover the time frame, both Luke and Matthew have pulled out the highlight reel, grabbing a certain number of names, probably to prove a theological point. Luke for instance includes 77 names, which might be a play on the number 7 which symbolizes perfection. Matthew groups his genealogy in 3 groups of 14, a number which people better at math than I am will tell you is 2 times 7. Likely, the truth is a combination of these factors. Neither of these men are giving us inaccurate information. But what data they chose and how they chose it is a little mysterious to us. We can move on, though, with the assumption that Luke is trying to teach us something by the genealogy he gives for Jesus.

Jesus is royal:

One thing Luke needs us to see is that Jesus is descended from royalty. There are two figures in particular that would stand out to a 1st Century Jew - David and Zerubbabel. Now, many of you may have heard of David in the Old Testament of the Bible. We know him from the story of David and Goliath. He was the shepherd boy that killed the giant. He became King over Israel. It was to David that God promised that he would keep David's throne forever. In other words, some legitimate heir of David would be the forever King. 2 Samuel 7 tells us that David desired to build God a great temple for God to make his home on earth but God, through his prophet Nathan, told David that his offspring **shall build a house for my name and I will establish his kingdom forever. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before**

me. Your throne shall be established forever. (1 Samuel 7:13, 16). Now there are some parts of God's promise that David's biological son seems to fulfill. But even he dies eventually. The temple David's son builds is eventually destroyed. David wanted to bless God but God chose to bless David and his family line by promising a future king was coming that would be greater than any other king the nation of Israel could have. That king would fix all things that were broken and he would rule forever.

That brings me to Zerubbabel. If you haven't heard of Zerubbabel, I'm not surprised. There is a reason his is not a household name. Zerubbabel was both a biological descendent of David *and* he was a legitimate heir to Israel's throne. But poor Zerubbabel never got to be king. When Zerubbabel, his kingdom had long been conquered. The Babylonian Empire had destroyed Jerusalem, the capital city. They had destroyed the Temple David's son had built. Zerubbabel's grandfather was the last legitimate king to sit on David's throne. But Zerubbabel still had an important part, if small part in the story. The Babylonian Empire didn't last forever and it too was conquered and the Persian Empire took over its lands, including the former kingdom of Judea. And Zerubbabel's family and people who had lived for decades away from their homeland were allowed to return and to begin to rebuild. Zerubbabel wasn't king, but he was appointed governor of his ancestral homeland and initiated, with the help of men like Ezra and Joshua the high priest, and Haggai the prophet, the rebuilding of God's temple. God told Zerubbabel that he had chosen him as a sign that God was about to begin his restoration of the world, overthrowing false kingdoms. But Zerubbabel didn't get to live to see the temple completed. He was never crowned king. He played an important but small part in history and when Luke makes sure to

include him in Jesus' genealogy along with David, he is reminding us that all the promises that God made to these two heirs to the throne are going to be found in the better king, Jesus who will be crowned ironically with a crown of thorns the king of the Jews at his crucifixion.

Jesus is descended from sinners.

But Luke wanted us to know that Jesus isn't just descended from kings. He is descended from some really questionable figures. Everyone on this list is a sinner! The Bible is just more explicit about some of these folks' baggage. Now, if we wanted really wanted to dig into the well-known figures like David and Abraham that Jesus descends from, we'd see a ton of junk in their lives. But even some of the bit characters have shady pasts. We're going to talk about Ruth who married Boaz on this list for four weeks starting next week, but she came from an entire country of people who worship false gods and have a reputation for some pretty shady things. She's from the wrong side of the tracks and yet, God sovereignly ordains her to be a part of Jesus' family line.

Additionally, Judah is so far back in Jesus' lineage that his whole tribe is named Judah. But Judah did some shady things. Judah worked with his brothers to fake the death of their youngest brother Joseph and sell him into slavery. Not only that, but in Genesis 38, we see that he had a thing for hiring prostitutes and he unknowingly hired his widowed daughter-in-law in an episode worthy of the soap opera. She had twins from their consort and one of those twins is in Jesus' genealogy.

I don't include - and I don't think the Bible includes - these salacious stories for us to be entertained. The Bible isn't worried about Search Engine Optimization or

capturing the day-time TV audience. Neither does the Bible necessarily want us to emulate these characters whether in their idolatry or morality. But the Bible also doesn't want to sweep former pagans and adulterers and prostitutes under the rug. These very real people with very real problems represent us. They represent the porn addicts, abuse victims, liars, thieves, and hypocrites who fill these pews. Who stand in this pulpit.

And it is at the apex of this family line, broken and marred by sin that Jesus stands, descended from people just like us. That means that Jesus hasn't just come to fulfill the promises to Jewish royalty. He has come for people like us. People who have sinned and suffered. When people tell me that they need to get their stuff together to come to church or before they become Christians, I like to point them to Jesus' family line. Even the main characters have issues. Even their issues have issues. Yet God in his gracious providence, God has used people with deep problems to further his story. He has actively redeemed them, bringing them into his story. If he is willing to use this broken, motley crew to bring the Messiah in the world why should we think that we can't be a part of telling the world about the Messiah?

Jesus is descended from Adam

One of Luke's themes is that not only does the Jewish people get to receive this good news, but people from the outside are being included into this motley crew. And one of the ways he shows us this is by reminding us that Jesus isn't just descended from the Jewish heroes, but that Jesus is also descended from Adam, the first man. The man that God created and placed in the Garden of Eden to keep and guard it. The man that God created to steward creation, and act as God's viceroy over

creation. But Adam, the first Man failed in his duties. He chose to disobey God and instead of being content to be the viceroy, he attempted to dethrone the King of the Universe. All the brokenness and misery that fills Jesus' family line flows from the act of rebellion against God that Adam and Eve are guilty of. Every other human being has by nature and choice continued in Adam's rebellion, trying to enthrone themselves over-against God. Why would God allow the Messiah, the savior of the World to come from the first rebel? Because now Jesus stands in the place of Adam as a human being. He has perfectly obeyed God and been obedient where Adam was not. And by extension, human beings from every part of our species, not merely the descendants of Abraham can walk in the new family line that Jesus establishes in the place of Adam's old family line. We can become new men with a new family identity. Paul expands on this concept in his letter to the Romans when he says, **"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. (Romans 5:12-13)"** We are sinful and broken and subject to death, physical and spiritual because of our ancestors. **But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.**

(Romans 5:14-16)” Jesus becoming the New Adam gives us back the life that was lost in the original trespass.

Jesus is the Son of God

In order to be the new Adam, a new type of human being who can identify with us, but still live the perfect life that we have failed to live, Jesus needs to be something that transcends humanity. Jesus, Luke tells us, is ultimately not merely another son of Adam. Jesus is the Son of God. In some ways, Adam was a son of God. God created Adam, fashioning him from the dust of the earth. He had no biological, earthly father in the same way Jesus had no biological father, being instead adopted by Joseph. And Luke puts this genealogy, ending with the phrase, “the son of God” immediately after Jesus’ baptism, where God tells Jesus - really for our sake - that he is God’s beloved Son, with whom God is well pleased. This concept, the son of God, brackets this genealogy because Luke wants to highlight the concept for us. He wants us to compare and contrast Adam’s sonship with God and Jesus Sonship with God. Adam is a finite creature, made by God and given an eternal soul. Jesus is an infinite, eternal being, who is God and has taken on a finite body. Adam’s sonship implies creation - Jesus’ Sonship implies unity with God. Its not an accident that the next story in the book of Luke involves Jesus in the wilderness resisting Satan’s temptation while Adam gave into Satan’s temptation in the Garden. Adam failed God. He rebelled against God. His actions displeased God and tore the human race from its intended place of close communion and fellowship with God. Yet Jesus is found pleasing to God, his Father.

Just like this genealogy bridges the gap between Jesus' baptism and his temptation, Jesus bridges the gap between God and Man, reconciling people from the wrong side of the tracks like Ruth or with a sketchy past like Tamar, fulfilling the promises that God gave to kings like David and his ancestor, and expanding those promises to the whole world, every descendent of Adam whether they are Jew or Gentile, man or woman.

Jesus' family line is filled with human beings like you and me, people who have experienced the effects of sin and rebellion that our first father Adam brought into the picture. People who advanced those effects at our own detriment. And yet Jesus has become the new Adam, winning the battles that we lost as a race and sharing his victory with us.

Redeemer, wherever you come from, whatever you've been through, Jesus has invited us to find a new ancestry, not simply from our first-father Adam, but to become adopted children of God, with a new family tree, a family that helps each other as we seek to become less like Adam and more like Jesus, through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, walking our repentance and discipling one another. May we be a people who remind each other that Jesus has given us a new story, welcoming in folks of regardless of their past or point of origin, and pulling each other closer to our Lord.

Prayer

Discussion Starters

1. Share your story. Where do you come from? What is your relationship to Jesus? What experiences (good or bad) have shaped you?
2. Jesus is the business of making a new humanity. What has he changed in you since you have known him? What is changing now? What still needs to change?
3. How can your new family of Christians help you as Jesus remakes you in his likeness?

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