One of the differences between the stories of Matthew and Luke in their infancy narratives is in their genealogies of Jesus (which for Luke, oddly enough, does not actually occur in his infancy narrative!). I know that genealogies are among the least favorite reading for many students of the Bible, and one may be a bit dismayed in starting to read the New Testament, with the very opening of the very first book, Matthew, to find a genealogy!

But I tell my students to suck it up: this one is only sixteen verses long. If they want a REAL genealogy, they should go to the book of 1 Chronicles in the Hebrew Bible: NINE chapters (count them, nine) of genealogies. When I was in college I took a correspondence course on the Bible and for the course we had to memorize verses as part of the assignment. I think the designers of the course had in mind verses like John 1:1; 1:14; 3:16; Romans 3:23 and so on. For my verses I chose some out of 1 Chronicles 3: “The sons of Hebron: Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shem. Shema became father of Raham, father of Jorkeam; and Rekem became the father of Shammai...” And so on. The course instructor was not amused. But hey, I was only following instructions!

Anyway, on the New Testament genealogies. I think I may have a few posts on them, since they are indeed interesting once you dig a bit and think about them in greater depth (which doesn’t take much work, since most people don’t think about them in any depth at all, but read them as quickly as possible to get to the meatier stuff.) To consider them adequately, you really need to look at the two of them individually, and I’ll do that. But it is interesting to notice the differences between the two. You can probably figure out a lot of these differences yourself, just by reading them (Matt. 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-38).

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