

## Appendix 2

### Where Jewish Opposition Breaks Down

Jewish opponents of Christ are mistaken when they deny that the historical Jesus can qualify to be the Messiah of Israel. Bruce James says these are the requirements of the Messiah:

- (1) He must be Jewish (see Deut. 17:15; Num. 24:17)
- (2) He must be descended from Judah (Gen. 49:10) and Solomon (numerous places, but see 1 Chron. 22:9-10)
- (3) With the coming of the Messiah will be the physical ingathering of Judah from the four corners of the earth (Isa. 11:12; 27:12-13)
- (4) Also with the coming of the Messiah will be the reestablishment of the Holy Temple (Mic. 4:1)
- (5) In addition the Messianic age will be one of worldwide peace (Isa. 2:4; 11:6; Mic. 4:3); and, finally,
- (6) In the Messianic age the entire world will believe in G-d (Isa. 11:9; 40:5; Zeph. 3:9).<sup>1</sup>

The New Testament unanimously expects points three to six to be realized at the return of Jesus to inaugurate the Kingdom of God, that prospect being the heart of Jesus' own saving Gospel of the Kingdom (Luke 4:43, etc., as it was also of Paul, Acts 19:8; 28:23, 31).

As to the descent of Jesus from Judah, Jews object that genealogically Jesus is disqualified from being Messiah. The work done by Lord Arthur Hervey, a British clergyman, in his *The Genealogies of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*<sup>2</sup> demonstrates the lineal descent of Jesus from David and a very reasonable way of harmonizing the genealogical tables provided by Matthew and Luke. These two different genealogical records of Jesus point to his descent legally from Solomon (Matt. 1:6-7) and biologically from Nathan (Luke 3:31), another son of David. Examples of a double genealogy for the same person are known elsewhere in Scripture.

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<sup>1</sup>Bruce James (Baruch Gershon), "Why Can't a Jew Believe in Jesus?" [http://judaism.about.com/od/jewishviewofjesus/a/jesus\\_onegod.htm](http://judaism.about.com/od/jewishviewofjesus/a/jesus_onegod.htm)

<sup>2</sup>Macmillan, 1853, rep. Kessinger, 2007. A useful summary of Hervey's work is found in Smith's *Concise Dictionary of the Bible*, John Murray, 1865, under "Genealogy of Jesus Christ," 283-285.

There is a clear reason why Matthew traces the line of Joseph back to Solomon, son of David while Luke traces the lineage of Jesus to another son of David, Nathan. The Old Testament records that the natural descendant of Solomon, King Jehoiachin,<sup>3</sup> was disqualified because of his sin from ever providing a Davidic descendant as heir to the throne: “None of his offspring will prosper; none will sit on the throne of David or rule any more in Judah” (Jer. 22:30).

When the line from Solomon was disqualified in Jehoiachin, a legal substitute was provided from another Davidic line. Shealtiel (Salathiel) and Zerubbabel were adopted from the Nathan line (Luke 3:27) into the Solomon line (Matt. 1:12) to provide the necessary legal heirs. These two as blood relatives of David through Nathan were themselves genuine heirs to the royal throne. Lord Hervey argues that eventually the two lines from Nathan and Solomon met in Matthan (Matt. 1:15; Matthat in Luke 3:24), who is the grandfather of both Joseph and Mary.

The right of Jesus to the throne of David is found in the fact that Jacob, son of Matthan, gave his daughter Mary in marriage to his nephew Joseph. Thus Mary and Joseph were first cousins and both, through the “legal” line back to Solomon and the natural blood line traced to Nathan, members of the royal Davidic family. Jesus thus inherited a legal right to the Messianic throne through Joseph and a right by virtue of lineal descent through Mary, who was like Joseph descended from Nathan, son of David. Matthew records the legal line of Joseph back through Solomon, whose blood line expired in Jehoiachin. Joseph was in fact son-in-law of Jacob, but is listed as his son (Matt. 1:16) because he was a legal heir to the throne.<sup>4</sup>

By his marriage to Mary, whose legal and blood lines are also traced back to David, Joseph provides Jesus with his legal right to the throne, while his blood relationship to David is secured through

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<sup>3</sup>He is called also Jeconiah and Coniah. For the expiry of his line, see Jer. 22:28-30.

<sup>4</sup>Legal sonship is granted to Zerubbabel who is said to be son of Shealtiel. He was in fact the nephew of Shealtiel and his father was Pedaiah, Shealtiel’s brother (1 Chron. 3:16-19). Hervey identifies the Hananiah of 1 Chron. 3:19 with Joanan of Luke 3:27, and Hodaviah of 1 Chron. 3:24 with Luke’s Joda (3:26) and Matthew’s Abihud (1:13). The plausibility of these identifications may be examined by comparing Ezra 3:9, Neh. 11:9, Ezra 2:40 and 1 Chron. 9:7.

Mary. Jesus is indeed heir to the throne of David. He is the one promised in Psalm 132:11: “The Lord has sworn to David a truth from which He will not turn back: ‘Of the fruit of your body I will set one upon the throne.’”

### **Satisfying the Criteria: The Genealogy Problem**

Jewish objections run as follows:

Even if Christians could establish that (a) Jesus existed and (b) Jesus was Jewish, they would have trouble proving that (c) Jesus was descended from Judah and Solomon. Both of the detailed genealogies in Matthew and Luke trace Joseph’s lineage to King David, albeit differently since Matthew 1:16 says that a fellow named Jacob was Joseph’s father, and Luke 3:23 tells us that Joseph was the son of Eli. (It seems that that family had a lot of problems determining fatherhood.) But these genealogies are bogus because Matthew tells us that Joseph wasn’t the father of Jesus, but Mary was still a virgin even after he was conceived through the “Holy Spirit”! Matt. 1:18. Since we know that genealogy runs from the father (Num. 1:18; 2:2), Jesus cannot claim descent from Judah.<sup>5</sup>

These problems are solved on the thesis of Lord Hervey’s scheme outlined above. The biblical text implies that Mary had children with Joseph, after her firstborn Son was produced by miracle (Matt. 1:25; Mark 6:3).

### **No Messianic Era?**

“Even still, Christians still have a problem because they still can’t establish points 3, 4, 5, or 6 above. Saying that those events will happen in a second coming is circular at best and contradicts Revelation 22:20 (‘Yes, I am coming quickly’).”<sup>6</sup>

The promise of an early return of Jesus to set up the Kingdom is common to all our New Testament writings. The prophets of Israel centuries before even the birth of Jesus declared that the “day of the Lord is at hand” (Isa. 13:6).<sup>7</sup> Jesus takes up the same prophetic

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<sup>5</sup>Bruce James (Baruch Gershon), “Why Can’t a Jew Believe in Jesus?” [http://judaism.about.com/od/jewishviewofjesus/a/jesus\\_onegod.htm](http://judaism.about.com/od/jewishviewofjesus/a/jesus_onegod.htm)

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>The idea that Jesus predicted his return within one generation is mistaken. His reference to “this generation [which] will not pass until all these things

warning, using exactly the same language, with his urgent call to repentance “because the Kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15). Since none of us knows how long we may live, the call to repentance in view of the impending Kingdom is always of the greatest urgency. The New Testament speaks also of a long period of time elapsing between the comings of Jesus (Matt. 25:19; Luke 20:9). A universal presentation of the Gospel of the Kingdom is foreseen as a necessary warning before Jesus comes back. “This Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world and *then* the end will come” (Matt. 24:14).

Christianity in its biblical form is in no sense inconsistent or contradictory. It presents its Savior as the legal descendant of David through Nathan and Solomon. The end of the line in Matthew is very probably that of Mary whose husband Joseph appears as the legal male descendant. Luke records the ancestors of Joseph, who was “as was supposed” by the public, the father of Jesus (Luke 3:23), from Nathan, son of David (Luke 3:31).

The important point to note in Hervey’s work is that Shealtiel and Zerubbabel appear in both lists. This is because the line from Solomon failed in Jehoiachin. He was barred from ever having his descendants as lawful heirs to the Davidic throne. Shealtiel son of Neri (Luke 3:27) was thus moved from the Nathan line to provide a “legal” rather than biological descendant for the Solomon line. It remains entirely plausible that Mary and Joseph were cousins sharing a common grandfather in Matthat (Matthan).<sup>8</sup> Jesus is then related by blood to David through Mary, who is a descendant of David via Nathan. Jacob (Matt. 1:16) would then be the father-in-law of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and the father of Mary.

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have happened” (Mark 13:30) points to the evil society which will prevail right up to his return. *Genea* has a broader meaning than a period of time limited to 70 years (see for example Luke 16:8, “kind”; cf. Prov. 30:11-14; Ps. 24:6). In Acts 1:7, Jesus could well have said, “I told you I am coming back within a few years,” if he had indeed ever said such a thing. Rather he explained that no one knows when the Second Coming will occur (Mark 13:32). “*This* generation” certainly did not point to a future limited period, now nearly two thousand years removed from Jesus.

<sup>8</sup>Smith’s *Concise Dictionary of the Bible* notes that Matthan, grandfather of Joseph, is probably identical with Matthat (285, 527).

Jesus fits the identity of the promised son of David. His Father is God and he is the biological son of David (Rom. 1:3). At his first coming he proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom and his own Messiahship amidst a turmoil of opposition from established religion. He promised to return to execute that part of the divine program for which he was destined — to rule the world successfully from the restored throne of his father David in the restored Eden of the Kingdom of God (cf. Acts 1:6).<sup>9</sup> The New Testament begins by defining Jesus as the son of David (Matt. 1:1) and ends by praying for the return of that same “descendant of David, the bright morning star” (Rev. 22:16). Belief in Jesus as the Son of God is equivalent to belief in him as the supernaturally begotten descendant of David.

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<sup>9</sup>For a full account of the Messianic program, see Anthony Buzzard, *Our Fathers Who Aren't in Heaven*, Restoration Fellowship, 1995, and *The Coming Kingdom of the Messiah: A Solution to the Riddle of the New Testament*, Restoration Fellowship, 2002.