

Reader 2
Jesus Across the Gospels
Winter 2021

Generation of Jesus Christ According to Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Written to Jewish Christians, Matthew identified Jesus as Israel's Messiah and King. First, by way of ancestry and fulfillment of Scripture, Matthew linked Jesus with two great figures from Israel's history: King David and Abraham. These men represented the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants, two major from the Old Testament. Along with making this genealogical connection, Matthew further strengthened his premise by adding the account of Jesus' virgin conception and birth. This miraculous element served to underscore his point). Jesus' record of descent demonstrates a strong legal and scriptural support base, which opened new levels of understanding to His messianic claims. Jews kept legal records of family descent for religious, political, and inheritance purposes. Matthew legally traced Christ's descent back to both Abraham and David. His record matches legal documents and scriptural records from the prophets. Matthew recorded significant portions of the Lord's ancestral descent as Scripture to affirm His identity basing it on the inspired writings authored by the prophets. The early church understood this and used it as a witnessing tool to both Jews and Gentiles.

Genealogical Periods

The Holy Spirit opened Matthew's understanding guiding him to record Christ's genealogy as Scripture. However, Scripture only records significant portions of it. For example, Matthew listed fourteen names to identify each generation spanning the Jews return from captivity in Babylon. Further, Matthew connects the vast gap between Zerubbabel and Jacob, the father of Joseph. This sufficiently linked Jesus of Nazareth with the Old Testament. Luke, author of the third Gospel, used Mary's genealogy to trace Christ's lineage back to David to Adam. Luke identified Jesus as Savior of the human race. Although Luke mentioned David in his ancestry account, Christ's kingship was not the focus. It was redemption. Matthew used portions of Scripture along with historical records to establish Jesus of Nazareth's royal lineage. Matthew divided his genealogy into three periods of fourteen generations each, listing Hebrew names in their equivalent form of Greek:

1. The first period called the period of Patriarchs, covered Abraham to David;
2. The second period called the period of the Kings, dealt with David until the last king, going into exile in Babylon.
3. The last period called the Post Exile, ranged from Babylon until the birth of Christ. It encompasses the full, 600-year period up to Christ's birth, but does not mention everyone in this line.

Matthew's third period covered the 400 years between the testaments leading up to Jesus' birth. The historical events of this period saw the rise of two world empires, various religious groups within Judaism, translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, and a rebuilt Jewish temple. These and other events set the stage for Messiah's coming. Jesus lived, ministered, and suffered crucifixion.

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ: 42 Generations With Three Periods Equal to 14 Generations Each (Matt 1:17)		
First Period	Second Period	Third Period
Patriarchs	Kings	Post Exile
RANGE	RANGE	RANGE
Birth of Abraham (the first Jew) to David, the King of Israel.	David the King to Jechoniah, the last King (during Israel's Exile into Babylon)	Jechoniah to Christ. This period includes the 400 "silent" years between the testaments

Genealogy of Jesus Christ (Figure 1.1)

The Expression, *Begat*

Once Matthew arrived at “Jacob who begat Joseph” (Matt 1:16), he does not use this expression about Jesus. Instead, Matthew writes “Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ” (v. 16). Jesus has no biological father in the natural sense of the term. To prove the virgin birth, Matthew shows a human did not beget Jesus. The Holy Ghost conceived Jesus in Mary’s womb, making Jesus the Son of God (v. 18), and then fulfilled the prophecy Christ would be born of a virgin (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:21-23). The expression *begat* commonly appears in Matthew’s genealogy. *Begat*, [Greek: γεννάω; *gennaō*] speaks of the procreation of offspring. The names in Matthew’s genealogy show descendants by procreation. Luke does not use this expression. Instead, Luke features the expression the son of [Greek: *huios*, υἱός’], meaning child by procreation; however, this meaning permits a wider range of kinship. One does not have to be a son by direct generation. The Jews considered Jesus as Joseph’s actual son (Luke 3:23). Luke’s genealogy traces Jesus’ lineage back to David through Nathan, the son of Bathsheba, called Bathshua (1 Chron. 3:1, 5). Jesus had a biological link to King David through His mother and a legal link through Joseph.

Blood of Jesus Shed For Everyone

In addition to Mary, Matthew mentions four other women in his genealogy: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba (whose name intentionally the genealogy did not give). Ancient Hebrew genealogists generally did not list a woman in a man’s record of lineage; rather, they established family lineage through the father. Tamar came from Gentile lineage. She deceitfully had sexual relations with her father-in-law Judah, son of Jacob. Rahab was a Gentile prostitute from Jericho; Ruth was an idolater from the country of Moab. Moreover, Bathsheba descended from Gilonite of Jewish lineage (2 Sam 11:2-4; 23:34). Bathsheba committed adultery with King David. These four women had questionable lifestyles Scripture does record, and yet Scripture lists their names in the

Lord's genealogy. One sees the story of God's grace with each woman's genealogical entry. The absence of Bathsheba's name reflects the sin associated with her, and the gracious act of God in forgiving and recording her in the genealogy of the king of Israel. Matthew, under divine guidance, identifies these women with the great men of Israel's history. Their presence testifies to God's miraculous use of a woman to produce the virgin birth, and the new status of honor He would grant to both males and females under the New Covenant, thus illustrating God's plan of redemption by grace through faith. God honors everyone in Christ as a son. Matthew not only recorded the names and sinful acts of these four women, but he also recognized the males: Judah, Tamar's partner; Manasseh, Israel's most wicked king; David, the first king (*+mentioned*) and Jechonias, the last are among the names listed. With the exception of Jechonias, the first three repented and experienced God's mercy over their lives. Their failures demonstrate a testimony to the faithfulness and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Additionally, another great truth emerges from this fact. Three of the four women had Gentile ethnicity. Bathsheba came from Jewish descent. The inclusion of Jews and Gentiles in the messianic lineage reveals the great truth of opening full access to salvation for all nations. The Apostle Paul taught the church at Ephesus (predominately Gentile) that the whole family in heaven and earth bears the calling and name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 3:14-15). Acts 2 says God poured out the Holy Ghost for all flesh (nations and races). God's grace does not exclude race or sex, rather He brings "many sons to glory" (Heb 2:10). Humankind's past sinfulness cannot place a person beyond God's reach. Jesus Christ shed His blood for everyone. Race and immoral lifestyles have no bearing because of the New Covenant for Jesus Christ makes men and women of all nations new.

The Firstborn, Higher Than the Kings of the Earth

Two psalms describe the nature of the Messiah's appointment, power and honor: Psalm 132:11 and 89:27. The first psalm says, "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne" (132:11); likewise, the second states "Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (89:12). Matthew's genealogy mentions the last king of Israel, Jechonias. The Hebrew Scriptures identified him as Jechoniah. Prior to Babylon's invasion of Judea, Jeremiah prophesied *Jehovah's* curse over Jechoniah's children from ruling Israel upon the throne of David (Jer 22:30). This includes Joseph, for had Jesus directly descended from David through Solomon, and consequently Joseph, he could lay no claim as Israel's King, for this curse applied only to Jechoniah's descendants. However, Scripture's oath promised David's throne to the Messiah. God's oath ensures fulfillment of His will. Christ bypassed this curse by way of His virgin birth and God's oath. As King David's descendant, Jesus does not inherit David's throne with earthly authority and honor. Instead, He will possess it having the glory, honor, and authority of almighty God. As King of kings and Lord of lords, He will exercise sovereign dominion over earth, Jehovah ruling as Son of David (Ps 132:11; Isa 9:6-7). Scripture calls Christ God's firstborn Son, as opposed to begotten Son (John 3:16). This reference reflects His resurrection found in Col 1:15, 18 revealing Him as firstborn of a redeemed creation. Jesus makes His saints partakers of His resurrection: First, He delivers them from the slavery of sin and death by giving them eternal life through His Holy Spirit. Second, they

will experience an actual resurrection at His return (Rapture) to reign eventually with Him on earth, fulfilling Ps 89:27 quoted earlier

Termination of Noah's Curse

Luke traces Jesus' genealogy through Mary. It lists Shem, son of Noah, as Jesus' remote ancestor. Genesis 9:26 records Noah blessing two of his three sons (Shem and Japheth) and their descendants while cursing Canaan, son of his third child, Ham. Noah spoke a messianic blessing over Shem, saying, "Blessed be the LORD God of Shem" (v. 26a). Noah gave a prophecy of praise and paternal impartation to God as a remote descendant of Shem. He foretold God's coming into human existence and Christ's eventual crucifixion. Shem and His descendants bore the Lord's calling throughout their generations until He appeared. Out of Shem's posterity came the Jewish race who produced the Messiah, humanity's Redeemer. The ultimate praise spoken by this prophecy speaks of salvation in Christ delivering all men from sin and curse spoken because of it. Noah spoke prophetically of God as a descendant of Shem having the incarnation in view. Luke 3:21-23 and 36 support this thought. At Jesus' baptism, God publicly declares Christ's Sonship and acknowledges His incarnation in Him. God came in flesh as the Son of God to redeem humanity from the curse of the law and give them eternal life through Christ's death and resurrection (2 Cor 5:19)

God came in flesh as the Son of God to redeem us from the curse of the law and give us the blessing of eternal life through the death and resurrection of Christ (2 Cor 5:19). The Cross made Jesus a curse; He became sin for everyone. What His passion accomplished, His sons and daughters now receive by faith through repentance, water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and baptism of the Holy Ghost. Christ terminated Noah's curse, Jeremiah's curse, and the law's curse for all people.

Closing

Matthew presents a unique genealogy of Jesus Christ. He portrays Jesus as the Messiah, King of Israel. Prophetically, he identifies Jesus with the two covenants God made with Abraham and David. As the promised Seed of both men, Jesus fulfilled both covenants to bless Jews and Gentiles with eternal redemption. Against the Jewish custom of women absent in a man's genealogy, Matthew recorded the mother of Jesus and four other women (this needs to stay for clarity). Though four of these women have questionable pasts, one sees this as message of God's grace. Further, the author's mention of some of Israel's greatest men and their failures reflect a testimony to God's mercy and willingness to restore sinners and fulfill covenant promises. Next, this genealogy presents New Testament truth that God also will make Gentiles part of His family. His grace has made the new birth a reality for all races. This fulfills God's promise to Abraham blessings all nations in his seed, Jesus Christ. Matthew called his Gospel "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ" (Matt 1:1a) for it gave witness then and continues today.

The Genealogy of Jesus According to Luke

The Lukan genealogy of Jesus emphasizes the Son of God in humanity. Luke began his account with God's declaration of Jesus, His beloved Son (Luke 3:22) and preceded to legitimize the first human Adam, the son of God (3:38). God's original power and identity for humanity reside in Sonship, His highest calling. God created the world by Himself; but fulfilled His purpose through humanity in Jesus with Sonship resulting from redeemed and restored relationship. Luke's genealogical account focuses on Jesus Christ and God's call for His people in Him.

The Resurrection Seal

Luke presents Jesus as the Son of man, representing God and humanity on earth with provision of salvation for all races. The Lukan genealogical narrative uniquely distinguishes itself with contrasting features from the Matthean by its theme, emphasis, lineage structure, and organization. Luke shaped his theme with unique accounts, teachings, and sayings collectively presenting the universal scope of forgiveness and restoration for those who repent. Most notably, Luke presented historical events surrounding Christ's birth as authentic eyewitness accounts and truths first century Christians believed (1:1-4). This understanding underscores Jesus' lineage descent and attests His authentic document of ancestry. His resurrection reveals Him more than just a man. It affirms the documented facts of His genealogy with Jesus as the Son of God. Our faith and interpretation of Scripture rests upon this great truth. When He rose from the dead, He professed Himself as Christ the Son of God and Israel's promised King (Rom 1:3-4). Gospel author Luke supports Jesus as the King of Israel by connecting Him to the house of King David and other scriptural figures.

Luke strategically placed Christ's genealogy following His baptism. During this event, God spoke the identity of Jesus of Nazareth from heaven to all present. Though God revealed Jesus to be His Son, the genealogy showed Him of human ancestry. Both God's revelation of Jesus and Luke's genealogical account qualify Him to represent humanity in bearing their sins on the cross. His identification with Adam, the last name recorded in this genealogy, unites Him with all races of humanity and God's original intent for them.

Jesus' Sonship

A genealogy records ancestral descent. The Ancients diligently updated family records after a child's birth to insure accuracy of ancestry. A person's genealogy said much about one's family honor and, at times, character. If questions of familial recognition or inheritance arose, these records settled disputes and established due honor (Hanson, as in Neyrey & Stewart, 1991). Both Matthew and Luke's genealogies present Jesus' honor as God and man. Each author balances his genealogy with the virgin conception and birth of Christ. Using Jesus' genealogy, the authors establish Him as the rightful heir to David's throne and Abraham's son through whom universal calling and blessing flow to all who hear and believe. Jesus' miraculous conception and birth reveal Him as the Son of God (God manifest in flesh). This balanced understanding of Christ's genealogy

upholds four great truths: Jesus' messianic claim through Abraham, His kingship through David, His supernatural conception, and God's incarnation in Him. Luke's presentation of Jesus Christ's genealogy differs from Matthew. Luke presents evidence of Jesus' royal connection to David just as Matthew does in His account, but he has a universal focus in mind with a relationship theme declaring Jesus to be the Son of God. Luke uses known individuals from Scripture and reversed order of their naming to inform us of an anticipated redemption and restoration for humanity. God created humankind as sons of God in the beginning, but they lost relationship in Adam. God now has restored it in Christ, Abraham's son.

Jesus' Kingship

Matthew's genealogy has a kingly nature in content and purpose calling Jesus both Son of David and Son of Abraham. The two expressions fulfill the two major Old Testament covenants God made with them. Matthew's genealogy also gives the royal lineage of kingly succession from David to Israel's last king, Jehoiakim. It continues until at Joseph, the husband of Mary. In connection with Mary's virgin conception of Christ, he presents Jesus' legal claim as King of Israel through Joseph, who belonged to the house and lineage of David (Luke 2:4). Matthew's genealogy shows Joseph did not beget Jesus, but as Mary's child, the Holy Ghost fathered Him (Matt 1:18-20). Her miraculous conception gives Jesus a human and divine ancestry: begotten of God and made of a woman (John 3:16; Gal 4:4). Furthermore, Matthew by Scripture and his account of Jesus' birth identifies Mary's child as Emmanuel (God with us). Luke also, in speaking of Christ's birth, calls Him Lord and Savior (Luke 2:11). A truth emerges from both gospels. The eternal God became a person of human descent to save His people. Jesus' birth declares Him Savior, Lord, and God while His genealogy reveals Him as promised King and Messiah.

The New Confession

Mary's miraculous conception of Christ produced the incarnation, a union between God and man in the human person of Jesus Christ. This act, with Jesus' resurrection, establishes a new faith confession all God's people should embrace. The New Testament exclusively declares Jesus, Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36; Rom 10:9). This confession agrees with and proves superior to the monotheistic confession of Deut 6:4. The Old Covenant confession affirms Yahweh (Jehovah) as Lord and God alone and His people are to love Him with all their hearts. The new confession retains the previous truth but relative to the incarnation with Jesus as the central focus. The God of the Old Covenant incarnated Himself in Christ, David's son after the flesh. By this confession, God promises salvation. This does not mean believers only verbally confess without a change of heart. Just as Deut 6:4 requires a life lived in devotion to God, the new confession calls for obedience to the Gospel (Rom 10:10; Acts 2:38). A believer's faith and confession begins with repentance, baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, receiving the Holy Ghost, and followed by a life lived in devotion to Christ.

Two Genealogies: An Explanation

Luke's identification of Jesus to Joseph parallels his earlier account of Christ's conception and birth. Many considered Jesus as Joseph's biological son at the time (Luke 3:23). Eight days after His birth, according to custom, Joseph and Mary named Him during circumcision. Afterwards, they added Jesus's name to their family records of descent as their son. Joseph adopted and raised Jesus as their own. Luke refers to Jesus' ancestry as Joseph's, but it belongs to Jesus' mother Mary without giving her name (Matt 1:16; Luke 1:23). The absence of a woman's name from a genealogy characterized standard Hebrew custom in those days since it emphasized male orientation. A woman's genealogy traced through her father (Neyrey, as in Neyrey & Malina, 1999). Once married, she took on her husband's genealogy by marriage. Luke presented Joseph as "the son of Heli" (3:23), and Matthew says "Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary" (1:16).

The expression son of found in Luke includes begetting, but also encompasses a more remote relationship. Many of the names in Luke's genealogy direct descended from Jacob. For example, Nathan (brother of King Solomon) directly descended from David (1 Chron 3:1, 5; Luke 3:31-32). On the other hand, Matthew called Joseph the actual son of Jacob by begetting. Luke referred to him as son-in-law to Heli (Luke 3:23). By tracing Christ's lineage back to David through Nathan and not Solomon, Luke showed Mary and Jesus belonging to the tribe of Judah and house of David. By actual descent, Jesus qualifies as the Son of David through His mother, Mary. Through Joseph, He also has legitimate status as David's Son and legal claim to kingship by adoption. However, God's oath of covenant made with David entitles Him heir to David's throne (Ps 132:11). Taken together, both Matthean and Lukan genealogies provide Christ's spiritual, biological, and legal claim to the throne of David.

Messianic Calling

Luke continued his presentation of Christ's lineage from David back to Abraham through Judah to Jacob's son, just as Matthew (Luke 3:33-34). This part of Christ's genealogy shows God's covenant oath with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants once again calling them His people. He promised to make them a great nation in a place of His choosing, Palestine; and assured them a royal dynasty throughout their generations from a chosen descendant Jesus of Nazareth, ruler all nations bringing Jewish and Gentile sons of God by faith in Him. This covenant calls Jesus, Abraham's Seed making Him its central heir (Gal 3:16).

Since the day of Pentecost, God continues to offer His calling and blessing to all nations through the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Gen 17:15-19; 22:16-18). Receiving the Spirit makes believers in Christ recipients of this covenant blessing and calling (Gal 3:14). As the Spirit of adoption, the Holy Ghost makes Jews and Gentiles sons of God and Abraham's seed by faith in Jesus Christ (Gal 4:3-5.) The lineage dates back to Noah through Shem, his second son.

Abraham, father of the Jewish race descended from this same lineage. Shem's calling and blessing follows the great flood (Gen 9:26) from Noah's prophecy. This blessing looks forward to the Lord God's arriving as a descendant of Shem and His subsequent victory over sin and death for all (Phil 2:8-9). God comes in flesh to carry out the ultimate calling for humanity's salvation, death, and resurrection. His Spirit now empowers believers to live above sin and walk worthy of His calling. In Gal 3:26-29, Paul further described union with Christ. Through the indwelling Spirit, Jesus joins believers to Himself in the New Covenant relationship. He makes them recipients of His resurrection glory and status transforming them forever (1 Cor 6:17; Gal 3:16; Heb 3:14)). Union with Him destroys the old relationship with sin allows to speak and impart blessing to all who receive His message. Just like Jesus, a seed does not receive life. It gives life.

Purpose and Unity

Christ's ancestry concludes with Adam, the first human. Scripture calls Him the son of God. By tracing Christ's genealogy beyond Abraham back to Adam, Luke identifies Jesus with all humanity and God's original purpose for sons of God in creation. A son of God implies both relationship and fellowship. Knowing God by revelation as Father and fulfilling His call on our lives was the basis of His intent for us. The non-Jewish nationalities in Christ's lineage reveal God's inclusion of all nations into His spiritual family, for Jesus bore humanity's iniquity. Paul expounded these truths throughout the New Testament (Eph 3:4-6). God calls the whole family in heaven and earth by Jesus' name (3:17). He died for everyone descended from Adam. He now becomes the Second Adam: Head of a redeemed race of humans created by grace in His image and calling (1 Cor 15:45-50). By descent from Adam, all humans have a sinful nature. Through new birth in Christ, God makes the repentant righteous, giving them a new identity and calling them sons of God who seek to do His will (John 3:3-5). This genealogy concludes all nations have a common origin and purpose given by the Creator, but His coming and sacrificial death for sin make His purpose for believers possible. Cultural diversity exists within the body of Christ; however, collectively it must seek intentionality in fellowship and ministry to accomplish the Father's will. Jan Paron (2013) made this point clear when she said, "Intentional ministry purposes a twofold action: open access to the elect for reconciliation with God by reaching across the cultural milieu to the multitudes and bring this collective Body into one fold with the one Shepherd" (Paron 2012).

Living with Favor and Purpose

In closing, people of ancient times used genealogies to establish family honor. Luke's genealogy presents Jesus' honor as Son of God. By linking the elements of Christ's baptism with His record of descent, Luke establishes God in Christ as the central link between God and humanity. He presents a new faith by showing Jesus' identity and God's intent to redeem and make humanity His children once again. First, the author revealed Jesus as Almighty God in flesh during His baptism. God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and declared from heaven His presence in the person of His Son here on earth. Called the incarnation, Christ's conception and

birth allowed God to become part of the human race (John 14:7-10; 1 Tim 3:16). Those who encountered Jesus in this world came face-to-face with God. Second, by identifying Jesus in the lineage of key figures from the Old Testament, Luke declares Jesus to be Christ, the Son of David, King of Israel and the chosen Seed of Abraham. Through His death, He redeems and blesses all believers before and after His first coming. The Old Testament prophets described Jesus in their prophecies of hope. Now through the Gospel, their message of hope proclaims reality in Jesus. Furthermore, God declared His pleasure of dwelling in His Son when He addressed Him as beloved. This decree reveals the new relationship established by the Lord's death and resurrection. Having received His Holy Spirit, God's pleasure rests in His people. He accepts and calls them chosen, a people in whom He works His good pleasure. In the hearts of the people of God should rest their Father's intent and calling. God desires them to know Him by relationship. Likewise, Luke's genealogy implies a common point of origin for humanity. Their new relationship with God requires unity with others of like faith. Finally, Luke's genealogy returns to Adam whom He also calls the son of God. His creation foreshadowed the model of God's only begotten Son yet to come.

The One God, Part 1

In general, Christianity confesses its belief in one God and some in Jesus Christ's deity; however, since the days of the apostles to our current day many modified that belief, resulting in debate and divisions within. Deuteronomy 6:4 states, "Hear O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD." This passage of Scripture declares that there is no other God but one. It also testifies to unity of a diverse, progressive revelation that finds its completion in Him called the LORD.

There is One God, and He is One

What does the Scripture mean when it states there is one God? Why does it say He is one? God is a Spirit. He is invisible and revealed Himself in His creation of all things and by His Word, the Bible. Deuteronomy 6:4 declares that the God of Israel is the true God to the exclusion of all others. Mark 12:28-34 endorses this interpretation. A scribe asked Jesus, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus responds, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord" (12:29b). Then, the scribe followed with, "Well Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he" (v. 32). Finally, the discourse concluded: "And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (v. 34b). Jesus endorsed this man's understanding of Deut 6:4, also known by the Jews as the Shema, the Jewish confession of faith. Jesus told the scribe with his understanding he was not far from the kingdom of God. Now what understanding would have gotten him in the kingdom? Jesus said in another passage, John 8:24, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Had the scribe recognized Jesus as the God of Deut 6:4 he could have come to the kingdom in that point of history. The Shema recognizes no other God but Jehovah.

Old and New Testament Unity of Meaning

Other Old Testament authors declared the same message. In Isa 45:5, it says "I am LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me." Further, two passages in Jer 10 speak to this message, "Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might" (10:6); and "But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king" (v. 10c). The Old Testament gives the belief in one God, Who is sovereign to all that exists. We are to love Him with loyalty to the utmost.

The New Testament reiterates the same thought. There is one God and He is one. Jesus and the authors of the New Testament established profound thoughts regarding God's oneness. These authors acknowledged mankind's belief in more than one God, but they stated the gods of humanity are not gods by nature. Their theologies cannot match the theology of what the Bible says about God. Galatians 4:8 says, "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are not gods." When the New Testament authors said there is one God, they addressed Him as Father because He is the Creator. Jesus said in John 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee (The Father) the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou

has sent.” It is the Father who called the only True God. Paul in 1 Cor 8:6a says, “But to us there is but one God, the Father.” The Scriptures see the one God as Father and this one God seeks true worshipers of Himself. The church of the Book of Acts retains the monotheistic belief of the Old Testament. There is no hint of radically changing this truth in the New Testament writings. Retaining the Old Testament view of God’s oneness was the early church’s (of the Book of Acts) way of safeguarding itself from idolatry and error. It is the same safeguard for us today.

Closing

Finally, the oneness of God is the biblical truth that the God of the Bible is the only True God. This excludes the ideologies declared by men to be the True God. He has no distinction of persons in His nature. Scripture addresses Him as the Father because He is Creator of all; however, He has revealed Himself diversely and progressively throughout Scripture to conclude His revelation in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. This truth keeps us from error. God desires to make Himself known to all, but only those who respond to His call and seek Him will find.

The One God, Part 2: The Incarnation

Revelations 11:15 enlightens the thought of God's oneness begun in the previous article, the One God: And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

The One God

The Jewish confession of faith called the Shema, found in Deut 6:4, declares God as the one God to the exclusion of all others that called God. This verse declares that God is one. The Hebrew echad showed a numerical oneness, indicating unity of all components that complete the total picture (Brown, Driver, & Briggs, 2010). God is God alone; and He has revealed Himself in diverse ways throughout Scripture by different names, titles, covenants and visions. This diversity defines His identity, character, purpose, will and power, but one must understand that this diversity finds its ultimate unity in one person, Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Revelations 11:15c, announces “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever.” It is our Lord and His Christ who will rule the nations here on earth for a thousand years. Now, this verse calls our Lord and His Christ a he and not they. It is not a unity of plural persons in the Godhead addressed here but the unity of the incarnation. The word he from 11:15, is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the union of the Lord God Almighty and His Anointed in one human person. The Apostle John shows in John 1:1, 14 that, “the Word was God” and that “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” He also clarifies that the Word made flesh called the Son of God. Scholars describe this uniting of God and man in one person as the incarnation. The word incarnation by definition refers to the act by which God became man. John 1:14 and Rom 1:3 confirm this meaning. The distinction is clear. The Word was God. The flesh is the Son of God begotten from the human ancestry of King David. John further enlightens the reader that he and the other disciples beheld Christ's glory in His humanity, and His glory was full of grace and truth. The Old Testament prophets and Israelites saw the glory of God in diverse forms, but God did not fully reveal His glory to them until the birth of His Son (1:14). The glory of God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ is God's truth for us today. Believers must seek to know and understand God in the context of the incarnation and not in the context of three persons. The knowledge of the Son of God is essential to bringing the church to the unity of the faith.

Two Truths

Revelations 11:15 demonstrates two truths. One truth shows the union of the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ, declaring Jesus as the Lord our God and God's anointed King. The incarnation gives truth that Jesus is the one God. Do not allow this truth to obscure the second truth--the relationship that exists between God and Christ. From the perspective of His deity one sees Jesus as the Sovereign God, the Creator and Lord manifested in flesh. From the standpoint of Jesus' humanity one sees Him as called and anointed by God to fulfill all that is written of Christ in both the Old and New Testaments. When the Son of God was revealed in the fulness of time, He was revealed as a man made of human lineage who learned obedience to fulfill the scriptures. This explains Christ's prayer life, His compassion for the oppressed, His statements of submission to God, His sufferings and His death and resurrection. He grew in His relationships with God and man. These statements and accounts are answered in the context of the scriptures that address them, but never to the denial of Jesus as the one God. Jesus always spoke as a human servant under the anointing of the Spirit of God, but His anointing revealed Him to be God by the things He both said and did.

Paron (2012) in her writing about the oneness of God, makes an important observation about the Word dwelling among us (1:14):

Some scholars suggest that the Gospel of John specifically shows an ancient form of biography of Whom the subject is Jesus. Indeed this Gospel chronicles the earthly ministry of the "Word," according to the recurrent theme of following (Greek: ἀκολουθέω) Jesus to where He dwelled among the people in fulfillment of the law. Through the "Word," Jesus, comes grace and truth" (1:17). John states in the opening verse that "the Word was God" and the "Word was with God. Jesus parallels this statement in John 14:10 with "I am in my Father, and my Father is in me...I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth within me."

Though called of God, Jesus was not speaking of Himself as a servant when He made the great I AM declarations of John's Gospel. He was speaking of the Father in Him. Servants do not declare their greatness only their masters. For Jesus to speak of the Father by declaring who He is demonstrated His identity as the Father though He were a servant here on earth. The I AM statements of Christ in the Book of John identify God in the person of Jesus Christ. The fulfillment of the Law and prophets required a human called of God and obedient to the will of God (2 Cor 15:21). The incarnation and trials of life made this possible in Jesus Christ. His obedience brought about the redemption of man and restoration of God's creation.

Covenant Blessings Ordained in Christ

God is called in Eph 1:3, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This statement speaks to the covenant God made with both Abraham and His descendant Son after the flesh,

Christ. It also speaks to the literal begetting of the Son of God by the Spirit of God in both birth and resurrection (Luke 1:34-35; Acts 13:33). Each of the covenants of Scripture ordains blessing and fulfillment to diverse peoples. Sin hindered humankind's complete partaking of these covenants until the death of Jesus Christ dealt with sin and made the fulfillment of God's covenants possible and accessible to humanity by faith. The covenant blessings God ordained in Christ would be given to men and women of all races who are in Christ or united to Him by baptism into His name and the infilling of His Spirit (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor 15:22). Christ in His humanity is the heir of all the covenants of Scripture for the human race. In Him, believers partake of all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ revealed Himself in the person of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ--Revealed Himself to make covenant with the elect through the blood of Christ's death and resurrection. Revealed Himself in the unity of God's fulness.

Understanding the Incarnation

Finally, understanding the incarnation and recognizing the relationship between God and His Son in this context brings about a more cohesive understanding to the Word of God. It allows believers to understand the relationship of Christianity's teaching to Judaism, as well as establishes believers in the present truth of God's Word. Many incorrect statements have been made and some truthful statements taken to the extreme have led to incorrect thinking. If the Bible teaches that Jesus is the Father, does one say that Jesus prayed to Himself, or that the second person of the Godhead prayed to the first person? In the language of the Scripture, Jesus "prayed to God" and "prayed to the Father" (Luke 6:12; John 14:15). It is best to say it as the Scripture states it, while also recognizing that yes, Jesus is our Father. According to Heb 5:7, Jesus prayed in the "days of his flesh to him (God) who was able to save him from death." In the same book, the author goes on to say the Son of God is addressed as both God and God's Anointed (1:8-9). The expressions of Father, Son and Holy Ghost pertain to the person of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 4:6). These designations also give a biblical knowledge of God in relationship with His Son and all New Testament believers in Christ. The union of deity and humanity in the person of Christ allows a human and divine interaction between the Father and the Son. This same thought exists with Christ and the Holy Ghost. In light of this understanding, the scriptures return one to the original premise that there is no separate knowledge of God apart from Jesus Christ.

Closing

This writing ends with the words of the great apostle, Paul. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col 2:8-9).

