

Prophecy and Birth Narrative: The Line of Christ

1A Introduction:

1B The Line of Christ has many lessons, but ultimately when we follow this concept through Scripture the resounding lesson is that there is only one Christ, and Jesus of Nazareth is surely and necessarily the only one.

2B This is a great lesson to teach to Jews.

2A An interesting sidelight, Genesis Six:

1B Genesis 6:1-4 1 Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. 3 And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." 4 There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

2B The plot of angels (as taught in a previous lesson) threatened two parts of the plan of God.

1C First, it threatened the line of Christ.

2C Second, it threatened salvation by imputation.

3C The line of Christ was miraculously preserved by the flood and eight faithful fully human persons.

3B The Seed of Abraham:

1C First statement of promise, Genesis 12:1-3 1 Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

2C The seed statement, including the reason: Genesis 22:1-18 1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."

6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. 9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." 13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided." 15 Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— 17 blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

4B The seed promise continued in Isaac, and the reason: Genesis 26:1-5 1 There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. 2 Then the Lord appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. 3 Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. 4 And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5 because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

5B The seed promise continued in Jacob: Genesis 28:10-14 10 Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. 11 So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. 12 Then he dreamed, and behold, a

ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. 13 And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. 14 Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

6B The seed continues in Judah:

1C Genesis 49:1 1 And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days:

2C Genesis 49:8-12 8 "Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's children shall bow down before you. 9 Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him? 10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people. 11 Binding his donkey to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, And his clothes in the blood of grapes. 12 His eyes are darker than wine, And his teeth whiter than milk.

1D Until Shiloh comes is a notoriously poor translation.

2D It should be, "until the one comes to whom it belongs."

7B The seed continues in David:

1C Isaiah 11:1 1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

2C 1 Samuel 16:1 1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."

3C 2 Samuel 7:12-16 12 "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. 15 But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." ' "

4C Jeremiah 23:5 5 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

5C Psalm 89:3-4 3 “I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David: 4 ‘Your seed I will establish forever, And build up your throne to all generations.’ ” Selah

3A The seed cannot continue through Jehoiachin/Jeconiah/Coniah:

1B The last king of Judah was Jeconiah. It was under him that the southern kingdom was carted off into slavery in Babylon. 2 Kings 24:8-10, 8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem; and his mother’s name was Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. 9 He did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done. 10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon went up to Jerusalem, and the city came under siege.

2B On account of this, the line of the Messiah of Israel could not go through Jeconiah, or his shortened name, Coniah. This is the Coniah curse: Jeremiah 22:24-30, “24 “As I live,” declares the Lord, “even though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet ring on My right hand, yet I would pull you off; 25 and I will give you over into the hand of those who are seeking your life, yes, into the hand of those whom you dread, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans. 26 “I will hurl you and your mother who bore you into another country where you were not born, and there you will die. 27 “But as for the land to which they desire to return, they will not return to it. 28 “Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered jar? Or is he an undesirable vessel? Why have he and his descendants been hurled out And cast into a land that they had not known? 29 “O land, land, land, Hear the word of the Lord! 30 “Thus says the Lord, ‘Write this man down childless, A man who will not prosper in his days; For no man of his descendants will prosper Sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah.’ ””

3B Yet the promise for a Messiah remains. The seed would continue, just not through Jeconiah: Jeremiah 23:5-6, “5 “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. 6 “In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, ‘The Lord our righteousness.’

4B A solution is found in Matthew and Luke’s genealogies:

1C The line of Joseph came down from David through Jeconiah. Christ could not be the Messiah on account of this, not without God breaking His word.

2C The line of Mary came down through Nathan, and therefore has Messianic eligibility. But... Christ could not receive this through Mary, his mother. Matrilineal inheritance was not legal.

3C But God did an awesome thing: notice the statement in Luke... “Son of Joseph, Son of Eli” - an apparent contradiction from Matthew, “Jacob, father of Joseph, husband of Mary.”

1D Luke 3:23-24

2D 23 Καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὡσεὶ ἑτῶν τριάκοντα ἀρχόμενος, ὧν - ὡς ἐνομίζετο - υἱὸς Ἰωσήφ, τοῦ Ἡλίου, 24 τοῦ Ματθαίου, τοῦ Λευῖ, τοῦ Μελχί, τοῦ Ἰαννά, τοῦ Ἰωσήφ,

3D Kai autos en ho Iesus hosei eton triakonta archomenos, on hos enomizeto huios Ioseph, tou Heli, 24 tou Mathat, tou Levi, tou Melchi, tou Ianna, tou Ioseph

4D Now Jesus Himself was about 30 years old while beginning [ministry], being (it was supposed the son of Joseph), the son of Heli, the son of Mathat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Ianna, the son of Joseph.

5D There are three significant things here:

1E First is the absence of the definite article next to the first Joseph. Every other man in this genealogy has the definite article. That means that Jesus' step father Joseph was different.

2E Second is the parenthetical statement, "it was supposed the son of Joseph." This means that the first generation is suppositional, what everyone assumed at the time. It also means that Jesus wasn't the son of Joseph.

3E Third is a comparison with Matthew's genealogy.

1F Matthew 1:11-13 11 Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. 12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. 13 Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor.

1G Notice how Matthew's genealogy runs through the line of Jeconiah. If Jesus' *real* genealogy ran according to Matthew, then the Word of God would have been violated, since it was promised that the line of Coniah could not produce the Messiah.

2G When Luke goes through the same time, Jeconiah, Coniah, or Jehoiachin is not mentioned. Luke 3:27-28 27 the son of Joannas, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, 28 the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmodam, the son of Er,

2F The Greek of Matthew 1 also reveals some interesting things: Matthew 1:16 16 Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς, ὁ λεγόμενος χριστός.

3F Iakob de egennesen ton Ioseph ton andra Marias, ex hes egennethe Iesus, ho legomenos Christos.

4F Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary, from whom Jesus was fathered, who is called Christ.

1G Notice how the definite article remains attached to Joseph here. This really is Joseph's line, and in Joseph's line was Jeconiah/Jehoiachin /Coniah.

2G But also notice how careful Matthew is to separate Jesus from the line. Jesus was fathered (passive voice) from Mary.

5B The Statement:

1C Luke 1:35 35 Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ, καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι· διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ.

2C Kai apokritheis ho aggelos eipen aute, pneuma hagion epeleusetai epi se, kai dunamis hupsistou episkiasei soi; dio kai to gennomenon hagion klethesetai huios theou.

3C And after formulating an answer, the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the Holy One who is being born will be called the Son of God.

4C Although Matthew 1:16 indicates that Jesus was fathered by someone other than Joseph the husband of Mary, it does not say who this is.

5C But here we find that Jesus' Father was no one else than God Himself.

6C How was this conception achieved by God?

1D It happened in the womb of Mary. Luke 1:31 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.

2D It is also Mary who conceives. She is the active subject of this conception. This means that this conception occurred in a normal way.

3D It isn't like Mary was abducted by angels to their spaceship, where she was impregnated by some scientific means.

4D There two statements in Luke 1:35:

1E The Holy Spirit will come upon you.

1F There is first of all timing involved here: *eperchomai* carries with it the connotation of a significant moment in time. We might say "Christmas is upon us" in the same way.

2F Second, there is emphasis on position. Not in some crude sexual reference, which would be blasphemy, but position "over" in the sense of in control.

3F Genesis 1:2 is analogous. 2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. **And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.**

- 4F Immediately before creation, the Holy Spirit hovered over the face of the waters.
- 2E The Most High will overshadow you.
 - 1F This is again the Holy Spirit, but this emphasizes the deity of the Holy Spirit, a rare thing.
 - 2F Three other times in the Gospel accounts this verb appears, all referring to the transfiguration incident.
 - 3F Let's take Luke's account: Luke 9:34 34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud.
 - 4F The transfiguration overshadowing was not something out of thin air. It too has a referent in the Old Testament.
 - 5F This is the same overshadowing Person of the wilderness journey. Exodus 40:35-37 35 And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 36 Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. 37 But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up.
 - 6F So what happened with Mary was an overshadowing cloud, which was meant as a covering for the glory of the Lord, even as it would later at the transfiguration.
 - 7F Because it is an overshadowing cloud for the glory of the Lord, our view of the event is obscured. We will never know exactly *how* this conception occurred.
- 6B Mary was not God. But she became pregnant by the act of God.
- 7B The significance of the virgin pregnancy:
 - 1C It means no transmission of the sinful nature by the normal genetic procedure of fertilization through the man's seed.
 - 2C It makes impossible condemnation by the imputation of Adam's original sin.
 - 3C Because of this, it requires of Christ *absolute perfection of thought, word, and deed*.
 - 4C It is a sign to Israel that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Messiah.
 - 5C Isaiah 7:14 14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.
- 8B The One:
 - 1C There was only one child of the line of David, but not through Coniah, born in Bethlehem at the exact time of the fullness of God's plan.

- 2C Micah 5:2 2 “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”
- 3C Galatians 4:4-5 4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
- 4C The fullness of time was just at that time for many reasons in God’s economy, not all of which have to be revealed.
- 5C But certainly this had to be the generation because of the promise of Daniel 9:24-26 24 “Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. 25 “Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. 26 “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.
- 1D This famous prophecy is based on the concept established in the context of Daniel that the weeks mentioned are years.
- 2D It clearly establishes the death of the Messiah at Passover, 33 A.D.
- 3D That means that the Messiah had to be born a generation before.