

# From which of David's sons was Jesus descended?

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Matthew 1:1-16 gives the genealogy of Jesus through Joseph, who was himself a descendant of King David. As Joseph's adopted Son, Jesus became his legal heir, so far as his inheritance was concerned. Notice carefully the wording of v.16: "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ" (NASB).

This stands in contrast to the format followed in the preceding verses of the succession of Joseph's ancestors: "Abraham begat [*egennēsen*] Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob, etc." Joseph is not said to have begotten Jesus; rather he is referred to as "the husband of Mary, of whom [feminine genitive] Jesus was born."

Luke 3:23-38, on the other hand, seems to record the genealogical line of Mary herself, carried all the way back beyond the time of Abraham to Adam and the commencement of the human race. This seems to be implied by the wording of v.23: "Jesus ... being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph." This "as was supposed" indicates that Jesus was not really the biological son of Joseph, even though this was commonly assumed by the public.

It further calls attention to the mother, Mary, who must of necessity have been the sole human parent through whom Jesus could have descended from a line of ancestors. Her genealogy is thereupon listed, starting with Heli, who was actually Joseph's father-in-law, in contradistinction to Joseph's own father, Jacob (Matt. 1:16).

Mary's line of descent came through Nathan, a son of Bathsheba (or

“Bathshua,” according to 1 Chron. 3:5), the wife of David. Therefore, Jesus was descended from David naturally through Nathan and legally through Solomon.

Archer, G. L. (1982). *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Originally published: *Encyclopedia of Bible difficulties*. 1982. Zondervan's Understand the Bible Reference Series (316). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

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