

'THE REST OF THE STORY'
(Rightly Dividing the Word of God about Spiritual Heritage)
Applying the Life of Christ to Our Lives Today

The Family Tree of Faith

People who know their *family tree* often are inspired by any heroic characters in their ancestry. If you have somebody special in your genealogy, it may even cause you to raise your aspirations on who you hope to become or what you should do with your life. Others sadly discover some broken branches or twisted limbs in their heritage that makes them become cautious about not ending up like that defective appendage of the family tree.

The genealogies of Jesus in **Matthew 1** and **Luke 3** are two different biblical views of the spiritual *family tree of faith* – Matthew shows royal lineage of Jesus back through David to Abraham, proving He has legal rights to the throne of the kingdom of God. Luke shows Christ's divine family lineage back to Adam connecting Jesus to Almighty God. Together, this *high definition* view of the *family tree* of Jesus confirms that He is the God-Man Savior of everyone 'grafted' into the 'family tree of faith' through trust in Him as Lord and Savior.

The *family tree of faith* consists of a *root system* of Old Testament saints who prophesied and looked forward to Messiah the Savior. Thus, the incarnate first coming of Jesus to earth is like the *tree trunk* emerging from the OT *root system* of the faithful remnant prior to the cross. The sacrificial death of Christ on the cross is like a *stump* where the family tree was *cut off* and the resurrection-like new life sprouting from the stump, resuming growth of the *family tree of faith*. These New Testament times of the Church Age are like the branches of the *tree of life* spreading throughout this age with spiritual fruit and eternal life for all who '*taste and see that the Lord is good*'.

We have a written record of our spiritual ancestors in the Old Testament. We have a written gospel record of the *spiritual tree trunk* of the life of Christ - His being cut off at the cross and His re-emergence with new life by resurrection. **Acts** and the New Testament Epistles recorded the new *family tree branches* of the Church Age continuing to grow and spread until He returns. It's all connected – the roots, the tree, the branches – if we are saved, we are connected by faith into a spiritual *family tree* we should be very proud of and inspired by. The OT *root system* saints send up to us NT *branches* inspiration and courage through their testimonies found in the Bible. By the gospel accounts of Christ, we New Testament saints are connected to them through Him.

Malachi 3:16-18 implies that there may well be an on-going record about this Church Age *branch* of the *family tree of faith* that will be very inspiring reading for those to be born on earth in the 1,000 year Millennial Kingdom of God. What we are doing now for the Lord with our lives during our time on earth will probably be like a 'Newer Testament' to share our part of the family tree with those born in the Millennium. Our stories may very well may be required reading by all born in the Kingdom of God on earth.

- If so, what affect do you hope your name will cause in the future people who see your name on the family tree?
- Will your name and story inspire your ancestors in this life and the one to come to trust and follow Jesus and to live for Him?

It's up to you right now how it will read. You are writing it daily by the way you think and act and live.

"... since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us and let us run the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith..."
Hebrews 12:1-3

'The Root System of the Family Tree' (*Luke's Genealogy of Christ Back to Adam & God*)

Luke 3:23-38

Contrasts between Matthew 1 and Luke 3 lineage lists of the Lord Jesus:

- 1) Matthew begins with Abraham and progresses forward through sons to Jesus; Luke begins with Joseph's father-in-law Heli and goes back through fathers to Adam;
- 2) Matthew includes 5 women (*Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba (implied) and Mary*), some of whom were non-Jews; Luke's list has no women named;
- 3) The kingly lineage from David in Matthew comes through his son Solomon, but the Davidic lineage in Luke comes through another son, Nathan (*to bypass the royal 'cut off' at Jeconiah / Matthew 1:12*);
- 4) Matthew's list of 42 names are in 3 historical groupings of 14 generations each, while Luke's list is 77 names (*including Jesus and God*) without generational groupings – Why? (*tip = audiences*)

Our 'Root System' Ancestors in Christ

(The Old Testament Origins of Faith)

(3:24-27) (*Heli to Rhesa*) Family heads unmentioned elsewhere in the Bible (*Names w/o stories*)

(3:27) (*Zerubbabel & Shealtiel*) Only names also in *Matthew*: connects Jesus to David (**Haggai 2:24**)

(3:28-31) (*Shealtiel to David*) Post-captivity era back to the kings of Israel era (*Names without stories*)

(3:32-34) (*David to Abraham*) Period of kings back to the post-flood era (*Patriarchs of Israel*)

(3:34-38) (*Noah to Adam*) Period of 'the great flood' back to creation (*Pre-flood remnant*)

- Whose names and stories in this lineage inspire you spiritually? Why? How?
- How do the names without stories affect you and your 'walk with the Lord'?
- If the *book of remembrance* is an accounting of Church Age believers, what do you hope will be recorded about you and your life? (*Malachi 3:16-18*)
- If this *book of remembrance* ends up being *required reading* for all who are born in the coming Millennium, how do you hope your story will affect them?

Our Church Age 'Branch System' in Christ

(Our 'Future Testament' Stories of Faith)

Below are New Testament references about how God is taking note of how Christians are living their lives in the world. How we live and what we are doing now will bring His commendation and reward someday (**1 Corinthians 3:11-15, Hebrews 6:9-12**) or loss if we represented Him poorly (**2 Corinthians 5:10**)

- Talk about the parable Jesus told to the disciples about how our testimonies and ministries done in this life have everything to do with Millennial Kingdom ministries and influence we will have for Christ during His thousand-year reign on earth.

Read and discuss Luke 19:11-27

Read and discuss Hebrews 12:1-3

- *Who are the 'cloud of witnesses' being influenced or who will be influenced by the story of your life? (friends, relatives, future children, grandchildren, etc.)*
- *What do you hope they think and say about you? Will you be remembered as heroic?*
- *Will your branch of the family tree of faith be spiritually bountiful and fruitful? It's up to you!*