

## Chapter 8: Harmonizing the Genealogies

One of the most common objections that I've heard to the virgin conception and birth of Yeshua is that the genealogies listed in Matthew and Luke's Gospel contradict one another. Certain people go so far as to teach that if the New Testament writings cannot even get the genealogy of Yeshua correct, then why should we trust anything else the New Testament has to say?

After taking my time to do the research, I believe this objection stems from a cursory review of the genealogies, along with a presupposed bias against the doctrine of the virgin birth. We should rather seek to harmonize the two, to the best of our limited ability, before claiming one or the other (or both) to be spurious. Many have thrown away the entire Bible, because *they feel* that it contradicts itself in various areas. Believe me, if you are looking for contradictions you will find them, *because you want them to be there*. However, if you realize that you are a finite creature, and Yahweh is an infinite Mighty One, you may be a person who although not understanding something at the present time, does not throw out the proverbial *baby with the bathwater*. Such is the case with the genealogies at a hand. Do they contradict? Is there a possibility of harmonization?

Let's look closely at the two and see what results we get. The objections to the genealogies in a nutshell (as I've encountered them) are as follows:

1. The genealogy in Matthew does not completely harmonize with the genealogy given in 1 Chronicles.
2. The genealogies in Matthew and Luke discontinue their similarity with differing sons of David.

Both of these objections are accurate in their bare assertions. It is true that the genealogies of Matthew and 1 Chronicles are not identical in the names they give. It is also true that the genealogies of Matthew and Luke discontinue their similarity with Nathan and Solomon (Mt. 1:6-7; Lk. 3:31). **However, these problems can be harmonized when one understands the Hebraic concept of adoption.** That is, when a child was adopted into a particular Israelite family, the child was considered as one which was born into the house. One example of this can be found in the case of David's wife Michal.

### Michal and Merab

In 1 Samuel 14:49 we read that King Saul had two daughters by the names of Merab (the first-born) and Michal. When we read 1 Samuel 18 through 2 Samuel 3, we find that David married the younger of Saul's daughters, lost her for a time, and then acquired her again. In 2 Samuel 6, the Ark of the Covenant was brought into the city of David, and David danced before Yahweh with all his might in a linen girdle. This was done with much shouting, as well as a mighty blowing of trumpets. At this time Michal, looking out of her window, saw David's actions and despised him within her heart. Her actions resulted in a stern rebuke from David, as well as a punishment from Yahweh which stated this:

Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death. [2 Samuel 6:23]

Michal's punishment was that she would have no children unto the day of her death. However, we find a *seemingly* contradictory passage in 2 Samuel 21:8.

But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; **and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul**, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite:

How is it that Michal had no child unto the day of her death, and yet is said to have five sons? The Hebrew text in 2 Samuel 21:8 definitely reads **Michal** and *not* Merab. We also find that in the Septuagint translation the name Michal is used.

And the king took the two sons of Respha the daughter of Aia, whom she bore to Saul, Hermonoi and Memphibosthe, **and the five sons of Michol daughter of Saul**, whom she bore to Esdriel son of Berzelli the Moulathite. [2 Samuel 21:8 LXX]

The only difference between the Hebrew and Greek of the Scriptures here is that the Hebrew reads, "whom she brought up for Adriel" as opposed to the Greek which reads, "whom she bore to Esdriel." I do believe this is also solved in the answer to the aforementioned "dilemma."

The harmonization is: *Merab (her sister) bore the sons, but they were brought up by Michal*. Do not miss that because of Michal's bringing them up they are said to be the "five sons of Michal." This harmonizes with the verse which states that Michal had no children, meaning that she did not *birth* any children. Adoption is the key here, and adoption, or *the bringing up of a child*, is the key to harmonizing the genealogies of Matthew and Luke.

Rather than me going into the issue in greater detail, I would rather like to quote excerpts from two excellent articles that deal with this very issue.

### **Mike Gascoigne's "Virgin Birth, Jewish Adoption, and Genealogy of Yeshua"**

In an article with the above mentioned title, there is a section entitled The Genealogies of Yeshua in Matthew and Luke. I would now like to quote this sections entirety, giving full credit to the author, Mike Gascoigne.<sup>1</sup>

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#### **The Genealogies of Yeshua in Matthew and Luke**

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke give two different genealogies of Yeshua.

Matthew 1:1-17 gives the genealogy from Abraham to David, and then from David to Yeshua via Solomon.

Luke 3:23-38 gives the genealogy in reverse order, and goes all the way back to Adam. The line of descent from David is through his son Nathan instead of Solomon. There are many more generations in Luke, and the names are different. According to Matthew, the father of Joseph is called Jacob. According to Luke, he is called Heli. It is not certain whether Matthan and Matthat are the same person, listed in Matthew and

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<sup>1</sup> This article can be read in its entirety at [http://annomundi.com/bible/virgin\\_birth.htm](http://annomundi.com/bible/virgin_birth.htm)

Luke respectively as the grandfather of Joseph. The only two names that appear identically in both lists are Zerubbabel and his father Shealtiel.

One possible explanation for the differing genealogies is that Luke's Gospel gives Mary's genealogy, with Joseph's name used as a covering to avoid the suggestion that Yeshua was illegitimate.

However, a much more satisfactory explanation is that one or both lists include adopted children, and there is nothing in either of them to suggest who is an adopted son and who is a genetic son.

To illustrate this, we should look at the two names that appear in both lists, Zerubbabel and Shealtiel. Matthew associates them with the exile into Babylon as follows:

And Josiah fathered Jechoiachin and his brothers, at the carrying away of Babylon. And after the carrying away of Babylon, Jechoiachin fathered Shealtiel; and Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel. (Matt. 1:11-12. Green's Literal Translation)

These are undoubtedly the same Shealtiel and Zerubbabel that appear in Ezra as follows:

Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon ... Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel...appointed the Levites ... to set forward the work of the house of the Lord. (Ezra 3:2-8)

They also appear in Haggai as follows:

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying... (Haggai 1:1)

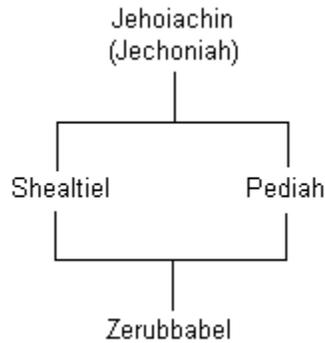
Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people, saying... (Haggai 2:2)

In 1 Chronicles 3 there are a number of fragmented genealogies of the tribe of Judah. Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) is mentioned as the father of Shealtiel, in agreement with Matthew's Gospel, but Zerubbabel is not listed as the son of Shealtiel. Instead he is the son of Shealtiel's brother Pediah.

And the sons of Jeconiah were Assir, and Shealtiel his son, and Malchiram, and Pediah, and Shenazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedebiah. And the sons of Pediah: Zerubbabel and Shimei. ... (1 Chr. 3:17-19. Green's Literal Translation)

Why does this verse appear to be at variance with Ezra, Haggai and Matthew's Gospel, suggesting that Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel's brother Pediah? The only possible answer is that Zerubbabel was the genetic son of one of these two brothers, but was adopted by the other. During the return from the Babylonian captivity, there must have been many orphans who required adoption. It is very likely that either Shealtiel or Pediah might have died and Zerubbabel was adopted by the surviving brother.

The genealogy is as follows:



In true Jewish tradition, as we have already seen, the Bible does not say anything to distinguish between genetic birth and adoption. In this case it is not even possible to tell from the context who is the genetic father of Zerubbabel and who is the adoptive father.

This, of course, provides the answer to all the Jewish anti-missionary groups that try to ridicule Christians with the suggestion that if the New Testament can't even get the genealogy of Yeshua right, how can we believe anything else it says? They should be aware that the same apparent contradictions occur in the Tanakh, for the same reasons. Not only do we have two different fathers of Zerubbabel, but we have also seen how Michal, the daughter of Saul, was childless until the day of her death, yet she bore five sons to Adriel.

It is likely that at the time of Yeshua, many different genealogical tables existed, and none of them made any distinction between genetic birth and adoption. Far from contradicting each other, Matthew and Luke are actually strengthening the point, that Yeshua was descended from David, by giving two different tables that both have the same result.

The book of 1 Chronicles goes on to list the children of Zerubbabel.

... And the sons of Zerubbabel; Meshullam, and Hananiah, and Shelomith their sister: and Hashubah, and Ohel, and Berechiah, and Hasadiah, Jushab-hesed, five. (1 Chr. 3:19-20)

Why does it say "five"? Some translations say "five others". Are these the five who were born after their sister Shelomith, or were they adopted? In true Jewish style it doesn't tell you. This whole chapter is just a fragmented genealogy and there is no reason to believe there were only five. There might have been six or seven. Matthew's Gospel says there was a son of Zerubbabel called Abiud, and Luke says there was a son called Rhesa.

According to Luke's Gospel, the father of Shealtiel was Neri instead of Jehoiachin, giving a different line of descent from David. Again, an adoption might have occurred during the chaos of captivity into Babylon.

As you can see, there are various points that non-virgin birth proponents have not considered in regards to these two respective genealogies. Let's continue by looking at another author's work.

### **John Cordaro's "A Defense of the Virgin Birth Doctrine"**

I have in my possession an article by the name of the above mentioned title. I would now like to quote a section of this article which deals with the subject at hand, giving full credit to the author of this article, John Cordaro.<sup>2</sup>

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The Scriptures have several teachings concerning adoption that would help us to understand this issue as it relates to Joseph and Yahshua. The question is, "Can an adopted son sit on the throne as King?"

Rom 9:4 says "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;"

The Israelites were adopted by Yahweh. That is why Yahweh spoke of them as "my son" (Ex 4:22,23; Deut 14:1,2; Isa 43:6; Jer 31:9; Hos 11:1).

Now, who was the first king over Israel? 1 Sam 12:12 & 8:7 tell us Yahweh was their first King. Yet, they rejected Him as King resulting in Saul reigning over them. David followed Saul as Israel's next king. He, in turn, was succeeded by his son Solomon. Notice what the Word says about David and Solomon;

"And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed him unto Yahweh to be the chief governor, and Zadok to be priest. Then Solomon sat on the throne of Yahweh as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. (1Ch 29:22b, 23)

Solomon was actually seated on the "throne of Yahweh." He was there instead of David. In other words, David also sat on the "throne of Yahweh" as king over Israel at one time. This is said because Yahweh was Israel's first King and it was His throne they ruled from after rejecting Him.

Saul would have been the first fleshly king to sit on Yahweh's throne. All successive kings of Davidic descent clear down to Zedekiah sat on the throne of Yahweh. (They also sat on the throne of David).

The point is this; every king that ever sat on the throne of David, including David himself, was an adopted child of Yahweh. As such, they were entitled to inherit everything from their father (Yahweh). Every king of Davidic descent, even though they were adopted, was permitted to rule.

It doesn't stop there, however. Rev 2:26, 27; 5:9, 10; 20:5, 6 all show that believers in Yahshua (the king who sits on David's throne), will also reign as kings. Whose throne will they sit on?

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." ( Rev 3:21).

Those that overcome will sit on the throne of David with Yahshua and will rule with him over the nations. Who are those overcomers? Are they literal descendants of David through an earthly father? No. They are adopted sons of Yahweh who are entitled to the throne just as though they were literal sons.

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<sup>2</sup> This article can be read in its entirety at [https://everlastinggoodnewsofyahweh.info/Virgin\\_Birth.html](https://everlastinggoodnewsofyahweh.info/Virgin_Birth.html)

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of Yahweh, they are the sons of Yahweh. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of Yahweh: And if children, then heirs; heirs of Yahweh, and joint-heirs with Messiah; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of Yahweh. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of Yahweh. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love Yahweh, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom 8:14-17, 19, 21, 28)

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of Yahweh: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of Yahweh, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 Jn 3:1, 2).

We have a glimpse of what we shall be in Revelation. We shall be kings reigning with Yahshua. We have already seen, in Rev 3:21, that the throne that overcomers will sit upon is Yahshua's throne, the throne of David, the throne of Yahweh. How does one acquire the throne? One way is through inheritance!

"He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are Yahweh's, and he hath set the world upon them." (1 Sam 2:8)

In other words, Yahweh will bring to power whoever He chooses to inherit it. Deut 17:15 says Yahweh is the one who would choose Israel's king. He chose Saul. Then He chose David even though David was not the firstborn of Jesse (1 Sam 16:11-13). Eventually Joash became king even though he was not the firstborn of Ahaziah (2 Kgs 11:12).

Yahweh rules in the kingdom of men, and "He gives the kingdom [and its throne] to whomever He will" (Dan 4:25). His adopted sons, or "overcomers," will inherit all things.

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his Elohim, and he shall be my son." (Rev 21:7)

One of the things they will inherit is the right to sit on the throne of David with Yahshua. The point, however, is that they don't sit on the throne because they are David's literal seed according to the flesh, but because, as adopted sons, they receive it through inheritance.

If overcomers can sit on the throne of David with Yahshua even though they are not the literal seed of David according to the flesh, then Yahshua can as well. He can sit on David's throne because he is Joseph's adopted son. As such, he was adopted into the tribe of Judah through Joseph and therefore entitled to Joseph's inheritance as well as the right to sit on the throne of David, the throne of Yahweh.

Actually, Yahshua has more right to sit on the throne of David than David himself since Yahshua is literally Yahweh's Son whereas David was only Yahweh's adopted son.

Some may continue to argue that an adopted son cannot be considered "the seed of David." Are not adopted sons in Messiah Abraham's seed? (Gal 3:29). If we are Abraham's

seed, then we are also Isaac's seed, Jacob's seed. Yahshua is the seed of David through Joseph's adoption of him (Joseph being the seed of David as well).

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### **Conclusion**

In this section we have seen that just because someone alleges a contradiction in the Bible doesn't make it so. Such is the case with the two genealogies of Messiah in Matthew and Luke. **They harmonize when a person understands the concept of adoption.** In Hebraic culture, an adopted child was considered a complete child and an heir to the inheritance of family heirlooms, whatever they might have been. We are the children of Yahweh, not because Yahweh is our literal father, but because we have been adopted by Yahweh, bought with the precious blood of His Son, Yeshua the Messiah. However, Yeshua of Nazareth is the actual Son of Yahweh, but the *adopted son* of Joseph; because of his adoption, he is considered to be a legitimate, acceptable root and offspring of David (his ancestor) and Joseph (his father). Yeshua has the greatest right of all to sit on David's throne, **because it was actually Yahweh's throne at the first**, and Yeshua is the only begotten Son of Almighty Yahweh.

