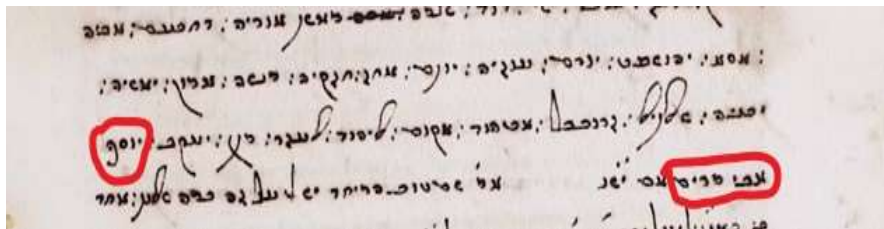


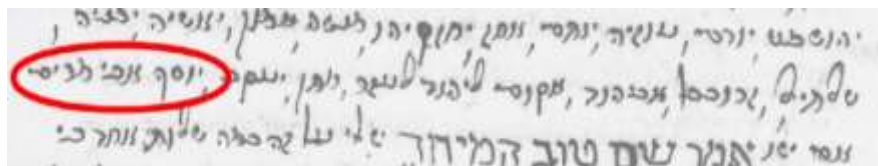
## JESUS' HEBREW GENEALOGY IN MATTHEW

Al Garza

In every known translation of the book, Matthew, regarding Matthew 1:16, has *Joseph the husband of Mary*, while Luke appears to have *Joseph, the husband of Mary*. So, what is the problem? The problem is that both genealogies do not go back up to King David the same. There are apparent contradictions between both that have been pointed out for centuries. But two Hebrew manuscripts that were discovered show something different. One Hebrew manuscript is at Oxford, while the other is at NY Jewish Theological Seminary. These are two independent manuscript witnesses. Both Hebrew text has in Matthew 1:16, "Joseph, the father of Mary." That means Luke records Joseph the *husband* while Matthew records Mary's *father*. Both parents of Jesus go back to King David, making Jesus a direct blood descendant.



13<sup>th</sup> Century Oxford MS Matthew 1:16 Bodleian Library  
MS. Oppenheim Add. 4° 111 77v "Joseph *father* of Mary."<sup>1</sup>



14<sup>th</sup> Century New York JTS at National Library, Israel,  
"Joseph, *father* of Mary."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup><https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/Discover/Search/#/?p=c+0,t+,rsrs+0,rsps+10,fa+,so+ox%3Asort%5Easc,scids+,pid+ad5d33b1-e475-4328-8efd-6040be77a2cb,vi+cd0aef60-2bcf-418f-9007-86b4256623ba>

<sup>2</sup>[https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/digitalibrary/pages/viewer.aspx?&presentorid=MANUSCRIPTS&docid=PNX\\_MANUSCRIPTS990000588040205171-1#|FL28188270](https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/digitalibrary/pages/viewer.aspx?&presentorid=MANUSCRIPTS&docid=PNX_MANUSCRIPTS990000588040205171-1#|FL28188270)

Without these two separate Hebrew Matthew manuscripts, one can argue that Jesus is not the Jewish Messiah. Without Mary's genealogy, Jesus is not a direct blood descendant of King David. Since Joseph is not biologically Jesus' father, there is no direct bloodline to King David without Mary. Clement of Alexandria also believed that Jesus' genealogy in Matthew ended with Mary being the fourteenth generation. "*And in the Gospel, according to Matthew, the genealogy which begins with Abraham is continued down to Mary, the mother of the Lord.*"<sup>3</sup> Without both Hebrew Matthew's genealogy, Matthew only has thirteen generations and not fourteen, as recorded in Matthew 1:17. Clement seems to have been looking at a possible Hebrew Matthew or a Greek Matthew that contained "Joseph, the father of Mary" and not the *husband*.

Let's look at how one foremost Greek New Testament textual scholar explains the modern variants of Matthew 1:16.

Bruce Metzger explains the variants of Matthew 1:16, none of which answer the direct contradiction between Luke and Matthew.

"Matthew 1:16, τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός {A} There are three principal variant readings: (1) "and Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ," is supported by a wide representation of textual families in early Greek and versional witnesses, including ⱼ1 & B C W vg syrp, h, pal copsa, (bo) geo. (2) "and Jacob begot Joseph, to whom being betrothed the virgin Mary bore Jesus, who is called Christ," is supported by several Greek and Old Latin witnesses (Θ f13 l 547 ita, (b), c, (d), g1, (k), q). Similar to this are the readings of the Curetonian Syriac manuscript, "Jacob begot Joseph, him to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, she who bore Jesus the Christ," and of the Armenian version, "Jacob begot [p. 3] Joseph the husband of Mary, to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, from whom was born Jesus who was called Christ." In the more complete form of the Liber generationis incorporated by Hippolytus in his Chronicle (completed about a.d. 234), the genealogy from Adam to Christ closes with the words Ioseph, cui dispensata fuit uirgo Maria, quae genuit Iesum Christum ex spiritu sancto (ed. by Rudolf Helm, 1955, p. 126; "Joseph, to whom was betrothed the virgin Mary, who [fem.] bore Jesus Christ from the Holy Spirit"). (3)

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/clement-stromata-book1.html>

“Jacob begot Joseph; Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the virgin, begot Jesus who is called the Christ,” is attested by the Sinaitic Syriac manuscript. Other witnesses have sometimes been supposed to support reading (3). Thus, in the Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila, an anonymous treatise (dating perhaps from the fifth century)<sup>2</sup> that presents a debate between a Christian and a Jew, Mt 1.16 is referred to three times. The third of these is a loose quotation of the commonly received text, Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν μνηστευσάμενον Μαριάμ, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (“And Jacob begot Joseph, who was betrothed to Mary, from whom was born the Christ the Son of God”).<sup>3</sup> The second quotation, which stands at the close of a rapid recapitulation of the genealogy, is Ἰακώβ δὲ τὸν Ἰωσήφ, ὃ μνηστευθεῖσα Μαρία. ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός (“And Jacob [begot] Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary, from whom was born Jesus who is called Christ”).<sup>4</sup> The first time that Mt 1.16 occurs in the Dialogue, the Jew quotes it in exactly the form given in (1) above and then follows it with his own inference, namely καὶ Ἰωσήφ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν λεγόμενον Χριστόν, περὶ οὗ νῦν ὁ λόγος, φησὶν, ἐγέννησεν ἐκ τῆς Μαρίας (“And [so] Joseph begot Jesus who is called [p. 4] Christ, about whom we are talking, it says, he begot [him] from Mary”).<sup>5</sup> Despite the protestations of Conybeare to the contrary,<sup>6</sup> it seems clear that these words are not a second citation added to the first, but are a Jewish interpretation of the commonly received text of Mt 1.16.<sup>7</sup> Another witness that is sometimes thought to support the reading of the Sinaitic Syriac is a twelfth century Jacobite Syrian writer, Dionysius Barsalibi, bishop of Amida. Hermann von Soden, for example, cites in his apparatus for Mt 1.16 the name of Barsalibi as patristic attestation entirely parallel with that of syrs. The evidence, however, is far from being so clear-cut, as the following account of the principal points will make obvious. In his Commentary on the Gospels Barsalibi discusses the syntactical difference between the ways in which the Greek and Syriac languages express “from whom” in Mt 1.16, but both the Greek and the Syriac, he declares, explicitly attest that Jesus was born of Mary and not from Joseph.<sup>8</sup> The critical point concerns Barsalibi’s comment on Mt 1.18, which reads as follows: “Here the manner of his [Jesus’] corporeal birth [the evangelist] teaches. When therefore you hear [the word] ‘husband’ [i.e., in ver. 19], do not think that he was born according to the law of nature – he who had constituted the law of nature. And when it comes to Joseph ܝܫܘܥ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܝܫܘܥ, and therefore afterwards it says, ‘Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah was thus,’ that is, not as the rest of men was he born, but a new thing is the manner of his birth, and higher than the nature of those who are [p. 5] born.”<sup>9</sup> The

words cited in Syriac can be translated either (a) “it says, ‘Who begot the Messiah,’” or (b) “it says that he begot the Messiah.” According to rendering (a), Barsalibi appears to be quoting from some manuscript or author, not identified here or elsewhere, whose text of Mt 1.16 paralleled the reading of the Sinaitic Syriac. On the other hand, according to rendering (b), Barsalibi is making his own summary exposition of Matthew’s account of Joseph’s relation to the Messiah. In either case, however, it is obvious that so far as Barsalibi is concerned he intends his quotation (if it be a quotation) or his summary exposition to be perfectly in accord with his earlier discussion of ver. 16 and his immediately following declaration that Jesus’ birth was unique. In other words, it appears that Barsalibi fully accepted the Peshitta text of ver. 16 (i.e. the reading designated (1) above). A third witness that has been thought to support the Sinaitic Syriac reading is one manuscript of the Arabic Diatessaron. Although Theodoret explicitly states that Tatian did not utilize the Matthean and Lukan genealogies in his Diatessaron, the mediaeval Arabic Diatessaron does contain them (ms. A includes the Matthean genealogy after I,81, and the Lukan genealogy after IV,29, but mss. B and E give them as an appendix after the close of the Diatessaron). At Mt 1.16 ms. A, which dates from the twelfth century, reads y‘qwb wld ywsf rjl mrym ’lthy mnh’ wld ’ysw’ ’lmsyh, “Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, who [masc.] of her begot Jesus the Messiah.”<sup>10</sup> (The other two manuscripts employ the correct feminine form, ’lty) That ms. A should in its special reading somehow reflect the text of a Greek manuscript of Mt 1.16 is, as Burkitt declares,<sup>11</sup> most unlikely. On the contrary it is altogether likely that the use of the masculine who is either a blunder of a careless copyist or the dialectal usage of the masculine relative for the feminine.<sup>12</sup> If then the relative is corrected, who of her will become of whom (fem.), [p. 6] and the second instance of the verb wld will be construed as a passive (was born), agreeing with the reading of the Peshitta version.<sup>13</sup> There appears to be, therefore, no substantial evidence to add in support of the singular reading of the Sinaitic Syriac (reading (3) above). What now are the relative merits of the three principal readings? The external evidence in support of (1) is extremely good: it is read by all known Greek uncial manuscripts except Θ, and by all other manuscripts and versions except the limited number that support (2) and (3). Transcriptional probabilities suggest that reading (2) arose (perhaps at Caesarea) because the expression “the husband of Mary” was thought to be misleading in a genealogical context. Lest the hasty reader assume that Jesus was the physical son of Mary and her husband Joseph, the text was altered to bring it into conformity with ver. 18 where the verb

μνηστεύεσθαι is used to describe the relationship of Mary to Joseph. On the other hand, if reading (2) be supposed to be original, it is exceedingly difficult to imagine why any scribe would have substituted reading (1) for such a clear and unambiguous declaration of the virginity of Mary. There is no evidence that reading (3) ever existed in a Greek manuscript of the first Gospel. The Committee judged that it arose either as a paraphrase of reading (2) – this was Burkitt's view – or as a purely mechanical imitation of the preceding pattern in the genealogy. Since every name in the genealogy up to Joseph is written twice in succession, it may be that the scribe of the Sinaitic Syriac (or an ancestor of this manuscript) carelessly followed the stereotyped pattern and in ver. 16, having made the initial mistake of repeating the word "Joseph," went on to produce reading (3)."<sup>4</sup>

There has been no genuine attempt to explain the apparent contradiction between Matthew and Luke until now. The Hebrew Matthews solve the problem that the Greek New Testament and all other translations failed to do. Clement and both Hebrew Matthew MSS are other witnesses to the Greek New Testament texts. The fourteen generations have meaning only in Hebrew. The Hebrew name for *David* has three letters with a total value of fourteen. So, three fourteen generations are represented by the name *David* in Hebrew.<sup>5</sup>

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"The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of *David*, the son of Abraham." (Matthew 1:1.)

No other translation, including Greek, has this meaning or understanding in the New Testament. Only Hebrew gives the reader the significance of three fourteen generations in Matthew 1:1.

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<sup>4</sup> Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary On The Greek New Testament*, second edition. Page 2, ISBN 3-438-06010-8 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Hebrew Dalet=4+Vav=6+Dalet=4, total sum is 14.