

The Good Word

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THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST, PART II¹

by Dr. Seraphim Steger

In our last issue we reviewed the genealogy of Christ presented in the *Gospel According to St. Matthew* and discussed the mistaken possibility of Matthew's genealogy being the genealogy of the Virgin Mary and not of St. Joseph the Betrothed. We noted that the curse placed on the descendants of King Jechoniah of Judah through the Prophet Jeremiah (*Jeremiah 22:24-30 & 36:30-31*) precluded that possibility because the Virgin Mary would have been placed under that curse as well. The curse was inconsequential for St. Joseph, but the genealogy in St. Matthew was most beneficial for Jesus since He, as the son of St. Mary would have been legally enrolled as a Royal descendant of King David, as "the son" of St. Joseph the Betrothed.

RECONCILING BOTH ST. MATTHEW'S AND ST. LUKE'S GENEALOGIES AS THOSE OF ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

BY LEVIRITE MARRIAGE: JULIUS AFRICANUS

Sextus Julius Africanus (c. 160 AD - c. AD 240) was an early Christian historian and traveler comfortable in the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew languages. He was the first to propose "levirite marriage" (cf. *Deuteronomy 25:5-6*) as a means to reconcile the divergent genealogies in St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Gospels with each other as both being that of St. Joseph the Betrothed. In his *Epistle to Aristides* he reasons:


"I. ... The evangelists, therefore, would thus have spoken falsely, affirming what was not truth, but a fictitious commendation. And for this reason the one [St. Matthew] traced the pedigree of Jacob the father of Joseph from David through Solomon; the other [St. Luke] traced that of Heli also, though in a different way, the father of Joseph, from Nathan the son of David. And **they ought not indeed to have been ignorant that both orders of the ancestors enumerated are the generation of David, the royal tribe of Judah ...**

"II. For whereas in Israel the names of their generations were enumerated either according to nature or according to

law,—according to nature, indeed, by the succession of legitimate offspring, and according to law whenever another raised up children to the name of a brother dying childless; for because no clear hope of resurrection was yet given them, they had a representation of the future promise in a kind of mortal resurrection, with the view of perpetuating the name of one deceased;—whereas, then, of those entered in this genealogy, some succeeded by legitimate descent as son to father, while others begotten in one family were introduced to another in name, mention is therefore made of both—of those who were progenitors in fact, and of those who were so only in name. **Thus neither of the evangelists is in error, as the one reckons by nature and the other by law.** For the several generations, viz., those descending from Solomon and those from Nathan, were so intermingled by the raising up of children to the childless, and by second marriages, and the raising up of seed, that the same persons are quite justly reckoned to belong at one time to the one, and at another to the other, i.e., to their reputed or to their actual fathers. And hence it is that both these accounts are true, and come down to Joseph, with considerable intricacy indeed, but yet quite accurately.

"III. But in order that what I have said may be made evident, I shall explain the interchange of the generations. **If we reckon the generations from David through Solomon, Matthan is found to be the third from the end, who begat Jacob the father of Joseph.** But if, with Luke, we reckon them from Nathan the son of David, in like manner the third from the end is Melchi, whose son was Heli the father of Joseph. For Joseph was the son of Heli, the son of Melchi. As Joseph, therefore, is the object proposed to us, we have to show how it is that each is represented as his father, both Jacob as descending from Solomon, and Heli as descending from Nathan: first, how these two, Jacob and Heli, were brothers; and then also how the fathers of these, Matthan and Melchi, being of different families, are shown to be the grandfathers of Joseph. Well, then, **Matthan and Melchi, having taken the same woman to wife in succession, begat children who were uterine brothers, as the law did not prevent a widow, whether such by divorce or by the death of her husband, from marrying another.** By Estha, then—for such is her name according to tradition—**Matthan first**, the descendant of Solomon, begets Jacob; **and on Matthan's death, Melchi, who traces his descent back to Nathan**, being of the same tribe but of another family, having married her, as has been already said, had a son Heli. Thus, then, **we shall find Jacob and Heli uterine brothers, though of different families.** And of these, the one Jacob having taken the wife of his brother Heli, who died childless, begat by her the third, Joseph—his son by nature and by account. Whence also it is written, "And Jacob begat Joseph." But according to law he was the son of Heli, for Jacob his brother raised up seed to him. Wherefore also the genealogy deduced through

1. Scripture passages are from the King James Version unless otherwise stated.



him will not be made void, which the Evangelist Matthew in his enumeration gives thus: **“And Jacob begat Joseph.” But Luke, on the other hand, says, “Who was the son, as was supposed”** (for this, too, he adds), of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Melchi.” For it was not possible more distinctly to state the generation according to law; and thus in this mode of generation he has entirely omitted the word “begat” to the very end, carrying back the genealogy by way of conclusion to Adam and to God ...

“V. **But as up to that time the genealogies of the Hebrews had been registered in the public archives, and those, too, which were traced back to the proselytes**—as, for example, to Achior the Ammanite, and Ruth the Moabitess, and those who left Egypt along with the Israelites, and intermarried with them—**Herod, knowing that the lineage of the Israelites contributed nothing to him, and goaded by the consciousness of his ignoble birth, burned the registers of their families. This he did, thinking that he would appear to be of noble birth, if no one else could trace back his descent by the public register to the patriarchs or proselytes, and to that mixed race called *georæ*. A few, however, of the studious, having private records of their own, either by remembering the names or by getting at them in some other way from the archives, pride themselves in preserving the memory of their noble descent; and among these happen to be those already mentioned, called *desposyni*, on account of their connection with the family of the Saviour. And these coming from Nazara and Cochaba, Judean villages, to other parts of the country, set forth the above-named genealogy as accurately as possible from the Book of Days. Whether, then, the case stand thus or not, no one could discover a more obvious explanation, according to my own opinion and that of any sound judge. And let this suffice us for the matter, although it is not supported by testimony, because we have nothing more satisfactory or true to allege upon it. The Gospel, however, in any case states the truth.**

“VI. Matthan, descended from Solomon, begat Jacob. Matthan dying, Melchi, descended from Nathan, begat Heli by the same wife. Therefore Heli and Jacob are uterine brothers. Heli dying childless, Jacob raised up seed to him and begat Joseph, his own son by nature, but the son of Heli by law. Thus Joseph was the son of both.”²

We must note that by this reckoning, St. Joseph is still the physical descendant of Jechoniah and so inherits the LORD’S curse pronounced by the Prophet Jeremiah.

BY LEVIRITE MARRIAGE: EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA

Eusebius (c. AD 260 - c. AD 339) was a scholar and a historian of Christianity, who sided with the Arians at the 1st Council of Nicæa and was never recognized as a Saint. He essentially recapitulates most of Julius Africanus’ analysis for his own *Church History* acknowledging the debt he owed to Africanus:

“1. Matthew and Luke in their gospels have given us the genealogy of Christ differently, and many suppose that they

2. Julius Africanus, *The Epistle to Aristides, I-VI*, in *Ante Nicene Fathers: Vol. 6 Fathers of the Third Century*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, pp. 125-127. Also, at <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/af06.v.iii.i.html>

are at variance with one another. Since as a consequence every believer, in ignorance of the truth, has been zealous to invent some explanation which shall harmonize the two passages, permit us to subjoin the account of the matter which has come down to us, and which is given by Africanus, who was mentioned by us just above, in his epistle to Aristides, where he discusses the harmony of the gospel genealogies. **After refuting the opinions of others as forced and deceptive, he gives the account which he had received from tradition in these words:**

[Note: Here Eusebius inserts Africanus’ explanation.]

“10. Hence the genealogy traced through him will not be rendered void, which the evangelist Matthew in his enumeration gives thus: ‘Jacob begat Joseph.’ But Luke, on the other hand, says: ‘Who was the son, as was supposed’ (for this he also adds), ‘of Joseph, the son of Eli, the son of Melchi’; for he could not more clearly express the generation according to law. And the expression ‘he begat’ he has omitted in his genealogical table up to the end, tracing the genealogy back to Adam the son of God. This interpretation is neither incapable of proof nor is it an idle conjecture ...”³

BY PROPOSING A ROYAL LINE AND A PRIESTLY LINE AS WELL AS LEVIRITE MARRIAGE:
ST. HILARY, BISHOP OF POITIERS (AD 310 - 368):


“1. **Whereas Matthew followed the order of royal succession, Luke reckons it according to priestly origin.** Each writer is using a [different] criterion, one tracing the Lord’s bloodline, and the other by means of his tribe. It is quite right to present the sequence of the Lord’s generation in this way **since the association of the priestly and royal ancestry inaugurated by David in his marriage is thereafter confirmed through the lineage of Shealtiel to Zerubbabel.**⁴

“And so while Matthew established his paternal origin which stemmed from Judah, **Luke teaches that the lineage proceeded through Nathan from the tribe of Levi.**⁵ Each writer in his way has demonstrated the glory of the double genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the eternal king and priest, even in his fleshly birth. That His nativity is traced from Joseph rather than Mary does not matter, for there is one and the same bloodline for the entire ancestry (Latin *tribus*). Matthew and Luke have given us a model, describing each of the fathers not as much according to lineage as by a race of people who originated from one ancestry and who are encompassed within a family of one succession and origin. For although He must be revealed as the son of David and Abraham, just as Matthew begins: *The book of the generations of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham*, there is no difference whether someone is classified by an account of their origin and lineage, provided it is understood the families of the world began from one man. Thus, as

3. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Church History, Bk I*, Chapter VII, 1-11, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1, Second Series*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, pp. 91-93. Also, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iii.vi.vii.html>

4. Note: David’s sons Solomon and Nathan were both born of Bathsheba in Jerusalem, see *1 Chronicles/Paraleipomenon (Lxx)* 3:5

5. *St. Luke* 3:23-38 There are two Levi’s in the genealogy, but the name itself doesn’t automatically prove descent from the tribe of Levi.



Joseph and Mary are from the same ancestry, so Joseph is shown to have proceeded from the lineage of Abraham and the same is true of Mary. **In fact, this is the principle, which was preserved in the Law: namely, if the head of a family died without any sons, the next eldest brother of the same bloodline would accept the wife of the dead man [Deuteronomy 25:5]. Sons begotten by this arrangement were ascribed to the family of the dead man, and so the order of succession should continue for those who are the firstborn, accomplished either by name or by lineage through the fathers of those who were later born.**

“2. Then there is the issue that (as we said, given the reliability of the facts) the sequence of the Lord’s generation agrees neither with the method of enumeration nor its order of succession so that a rational of the [present] narrative might be sought. There is a reason why the narration makes one kind of emphasis and the facts say another, and yet another [reason] which is related to the whole, and then another is connected with their enumeration. In fact, *from Abraham to David fourteen generations* are counted, and *from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations*, whereas in the books of the Kings seventeen generations are counted. But there is not a problem here of falsehood or fault from an oversight. For three generations have been bypassed according to an underlying principle. Jeroam begot Ahaziah; then Ahaziah begot Joash; after Joash, Amaziah; and from Amaziah, Azariah. But in Matthew, it is written that *Joram begot Azariah* although the latter is fourth after him. **It was done in this way because Joram begat Ahaziah from a pagan woman,⁶ that is, from the household of Ahab, and it was declared by the prophet that not until the fourth generation⁷ would anyone from the household of Ahab sit on the throne of the kingdom of Israel. By removing the disgrace of a pagan family and bypassing its ancestry, the royal origin of those to follow in the fourth generation is then counted.** And although it is written that there are fourteen generations till Mary, and thirteen are found in counting them, there can be no mistake for those who know that our Lord Jesus Christ has an origin not only from Mary, but in the procreation of His bodily nativity, his eternal significance is discovered.

3. The explanation of His generation is simple. That He was “conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary” is the message of all the prophets.⁸

St. Hilary of Poitiers does recognize levirate marriage as part of the way to reconcile the genealogies and introduces the idea that both a royal line (St. Matthew) and a priestly line (St. Luke) come together, the latter through Nathan from the tribe of Levi. Since Nathan was born of David by Bathsheba as was Solomon, the priestly line would have to come in through marriage to a daughter of the tribe of Levi.

6. King Jehoram (Joram) of Judah married the daughter of King Ahab of Israel and of his wife the evil Queen Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal of the Zidonians (Baal and Ashtoreth worshippers).

7. 2 Kings (*Lxx* 4 Kingdoms): 10:30, 15:12.

8. St. Hilary of Poitiers, *Commentary on Matthew*, Fathers of the Church Series, Vol. 125, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 2012, pp. 41-44.

Unfortunately, St. Hilary does not give us a specific explanation of how he came up with this idea, nor does he explain his reasoning for the statement: *since the association of the priestly and royal ancestry inaugurated by David in his marriage is thereafter confirmed through the lineage of Shealtiel to Zerubbabel*, who were both of the tribe of Judah.

BY LEVIRITE MARRIAGE: ST. AMBROSE, BISHOP OF MILAN (C. AD 337 - 397):


St. Ambrose has written a very detailed, lucid, and well thought out commentary on these genealogies.

“*Book III.1. And Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age when He began, being (as men supposed) the son of Joseph* (St. Luke 3:23). Before speaking of the generations between which we see some variation in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and this, the interpretation of which we have in our hands, since it is unbelievable that holy men could contradict each other, particularly about the works of our Lord and Saviour, **let us show with what zeal we can that they did not say different things.** 2. And, first of all, it behoves none to change what is thus written: *Who was thought to be the son of Joseph? For He was fittingly thought so, because He was not so by nature, but was thought to be because He was born of Mary, who was espoused to Joseph*, her husband; for so ye have: *Is not this Joseph the carpenter’s Son?* (St. Matthew 13:55) ...

“3. We could question why the generation of Joseph is described rather than that of Mary, when Mary gave birth to Christ from the Holy Spirit, and Joseph seems a stranger to the lineage of the Lord, save that the **custom of the Scriptures which always seeks the husband’s origin instructed us ...** He who came into the world must be described in the custom of the world, particularly as the lineage of Mary is also in the lineage of Joseph. **For since Joseph was a righteous man, he took a wife from his own tribe and his own country**, nor could a righteous man contravene what is prescribed in the Law (*cf.* Numbers 4:1). For ye have that the sons of Israel will cleave to the inheritance of the tribe of their country, nor will they pass from one tribe to tribe, and every daughter who is descended from the tribes of the sons of Israel will be a wife to one of the people of the tribe of her father (*cf.* Numbers 36:6-8). **Therefore at the time of the enrollment, Joseph went up from his house and the country of David to be enrolled with Mary his wife** (Luke 2:4-5). **She who enrolls from the same house and the same country surely signifies that she is of this same tribe and same country ...**

“5. **Elisabeth is also mentioned as Mary’s kinsman** (*cf.* Luke 1:46), firstly because all Jews are kin, just as the Apostle, too, taught, saying, *For I wished myself to be cursed from Christ for my brothers, and kinsmen as pertaining to the flesh: which are the Israelites* (Romans (9:3-4). Kin, then, because both were Israelites, and kin because both were of the tribe of Judah ... [Note: Ambrose now briefly discusses how the priestly and royal lines intermingled through marriage but gives no example.]

“11 ... **Luke also thought that His origin should be traced back to God, because God is the true Begetter of Christ**, either the Father according to the true Generation or



the Author of the mystical gift according to the regeneration of Baptism. Furthermore, he did not start by describing His generation, but first set forth His Baptism, desiring to show Him as God, the Author of all, weaving everything together through Baptism, and also stated that Christ derived from God in the order of succession, **in order to prove Him the Son of God according to the Nature, according to Grace, and according to the flesh.** Then what clearer evidence is there of Divine Generation, than that before speaking of His Generation, he premised the Father Himself saying, *This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased* (St. Matthew 3:17; St. Luke 3:22).

“12. **Here, too, some are wont to raise issues, that Matthew counted forty-two generations from Abraham to Christ, but Luke fifty, and that Matthew reported that the generations descended through some persons, and Luke mentioned others.** In this matter, ye can test what we said, that although Matthew wove some Forefathers of the Divine lineage, but Luke others, into the order of Generation, nevertheless, each indicated the remaining authors of the race from Abraham and David. 13. **But that Matthew thought the Generation should be derived through Solomon, but Luke through Nathan seems to show both a royal and a Priestly family of Christ.** We should not take it that one is more true than the other, but the one agrees with the other in equal faith and truth. **For according to the flesh, He was truly of a royal and Priestly family, King from Kings, Priest from Priests. Although the prophecy pertains not to the carnal, but the celestial, since a King exults in the power of God (cf. Psalm 20:1), to Whom judgment is committed by the King, His Father (cf. St. John 5:22), and a Priest is for ever. According as it is written, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 109:4).** Then, each fittingly kept faith, so that Matthew established His origin led through Kings, and Luke, by deriving the lineage of His race transmitted through Priests from God to Christ, declared His very descent the more holy. At the same time the image of a calf is indicated, insomuch as he thinks the Priestly mystery must be preserved. 14. Nor should ye marvel if there be more successions from Abraham to Christ according to Luke, and fewer according to Matthew, when ye discover that the Generation traverses different persons; for it can happen that some lived long lives, but those of another generation died prematurely ...

“15 We also observe that Saint Matthew recalled that Jacob who was the father of Joseph, was the son of Matthan, but Luke described Joseph to whom Mary was espoused as the son of Heli, but Heli was the son of Melchi. How does one man have two fathers, i.e., Heli and Jacob? And how does he have two paternal grandfathers, Matthan and Melchi? But if ye persevere, ye will find that, according to the precept of the Old Law, two brothers begot different uterine sons of a single wife (cf. Deuteronomy 25:5-6). For it is said that Matthan, who was descended from Solomon, begat his son Jacob and died, leaving a widow, whom Melchi afterward took to wife, and on whom Heli was begotten. Again, when Heli's brother [Jacob] died childless, Heli wed his brother's wife and begat a son Joseph. since consequent upon the Old Law, a brother raised up the seed of a dead brother. Thus he is called the son of two men, not begotten by each, but because he became the son of the one according to generation, and the son of the

other according to the Law ... ⁹

In this last paragraph St. Ambrose reverses the direction of the levirate marriage espoused by Africanus and Eusebius (and later Fathers), so that the physical line of descent goes from David through Nathan to Melchi to Heli to St. Joseph. Jacob and his son St. Joseph reenter David's royal line through Jechoniah by levirate marriage according to the Law of Moses thereby bypassing the curse on Jechoniah's line by physical descent. St. Ambrose discusses this curse at length also:

ST. AMBROSE REGARDING THE CURSE ON
KING JECHONIAH OF ISRAEL:

St. Ambrose is the first Patristic author after St. Irenaeus to consider the curse placed by the LORD on King Jechoniah (Jechonias/Coniah). He takes an interesting spin on the matter:

“40. Then, it is sufficiently clear concerning Ahab, whose wife was Jezebel (cf. 3 Kingdoms 16:31), and Jechonias, concerning who Jeremias is a fitting author, that he was guilty of a very serious crime, he from whom he took the name he bore (cf. 4 Kingdoms 23:34). And on this account, he who is called *Joachim* in the Book of Kings is named *Jechonias* by Jeremias, when he says, *Jechonias is dishonoured as a good-for-nothing vessel; for he is cast out, he and his seed. Earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Write this man an outcast: for there shall none of his seed at all group up to sit on the throne of David, as a prince yet in Judah* (Jeremias 22:28-30). For in his reign, the Babylonians laid waste Judah; (cf. 4 Kingdoms 24:1-6), nor could any man of his seed ever afterward obtain sovereignty in Judah, for after the people were released from the Captivity (cf. 2 Esdras 2:1, Nehemias 7:6) they were under Priests and tetrarchs. Hence even unto the Generation of Christ the tetrarchs remained, as far as history teaches, not even preserving the rank of the royal family for themselves ...

“43 But since Jechonias himself sat upon the throne of David, how is the saying fulfilled that the descendants of Jechonias will not sit upon the throne of David, although it seems that the same throne belonged to both? Therefore, we cannot deny that this was the throne of David, yet Christ did not sit upon the same throne of David as did Jechonias, indeed nor could any other of David's blood but Christ sit upon the throne, because nor is his seed eternal in any other man, but in Christ as God Himself revealed, saying, *Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie to David, his seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me* (Psalm 88:34-35). Whom does he mean here? Not Solomon, indeed, not Rehoboam, nor Nathan, but Him of Whom alone He can say, *I will set His hand in the sea, and His right hand in the rivers. he shall call upon Me and shall say: "My Father art Thou"* (Psalm 88:24-25), and, *I will establish his seed unto ages of ages, and His throne shall be as the days of Heaven* (Psalm 88:28). Surely, Solomon did not sit upon this throne, nor Rehoboam, nor Jechonias. Would ye know Who sat upon

9. Saint Ambrose of Milan, *Exposition of the Holy Gospel According to Saint Luke*, Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, Etna, CA, 1998, pp. 81-89. St. Ambrose wrote in Latin, thus the latinized names.

it? He of Whom the Angel says to Mary, *Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His Name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father: and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there shall be no end* (St. Luke 1:31-33). If ye do not believe the Angel, at least believe in the Lord Himself, saying, *Thou sayest that I am a King* (St. John 18:37). So did He Himself lie when He said that He reigns, He Who did not reign on earth? How is the Scripture fulfilled which says He reigns? 44. We are come to the difficulty of the argument, we are stuck fast in the shallows, and we waver on a shipwreck of truth. Then, let us appeal to Christ, let us ask Him, let Him reply. Let us ask the Scriptures. We find that the Lord's Kingdom is not of this world, for He Himself said, *My Kingdom is not of this world* (St. John 18:36). He Who says His Kingdom is not of this world shows that it is above the world. Thus, His Kingdom both was and was not, it was not in this age, it was above this age. Thus, there was another Kingdom of the true David, which Christ alone received, and there was another seed of David, which endure for ever, from which Christ alone was engendered ...¹⁰

THE GENEALOGY IN ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL IS THAT OF ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED, ACCORDING TO ST. EPIPHANIUS OF SALAMIS, BISHOP OF CYPRUS (AD 310-403)

St. Epiphanius, in his book *Against Heresies* 2.2-3 adds a new name in the genealogy of Christ's ancestors, the last name *Pantheros*¹¹ (Πάνθηρος = "supporting all animals"), which some modern authors speculate was added by the ancestors to be more competitive in the economy of the Greco-Roman world in an era when Jews had little or no civil rights in Palestine. He also adds the names of Christ's stepbrothers and step sisters:

"In this way **Joseph is the brother of Cleopha, he was the son of Jacob who was given the surname Pantheros**. These two were born from the one surnamed Pantheros. In this way, Joseph had his first wife from the tribe of Judah and she bears for him a total of six children, four males and two

10. Saint Ambrose, pp. 103-106.

11. The name *Pantheros* [other spellings include *Panthera*, *Panther*, *Pantherus* (Latin form), *Pandira*, *Pandera* (Aramaic forms)] associated with the genealogy of Christ first arises in Origin's (AD 185-254) book *Against Celsus* (a heretic). In Bk. 1, ch. 32,33, and 69, Celsus introduces a Jew. "speaking of the mother of Jesus, and saying that "when she was pregnant she was turned out of doors by the carpenter to whom she had been betrothed, as having been guilty of adultery, and that she bore a child to a certain soldier named Panthera... as Celsus thinks, by an act of adultery between Panthera and the Virgin?! ... But he [Celsus] disbelieves the accounts of His conception by the Holy Ghost, and believes that He was begotten by one Panthera, who corrupted the Virgin." Source: <https://charlesasullivan.com/1563/the-genealogy-of-christ-and-other-problems-part-1/> <https://charlesasullivan.com/tag/bar-panther/> Also in Origin, *Against Celsus, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol 4*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, pp. 410, 428. Also, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf04.vi.ix.i.xxxiii.html>, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf04.vi.ix.i.xxxiv.html>, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf04.vi.ix.i.lxx.html>

females.

"Just as they clearly explained (in) the Gospel according to Mark and according to John. The first is held to be James [the "brother" of the Lord], the one who was called "*Oblian*", interpreted the "*Wall*" and also called righteous and being a Nazarite which is to be interpreted as holy.

"Thus he [Joseph] brought fourth this **James**, I suppose having been born more or less in about the 40th year. After him a child named **Jose** is born. Next after him **Simeon**. Thereupon **Judas**. And two daughters who are named **Mary** and **Salome**. And then his wife died. Then after many years the widower takes Mary into marriage, estimating the age of life somewhere around 80 years and a man advanced (in age). At this time he takes Mary into marriage, as also it says in the Gospel, "for having been betrothed", it says, "belonging to Mary". And it does not say, "belonging in the state of marriage" And (it is) repeated again, "He did not know her."¹²

THE GENEALOGY IN ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL IS THAT OF ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED: ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

St. John Chrysostom (c. AD 349 - 407), in homilies II through IV on the *Gospel of St. Matthew*, eloquently discusses the genealogy in it at great length, assigning it specifically to St. Joseph the Betrothed, before he comes to the divine birth of the Son of God. Nowhere does he mention the curse on Jechoniah's line. Here he confirms that the genealogy in the *Gospel of St. Matthew* is that of St. Joseph the Betrothed by physical descent, provided for the Virgin Mary's sake:


"*Homily IV.4: Having then mentioned all His forefathers, and ending with Joseph, he did not stop at this, but added, Joseph the husband of Mary; intimating that it was for her sake he traced his genealogy also*. Then, lest when thou hast heard of the *husband of Mary*, thou shouldst suppose that Christ was born after the common law of nature, mark, how he sets it right by that which follows. "Thou hast heard," saith he, "of an husband, thou hast heard of a mother, thou hast heard a name assigned to the child, therefore hear the manner of the birth." *The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise*. "Of what kind of birth art thou telling me, I pray thee, since thou hast already mentioned His ancestors?" "I still wish to tell thee the manner also of His birth." Seest thou, how he wakens up the hearer? For as though he were about to speak of something unusual, he promises to tell also the manner thereof."¹³

ST. MATTHEW'S GENEALOGY IS BY PHYSICAL DESCENT AND ST. LUKE'S BY ADOPTION, AKA LEVIRITE MARRIAGE: ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (AD 354 - 430)

"Chapter II. 5 ...Thus, too, we can understand how **Luke**, in the genealogy contained in his Gospel, has named a

12. Charles Sullivan, *The Last Name of Christ*, in MPG Vol.42. St. Epiphanius. *Adversus Hæreses*. Lib. III. Tom. II: LXXVIII. Col. 709ff. Also, at <https://charlesasullivan.com/1563/the-genealogy-of-christ-and-other-problems-part-1/>

13. St. John Chrysostom, *Homily IV.4, Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 10*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, p. 21. Also, at <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf110.iii.IV.1.html>



father for Joseph, not in the person of the father by whom he was begotten, but in that of the father by whom he was adopted, tracing the list of the progenitors upwards until David is reached. For, seeing that there is a necessity, as both evangelists give a true narrative,—to wit, both Matthew and Luke,—that one of them should hold by the line of the father who begat Joseph, and the other by the line of the father who adopted him, **whom should we suppose more likely to have preserved the lineage of the adopting father, than that evangelist who has declined to speak of Joseph as begotten by the person whose son he has nevertheless reported him to be?** For it is more appropriate that one should have been called the son of the man by whom he was adopted, than that he should be said to have been begotten by the man of whose flesh he was not descended. Now when Matthew, accordingly, used the phrases, “Abraham begat Isaac,” “Isaac begat Jacob,” and so on, keeping steadily by the term “begat,” until he said at the close, “and Jacob begat Joseph,” he gave us to know with sufficient clearness, **that he had traced out the order of ancestors on to that father by whom Joseph was not adopted, but begotten.**”¹⁴

BY LEVIRITE MARRIAGE AS RECORDED IN AFRICANUS:
THE BLESSED THEOPHYLACT (C. AD 1050-1108)

“Some have asked how it is that Matthew says that Joseph was the son of Jacob, while Luke says that he was the son of Heli. It is impossible, they say, that one man could be the son of two fathers. In answer to this question, we say that Jacob and Heli were brothers of the same mother, but each had a different father. When Heli died childless, Jacob took Heli’s wife and begat a son from her. Thus it is said that Joseph was the son of Jacob by nature, but the son of Heli by law. Jacob begat Joseph physically and in actuality, and therefore is Joseph’s physical father, while Heli is the father of Joseph only according to the law. For the law commanded that if a man die childless, his wife should be joined to his brother, and the child that thus was born would be considered the child of the dead man, even though by nature he was the child of the man who was living. Thus the Evangelists speak well, and do not contradict each other. **Matthew records Joseph’s physical descent, while Luke records his father according to the law, that is, Heli, so that together the Evangelists might show that the Lord was born for this very reason, to sanctify both physical nature and the law.**”¹⁵

Having now traced through a millennium of Patristic Orthodox commentaries, it would appear very clear that the genealogy in the *Gospel According to St. Matthew* is the line of physical royal descent of St. Joseph the Betrothed from King David, through King Solomon, and through King Jechoniah whose subsequent line was cursed from ever sitting on the Throne of David or

14. St. Augustine of Hippo, *Sermon on the Mount, The Harmony of the Gospels, Book II*, Chapters II-III, in P Shaff (ed), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol 6*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA 1994, pp. 103-5. Also, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf106.vi.v.iii.html>, and <http://www.ccel.org/ccelschaff/npnf106.vi.v.iv.html>

15. Blessed Theophylact, *The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact of the Holy Gospel According to Luke*, Chrysostom Press, Hot Springs, MO, 1997, p. 46.

ruling over Israel and the nations. However, it allowed his espoused wife’s son, Jesus Christ, to be officially registered as a legal descendant of King David in the official public archives of the genealogies of Israel. The genealogy in the *Gospel According to St. Luke* is also the genealogy of St. Joseph the Betrothed, the “legal” son of Heli’s wife Estha, whose first husband Heli had died childless. Wherefore, Jacob raised up his physical son Joseph by Estha to be the continuing seed of Heli (by the levirite marriage laws) so that Heli’s line would not perish from Israel. St. Hilary of Poitiers suggested the two lines reuniting at St. Joseph the Betrothed also united Royal (St. Matthew’s genealogy) and Priestly (St. Luke’s genealogy) lines in Christ. But that is hard to prove from the genealogies and the information we have gleaned so far.

THE GENEALOGY OF THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN MARY

GENEALOGY OF ST. ANNA & ST. JOACHIM
ACCORDING TO THE *PROTEVANGELIUM OF JAMES*

The earliest information about the genealogy of the Most Holy Virgin Mary comes from the apocryphal *Protoevangelium of James*¹⁶ dating from the latter half of the second century AD. Origin of Alexandria was the first to mention the book. It was a popular work despite being unaccepted as genuine by several Church councils. In it the parents of the Virgin Mary were named Joachim and Anna. The work describes their lives up to the point that the Virgin Mary was received into the Temple in her third year.


... ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS (AD 676-749)

The genealogy of the Most Holy Virgin Mary was further delineated for us by St. John of Damascus in *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*:

“Chapter XIV.—Concerning our Lord’s genealogy and concerning the holy Mother of God.

“Concerning the holy and much-lauded ever-virgin one, Mary, the Mother of God, we have said something in the preceding chapters, bringing forward what was most opportune, viz., that strictly and truly she is and is called the Mother of God. Now let us fill up the blanks. For she being pre-ordained by the eternal prescient counsel of God and imaged forth and proclaimed in diverse images and discourses of the prophets through the Holy Spirit, sprang at the pre-determined time from the root of David, according to the promises that were made to him. For the Lord hath sworn, *He saith in truth to David, He will not turn from it: of the fruit of Thy body will I set upon Thy throne (Psalm 131:11 Lxx)*. And again, *Once have I sworn by My holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and His throne as the sun before Me. It shall be established for ever as the moon,*

16. *Protoevangelium of James* in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 8, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA 1994, p.361-3. Also, at <http://www.ccel.org/ccelschaff/anf08.vii.iv.html>



and as a faithful witness in heaven (Psalm 88:36-89 Lxx) And Isaiah says: *And there shall come out a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots (Isaiah 9:1).*

“But that Joseph is descended from the tribe of David is expressly demonstrated by Matthew and Luke, the most holy evangelists. **But Matthew derives Joseph from David through Solomon, while Luke does so through Nathan; while over the holy Virgin’s origin both pass in silence.**

“One ought to remember that **it was not the custom of the Hebrews nor of the divine Scripture to give genealogies of women; and the law was to prevent one tribe seeking wives from another. And so since Joseph was descended from the tribe of David and was a just man (for this the divine Gospel testifies), he would not have espoused the holy Virgin contrary to the law; he would not have taken her unless she had been of the same tribe.** It was sufficient, therefore, to demonstrate the descent of Joseph.

“One ought also to observe this, that the law was that when a man died without seed, this man’s brother should take to wife the wife of the dead man and raise up seed to his brother. The offspring, therefore, belonged by nature to the second, that is, to him that begat it, but by law to the dead.

“**Born then of the line of Nathan, the son of David, Levi begat Melchi and Panther: Panther begat Barpanther, so called. This Barpanther begat Joachim: Joachim begat the holy Mother of God.** And of the line of Solomon, the son of David, Mathan had a wife of whom he begat Jacob. Now on the death of Mathan, Melchi, of the tribe of Nathan, the son of Levi and brother of Panther, married the wife of Mathan, Jacob’s mother, of whom he begat Heli. Therefore Jacob and Heli became brothers on the mother’s side, Jacob being of the tribe of Solomon and Heli of the tribe of Nathan. Then Heli of the tribe of Nathan died childless, and Jacob his brother, of the tribe of Solomon, took his wife and raised up seed to his brother and begat Joseph. **Joseph, therefore, is by nature the son of Jacob, of the line of Solomon, but by law he is the son of Heli of the line of Nathan.** [Note: This would place Joseph under the curse on Jechoniah’s physical line as Africanus and Eusebius have outlined.]

“**Joachim then took to wife that revered and praiseworthy woman, Anna. But just as the earlier Anna, who was barren, bore Samuel by prayer and by promise, so also this Anna by supplication and promise from God bare the Mother of God in order that she might not even in this be behind the matrons of fame.** Accordingly it was grace (for this is the interpretation of Anna) that bore the lady: (for she became truly the Lady of all created things in becoming the Mother of the Creator). **Further, Joachim was born in the house of the Probatica, and was brought up to the temple.** Then planted in the House of God and increased by the Spirit, like a fruitful olive tree, she became the home of every virtue, turning her mind away from every secular and carnal desire, and thus keeping her soul as well as her body virginal, as was meet for her who was to receive God into her bosom: for as He is holy, He finds rest among the holy. Thus, therefore, she strove after holiness, and was declared a holy and wonderful temple fit for the most high God.¹⁷

17. St. John of Damascus, Bk 4, Ch. xiv, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, NPNF*, 2nd Series, Vol. 9, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, pp. 84-86.

Thus, St. John of Damascus has given us the paternal lineage of the Virgin Mary and confirmed her mother as Anna. The greater part of the Services of the Orthodox Church were composed in the 8th and 9th centuries, but were only compiled into the 12 volumes of the *Menaion* in the 16th century by Hieromonk Bartholomew of Imbros of the Monastery of Koutloumousiou, Mount Athos. The *Menaion* for September 8-9 contains services for the Birth of the Theotokos (the canon dates from the 9th century) as well as a commemoration for her parents affirming them to be Sts. Joachim and Anna, but not their ancestors. For the maternal line of Anna we have to look to the compiler of the *Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints*, St. Demetrius, Metropolitan of Rostov. (AD 1651-1709) who credits St. Epiphanius and St. John of Damascus as two of his sources.

THE LIVES OF STS. JOACHIM AND ANNA BY
ST. DEMETRIUS OF ROSTOV

“**The Holy righteous Joachim was descended from the tribe of Judah.** He traced his ancestry from the house of David thus: **from the line of Nathan, the son of David, Levi was born, Levi fathered Melchi and Panphira, Panphira fathered Barphira, and Barphira fathered Joachim, the father of the Mother of God. Joachim lived in Nazareth of Galilee and had a wife [Anna] of the tribe of Levi and the line of Aaron. She was the daughter of Matthan the priest,** who performed his office in the days of Cleopatra and Casoparus (also known as Sapor) of the Kingdom of Persia, prior to the reign of Herod, the son of Antipater. **Matthan had a wife, Mary, of the tribe of Judah,** an illustrious woman from Jerusalem, who bore him three daughters: Mary, Sovia [Sophia], and Anna. Of his daughters, the first to wed was Mary. She was married in Bethlehem and bore Salome. **The second to wed, likewise in Bethlehem, was Sovia, who bore Elizabeth, the mother of St. John the Forerunner. The third was Anna, the mother of the Theotokos,** who, as has been said, was given in marriage to Joachim in the town of Nazareth, in the land of Galilee. Such was the noble lineage of this couple, Joachim and Anna, who lived in accordance with the Law and were both righteous before God.¹⁸”

The Royal line in the Virgin Mary thus runs through David, Nathan, ...Levi, Panphira (Panther), Barpanphira (Barpanther), to her father St. Joachim. The Priestly line runs through Levi and Aaron to her mother Anna the daughter of Matthan the priest and his wife Mary (of the tribe of Judah). Thus, through Mary both the Royal Line of David through Nathan and a Priestly Line from Aaron join together in St. Mary which she bestowed upon her Son Jesus Christ. [See diagram on next page]

18. St. Demetrius of Rostov, *The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints*, Vol. 1, September 9, Chrysostom Press, Hot Springs, MO, 1994, p. 160-161.

THE GOOD WORD

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DIAGRAM OF THE GENEALOGICAL DESCENT OF STS. JOSEPH AND MARY, CHRIST JESUS, AND ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

