

Monday, May 26, 1997

Subject: Genealogy of Jesus

Dear Dr. Ryrie: Why is the genealogy of Jesus different in the books of Matthew and Luke? My footnotes say that one traces Joseph's line and the other Mary's. I'm looking for a more detailed explanation. Can you help me? -- Stephen F.

Dear Stephen: There does not seem to be any question that Matthew's genealogy of our Lord is traced through Joseph. The text says so (Matt. 1:16). This established our Lord's legal right to the throne of David. Notice, however, that He was born only of Mary and not of Joseph and Mary, for the "by whom" in 1:16 is a feminine singular pronoun, which cannot include Joseph. Most think that Luke's genealogy is Mary's, but some consider it to be Joseph's. To be Joseph's, we would have to assume that Matthan (Matt. 1:15) and Matthat (Luke 3:24) were the same person and that Jacob (Matt. 1:16) and Eli (Luke 3:23) were brothers, one being Joseph's father and the other his uncle. Any detailed commentary on Matthew and/or Luke should discuss this problem.

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