

In the Fulness of Time

A STUDY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS *BEFORE* HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY
Palmetto Baptist Church, Powdersville SC – November 2019

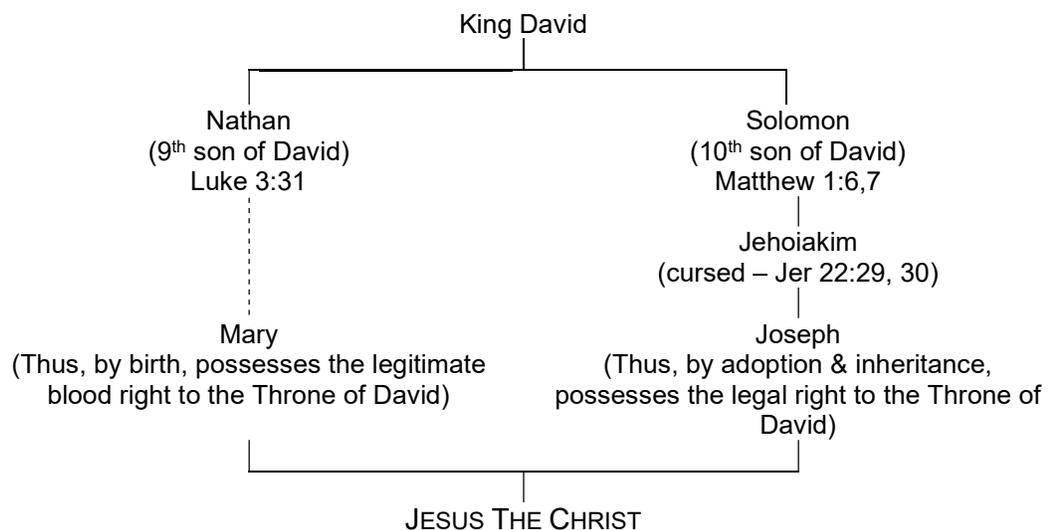
Focus #1: THE GENEALOGIES of Yeshua ben Joseph “...THE SON OF DAVID, THE SON OF ABRAHAM”

INTRODUCTION:

Genealogies may seem pedantic and irrelevant to the modern Western mind, but for many reasons they played a very important role in ancient Israel. Most important was the place of the genealogy of Jesus with reference to His Messianic claims; thus the genealogies recorded in Mt 1:1-17 & Luke 3:23-28. That significance was largely a factor of two important covenants made by Yahweh in the Old Testament: first, that which He cut with Abram and his descendants (Gen 12:1-3), and second that which He made with King David in response to that monarch's determination to build a “house for Yahweh” (2 Sam 7; Ps 89).

²⁰I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him...²⁸My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. ²⁹His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven

- 1a. The PURPOSE of these genealogies--to connect Jesus by LEGAL and PHYSICAL descent with three ideas of Old Testament promise, and thus validate His claim to be the promised Messiah.
 - 1.) Messiah must be the seed of WOMAN – Genesis 3:15
 - 2.) Messiah must be the seed of ABRAHAM – Genesis 12:1-3
 - 3.) Messiah must be the seed of DAVID – 2 Samuel 17 (Psalm 89)
- 2a. The DISTINCTION between the two genealogies
 - 1b. MATTHEW'S – the **legal** lineage of Jesus, establishing His *right* to the throne of David
 - 1c. Jesus was NOT the physical son of Joseph, but when Joseph married Mary, Jesus became the legal son of Joseph, and thus the possessor of all that belonged to Joseph's offspring
 - 2c. Concerning the word "begat" in this genealogy-
 - 2b. LUKE'S – the **physical** lineage of Jesus, establishing His *relationship* to the house of David
Note: concerning Lk 3:23--is this the line of Joseph or of Mary?
- 3a. Taken together, these genealogies prove Jesus' right to be the Messiah *on two counts*



Note: these genealogies are interesting validation of the historical veracity of the Gospels.

Focus #2: THE NATIVITY OF JESUS – Rethought in Three Particulars

...THERE WAS NO BEAUTY THAT WE SHOULD DESIRE HIM!”

Ia. Concerning the relationship of Joseph and Mary at the time of the angelic announcement
[In short, Joseph and Mary were husband and wife!]

1b. Concerning the distinctives of marriage in (first century) Jewish culture

Note: concerning the translation of the term *μνηστεύω* (*mnesteuo*, betrothed) in various translations –

2b. The two stages of a Jewish marriage

1) The betrothal –

2) The wedding march and wedding feast –

3b. How do these cultural realities impact our understanding of the nativity narrative?

Cf. Mt 2:18 - *After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child...*

2a. Concerning the trip made by Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, where the Child was born
[In short, Joseph and Mary had left Nazareth and planned to re-locate in Bethlehem.]

1b. Re: the protocols involved when the Caesar decreed that the entire empire must register for taxation –

The point: Mary & Joseph did not make a quick trip to Bethlehem, arriving on the day when Joseph was to register – which just happened to be the day on which the baby Jesus was ready to be born.

2b. A Background consideration: why was the family of Joseph of Bethlehem living in Nazareth?

3b. Biblical evidence that Joseph had decided to leave Nazareth permanently (i.e., this was not a quick trip to Bethlehem for the registration, with the intent to return to Nazareth as soon as that task was completed)

1) Luke 2:4-5 – When Joseph travels to Bethlehem to be registered, he takes with him his pregnant wife

2) Luke 2:6 – Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem some days (weeks?) before the baby was born

3) Matthew 2:21-23 – Joseph intended to settle in Judea (almost certainly Bethlehem) after returning from Egypt

Given this, what was the likely relationship b/w the registration & the trip to Bethlehem (Lk 2:1-5)?

4b. ① Why had Joseph & Mary decided to relocate from Nazareth to Judea/Bethlehem?

② Why, then, did they finally decide to return to Nazareth (Mt 2:22, 23)?

3a. Concerning the place where Joseph and Mary were staying when the Child was born
[In short, the couple had not been unable to find a room in a public hostelry (i.e., an inn of some sort); they had been refused a place of honor in a relative's home]

1b. The one indication as to the place: Lk 2:7 (“manger...no room for them in the inn”)

2b. Concerning the term *κατάλυμα* (*kataluma*, often translated “inn”) –

1c. The literal meaning –

Cf. the only other uses in NT: Mk 14:14, Lk 22:12

2c. The most likely significance of the term as used in Lk 2:7 –

3c. In this connection, concerning the concept of “hospitality” in 1st century Judaism –

4c. Finally, what does this suggest concerning the place where Jesus was born?

Conclusion: There was more of shame & ignominy at the birth of the Messiah than is usually appreciated. In light of this, think again through passages such as Isa 53:1-3; Phil 2:5-11; 2 Cor 8:9.

Focus #3: THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS (Yeshua ben Yosef – the Kid Down the Street)
Pondering the Life of Young Jesus as Reflected in the Scriptures
BEFORE THERE WAS A GOD-MAN, THERE WAS A GOD-BOY!

Focus 3 - Topic #1: JESUS AND HIS VILLAGE

Considering the way young Jesus was understood by those who knew Him best

Introductory Thought: There is much misinformation and confusion about Jesus' life as a youth. The Bible has only one story of His life between His infancy and His adult ministry (Lk 2 – at the temple at age 12), but there is a passage which provides very helpful insight into that era of His life.

I. The Narrative: Jesus returns to His hometown, but now as Messiah (Lk 4:16-31)

1a. The popular but erroneous (if not blasphemous) idea of Jesus' youth: He was a "Wonderboy." [See box.]

2a. The setting of the narrative in Luke 4: Jesus lived with His family in the village of Nazareth for virtually all of His life. But shortly after His baptism, Jesus had moved with His family to Capernaum. Now, early in the 18-month Galilean ministry, He visits the town where He had lived all those years and participates in a synagogue service.

3a. The drama that unfolded in the synagogue that day teaches us something very important about the life lived by Jesus as a child, as a youth, and as a young man.

- 1) Jesus returns to the village "where He had been brought up, visits the synagogue "where it was His custom to go" (4:16)
- 2) Jesus is invited to participate in the synagogue service, is handed the Isaiah scroll, and He reads from (our) Isa 61 – a remarkably clear Messianic passage (4:17-19)
- 3) Jesus sits; the audience waits for His "preaching" on the passage; Jesus makes a stunning claim concerning Himself (4:20-21)
- 4) The way in which the crowd in the synagogue – the people who knew Jesus better than any other group on earth – responded to Jesus is hugely instructive as to the life lived by Jesus during all those years in Nazareth (4:22)
- 5) Jesus challenges the willingness of His listeners to follow Him (4:23-30)

The spurious *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* (C2, Gnostic) shows 5-year old Jesus on a Sabbath day, playing by a stream making pools, and purifying the waters in them with a word. Jesus takes clay, fashions 12 sparrows; a neighbor complains to Joseph that the child is violating the Sabbath; Joseph chastises his son, but Jesus claps his hands, cries out 'be gone' and the clay sparrows come to life and fly away. [This story also appears in the Koran.] A child takes a stick and destroys Jesus' pools of water; Jesus tells the child that he will wither away, and immediately it happens. Another child bumps into Jesus; Jesus tells him that he will go no further, and immediately, the child drops dead. The neighbors are horrified, and they warn Joseph that he cannot live in the village unless Jesus learns to bless and not to curse. Joseph privately tells Jesus to stop, but Jesus declares that his accusers will be punished, and immediately they go blind. Joseph tries physical punishment, yanking Jesus' ear, to no avail. As Jesus grows from age five to age eight, his behavior changes; he is shown to heal many people. He begins to bless and not to curse, just as Joseph and the villagers hoped. The villagers go from fear of him to worship. Over the following years, more healing miracles follow. A child falls from a roof and dies, and Jesus calls him back to life. Jesus next heals a young man's foot, which had been struck with an axe. Jesus also heals his brother James from a snake bite by breathing on the bite. Jesus touches an infant which had sickened and died, restoring it to life.

II. The unmistakable conclusion: the one word which must be written over Jesus' life as an infant, a child, a youth, and a young man is: _____



1. Jesus was fully God and fully man, but His human nature was "unfallen" – that is, Jesus was not corrupted or crippled by the sin nature (Heb 4:12). Indeed, in His humanity Jesus was what Adam had been *before he fell by disobedience*. What practical differences would that have made in the way Jesus grew and the way He interacted with all those about Him?

2. Though Jesus was like other humans in every *essential* (ontological) way, He was distinct from all other humans in many very real ways. What might those practical differences have been, and might Jesus have noticed them? (Asked another way, how might we conjecture that the life of an *unfallen* human being is *different* than that of fallen human beings?
3. Jewish boys were trained in the local synagogue from the time they learned to read (taught by their mother) until about 12 years of age. Jesus would have gone to synagogue school (*Beth Midrash* – house of learning) for those years. What would it have been like to be a *classmate* of Yeshua ben Yosef?

Focus 3 - Topic #2: JESUS AND HIS PARENTS

Pondering the account of Jesus learning a lesson as a very young adult

Introductory Thought: In the Gospels, the one incident recorded of the young life of Jesus is the time He stayed behind at the Temple at the Passover Feast which occurred after He had turned 12 years old. There is much instruction in that narrative, both as to the person of Jesus and the passions of His life.

I. The Narrative: The end of Jesus' childhood and a lesson learned at the Temple in Jerusalem (Lk 2:41-52)

1a. The significance of this event in the life of Jesus

- 1b. At about the age of 12 a Jewish boy becomes a "son of the law," and is admitted to the privileges of adulthood in the religion and society of Israel

Note re: the concept of "son" in the culture of Judaism:

2b. One very important privilege which befell young Jesus at this time:

2a. Jesus' interview with the Rabbis and the return of His parents

- 1b. Jesus lingers in the city, His parents return to find Him; meanwhile, Jesus communes with the rabbis (Lk 2:40-47)
- 2b. Mary rebukes her child; Jesus insists He must be "about that which is my Father's" (Lk 2:48-50)

3b. Jesus returns with His parents to Nazareth, and there lives in quiet seclusion and subjection for 18 yrs.



II. The Application:

1a. An question: Who learned a lesson as a result of this conversation, and what was the lesson learned?

A (perhaps cryptically) related two-fold question: If Jesus had lived in our day, could He ride a two-wheeler the first time He tried? If He could not, would it be wicked for Him to fall and skin His knee?

2a. The lesson: Jesus knows what it is to struggle with the challenges and transitions of growing from childhood to adulthood.



In this drama, young Jesus sets a pattern which a young person today would be wise to emulate.

1. What is it in this narrative which shows that young Jesus was gripped by a *desire* for the Word of His Heavenly Father?
2. What shows that young Jesus was gripped by a *dedication* to the Work of His Heavenly Father?
3. What shows that young Jesus was gripped by a *devotion* to the Will of His Heavenly Father?

An Addendum: the years in Nazareth until Jesus went to be baptized by John

Evidently Jesus' adopted father, Joseph, passed away during these years; at that time, Jesus would have adopted the role of the elder brother (i.e., would have assumed responsibility for the family).

1. The evidence suggesting that Joseph had died:
2. The implications –
First, with reference to the fact that Jesus never married –
Second, with reference to the abiding responsibility of Jesus as the head of His home –

Throughout these years, Jesus is patiently waiting for the time when the Father would direct Him to commence the ministry for which He knew the Father had sent Him forth.

Focus #4: JESUS AND HIS SIBLINGS

Sorting out the life-long relationship of Jesus and His immediate family

Introductory Thought: Mary supernaturally conceived and then bore Jesus while she was yet a virgin. But then she and Joseph had a number of children – evidently 4 sons (James, Joseph, Simon & Judas) and at least two daughters (Mt 13:55). Thus Jesus grew up as the eldest of at least 7 children (His half-siblings). Much can be learned from the biblical indications concerning Jesus' relationship to His physical family.

Note:

A necessary inference: sometime after the experience at the temple in Lk 2 (the last time Joseph, the adopted father of Jesus, appears in the record) and the beginning of Jesus' adult ministry, Joseph passed away. When that happened, Jesus, the eldest brother, would have stepped into the leadership of the family, providing for them and training His younger brothers. Every indication of the Gospels is that Jesus did exactly that.

There are several times in the Gospel account when Jesus' family – His mother and/or His siblings – enters the record of Jesus' ministry. We will briefly consider those pericopes.

I. The moment of *leave-taking from His mother* at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1-5)

- 1a. Understand the background to this event. This is the first time Jesus had seen His mother since several weeks earlier when He had left Nazareth to be baptized by John.
- 2a. There are two rather strange elements to the dialogue between Mary and Jesus
 1. The term of address, *Woman*, seems harsh
 2. Jesus' rebuke of Mary, *What have I to do with thee?* seems very harsh
- 3a. The point: Jesus is here lovingly but firmly informing His mother that the relationship which they had known for so many years, a relationship in which He submitted to her as His mother, and in which He lived out His daily life primarily to care for her and the family, *was now to change dramatically*. Indeed, the moment which Mary had to have known was coming, the moment which perhaps she longed to see, had now come. Her son, the miraculously conceived child who had lived in her home for more than three decades, was now to begin that ministry in which He would offer Himself to His own as Messiah and God.

II. Jn 2:12; Mt 4:13 – Jesus moves His family from Nazareth to Capernaum

- 1a. Two records: John 2:12; Matthew 4:13
- 2a. The strategic reasons for this (dramatic) move:
 - 1) A geographical reason: to facilitate an itinerant ministry across the land of Galilee
 - 2) An apologetic reason: to “salt & pepper” the Roman world with eye-witness testimony to the miracle working power of the Nazarene
- 3b. The point for our purposes: Jesus *took His family with Him*.

III. Jesus' family tries to seize Him, “thinking Him to be mad”

- 1a. The account: Mark 3:20-21, 31-35
- 2a. Notice that this account is part of the “long day” in Jesus' life. It occurred shortly after Jesus had selected twelve of His followers to be apostles (Mk 3:13-19). In fact, in Mark this narrative is actually sandwiched around the record of the blasphemous accusation against Jesus (Mk 3:22-30).

IMPORTANT: This day included the first of two grand moments of rejection on the part of the Jewish generation to which Jesus had come. It must have been a time of crushing heartache & disappointment.
- 3a. The poignancy and pain of Mk 3:31-35 will be more carefully appreciated if that passage is considered against the backdrop of 3:20 & 31.
- 4a. The point: in making this choice, Jesus is living out a very important and specific Old Testament requirement (cf. Ex 32:26; Dt 33:8-11).

IV. Later, just before His death, *Jesus' brothers are still unbelieving and bitter*

- 1a. The account: John 7:1-9 (esp. 7:5!)
- 2a. The time of this event: at the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2), in October, about six months before Jesus would die (at Passover, in early April)
- 3a. Notice concerning this record –
 - 1) - the cynicism in the taunt of Jesus by His brothers (7:3, 4)
 - 2) - the explicit testimony of John the apostle that “not even His brothers were believing in Him” (7:5)
 - 3) - the disappointment, hurt and distrust in Jesus’ response to His brothers (7:6-8, cp 7:10)
- 4a. The point: consider the pathos in this narrative, especially the note of apparent failure and disappointment intended in setting 7:1 off against 7:10.

V. From the cross, *Jesus is careful to provide for the welfare of His mother* (John 19:25-27)

- 1a. Why did Jesus provide another home in which His mother would be cared for after His death?

Calvin on John 19:25 – 27

“I say nothing about the severe tortures of his body; I say nothing about the reproaches which he suffered; but, though horrible blasphemies against God filled his mind with inconceivable grief, and though he sustained a dreadful contest with eternal death and with the devil, still, none of these things prevent him from being anxious about his mother.”

Robertson on John 19:26

“If John were his cousin, that helps explain why Jesus turns the care of his mother over to him. But the brothers of Jesus are not present and disbelieved his claims. John is the only one of the apostles with courage enough to take his stand with the women by the Cross.”

- 2a. Notice that in this moment, perhaps as much as any other, Jesus was powerfully touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

J. C. Ryle on John 19:25-27

“We are told that even in the dreadful agonies of body and mind which our Lord endured, He did not forget her of whom He was born. He mercifully remembered her desolate condition, and the crushing effect of the sorrowful sight before her. He knew that, holy as she was, she was only a woman, and that, as a woman, she must deeply feel the death of such a Son. He therefore commended her to the protection of His best-loved and best-loving disciple, in brief and touching words--“Woman,” He said, “behold your son! Then He said to the disciple, Behold your mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.”

Let us take comfort in the thought that we have in Jesus a Savior of matchless tenderness, matchless sympathy, matchless concern for the condition of His believing people. Let us never forget His words, “Whoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.” (Mark 3:35.) The heart that even on the cross felt for Mary, is a heart that never changes. Jesus never forgets any who love Him, and even in their worst estate remembers their need. No wonder that Peter says, “Casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you.” (1 Pet. 5:7.)”

III. The (delightful) end of the story:

- 1a. The biblical record: 1 Cor 15:7 / Ac 1:14 / Epistles of James & Jude –
- 2a. The Point: Jesus’ family finally became believers in the Messianic claims of their brother!



1. Had you been a younger sibling of Yeshua ben Yosef, do you think you would have been quicker to believe your older brother’s claims than were His brothers in the Gospels? Why do you answer as you do?

2. Why is it important to recognize that Jesus’ life of ministry was intimately and constantly intertwined with His responsibilities to His family?
3. How does Jesus’ relationship with His family instruct you as to how you ought to relate to your family?