

Biblical Genealogies and the Law of Inheritance

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INTRODUCTION

If you were to take a survey of people who regularly read the Bible and ask them: *What are the most boring parts of the Bible? What are the least important parts of the Bible? What parts of the Bible have you never heard a sermon on?* chances are a good number of them would respond “the biblical genealogies” in each case.

Yet, the genealogies are in fact a treasure trove of information which help us understand several key aspects of biblical truth. In this essay I want to uncover some of these truths, especially as they relate to the laws of nature. However, before I jump into the legal aspects, allow me to establish a framework for our analysis by examining three non-legal aspects of the genealogies.

There are six principal biblical genealogies I want to consider, although my remarks are not limited to these six:

Gen. 5:1-32 - the lineage from Adam and Eve to Noah and his three sons

Gen. 10:1-32 - the Table of Nations, or the lineage of Noah’s sons until the dispersion of the world’s population after the Tower of Babel

Gen. 11:10-32 - the lineage of Shem (Noah’s son) down through Abram and his nephew Lot

1 Chr. 1:1 - 9:44 - the lineage from Adam to Abraham repeated, plus an expanded genealogy (including many siblings) from Abraham onward until the return of the Jewish exiles, including brief genealogies of Ishmael and Esau, but focusing on the twelve tribes of Israel, with particular emphasis on the descendants of David down about 20 generations

Mat. 1:1-17 - an abbreviated lineage from Abraham (Abram) to Jesus (ostensibly via Joseph)

Luk. 3:23-38 - in reverse order, the complete lineage from Adam to Jesus (ostensibly via Mary)

OK, so what can these genealogies teach us?

1. BIBLE AS FACT

Many people regard the Bible as merely a religious book, which is unfortunate. While I grant you parts of the Bible relate to spiritual matters, I suggest that none of its human authors ever intended to write a religious book, as such. Most of scripture is simply devoted to recording events as they occurred by people who witnessed them. A few portions were compiled by men who believed the information gathered from others was accurate. For the most part, the authors merely saw themselves as historians.

As for the prophets, they weren’t trying to be spiritual so much as they merely recorded what they believed God had told them. They saw themselves as messengers rather than as religious persons,

because their messages often ran contrary to what the religious establishment of their day was saying. And for the most part those prophecies concerned matters that were very tangible and temporal, *i.e.*, the rise and fall of kingdoms, of nations, of households, and of legacies. In other words, who would prosper in the long run, who would not, and who would be around to see it.

The fact those prophecies were often shrouded in symbolic language does not make them spiritual. Sad to say, that is exactly how many people read biblical prophecies today - as mainly spiritual lessons clothed in the language of allegory. But the prophets themselves, I am convinced, regarded their messages as literal to the extent they understood them. Of course, there are some instances when the prophets clearly did *not* understand their own messages and could only scratch their heads. But these would have been regarded (by the authors) as more mystery, than religion.

None of the biblical authors were trying to be mystical, holy, or to exercise religious authority as we normally think of it (*i.e.*, as those in charge of a religious institution or as directing the spiritual welfare of others). They often had great concern for others, but just wrote what they believed to be true. And truth can be, but is not necessarily, spiritual.

Note that I am *not* denying the Bible has a substantial religious aspect. Any book (actually, the Bible is a collection of books) which discusses sin and wickedness on the one hand, and holiness and righteousness on the other, pertains to religion. And here, I use the word *religion* in the sense given to it historically, as “the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it.” Virginia Declaration of Rights, §16 (1776). So what I mean to say, and what I actually already have said, is that the Bible is not *merely* a religious book.

In other words, the Bible has more in it than just religious stuff. That non-religious stuff is substantial and extensive, and it is also important, *i.e.*, worthy of our attention. Thus, I begin my analysis with the assumption that the biblical genealogies are neither spiritual nor religious. Neither are they symbolic or allegorical. They are simply a record of what happened.

One of the most unappreciated aspects of the biblical genealogies is that they help establish the biblical record as *fact, not myth*. The genealogies are not just a sequence of names - rather, they are interspersed with historical data that link them with real historical events and cement them as a credible witness of the past. And since the genealogical records span the entire time from creation until Christ, they help cement the factual nature of the entire Bible, not merely the genealogies themselves.

Take for instance, the Matthew genealogy. Listed there among all the fathers and sons are the names of four wives: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and “the wife of Uriah” (*i.e.*, Bathsheba). Each of these women played a crucial role in the early history of the nation of Israel, and a substantial amount of scripture is devoted to each of them.

Tamar’s story is recounted in Gen. 38:6-30 and is part of the larger narrative of Judah’s life. It is a fascinating story of a woman who started out as Judah’s daughter-in-law, but ended up as his concubine and the mother of Judah’s twin sons. Rahab, of course, was the harlot of Jericho who

helped the Israeli spies and was spared when the walls of Jericho fell. Her story comprises the better part of two chapters, Josh. 2 & 6. Ruth the Moabite widow, has an entire book devoted to her story of faithfulness to her mother-in-law Naomi and her redemption by Boaz. Bathsheba was the woman with whom David committed adultery and who became the mother of Solomon. Her account is told in 2 Sam. 11 & 12, and 1Ki. 1 & 2.

Thus, when reading the Matthew genealogy we know who these women were. They were historical people who really existed are not merely mythological figures or spiritual archetypes. They lived in the real world, endured real suffering and experienced real triumphs. Their inclusion in the genealogy is a testament to the authenticity of the genealogy as a whole.

Of course, many of the men named in the Matthew genealogy are known historical figures as well, and their individual stories are additional evidence that these were real people and not mythical figures. Yet, I find the inclusion of the women particularly helpful in taking the genealogy out of the realm of the abstract and placing it squarely in the domain of historical fact.

But that isn't all. The genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11, taken together, provide useful timeline information from Adam down to Abram. In those accounts we are provided with how long each person lived, and how old they were when their principal heir was born. We will consider the usefulness of that information next, but at this point I merely want to point out the fact such data exists helps to establish the genealogies as factual and not merely mythical or allegorical.

Especially given that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are viewed by many Christians as non-historical, the type of data we find in Gen. 5 and 11 provides an additional basis (that is, in addition to the other historical facts presented in Genesis) for considering the genealogies as historical fact. This, in turn, further supports the understanding that all the events described in the first eleven chapters of Genesis are historical fact and not mere myth or allegory.

Which is crucial, given that so many of our most fundamental legal principles, including equality, religious freedom, private property, economic liberty, family relationships and mankind's dominion over the creation (to name but a few) all spring from a literal/historical reading of Genesis 1 thru 11. Not to mention that our whole understanding of the fall, man's sinful nature and the absolute necessity of redemption all rest on a shaky foundation if the events of Genesis 3 are not factually and literally true.

By this I mean either we are all of us - every single person - a physical descendant of Adam and the inheritor of a pre-disposition to sin *as a matter of absolute fact*, or the whole story only has as much weight as we choose to give it. If fact, then it doesn't matter what any of us believe, we are all objectively sinful. If not fact, then the whole thing becomes subjective and a lot less like a universal truth. Establishing the Genesis account as a fact is crucial if it is to be understood as *truth*.

2. CHRONOLOGY

The chronological data contained in the genealogies of Gen. 5 & 11 help us establish a reliable time

line for the earliest 2,000 years of human history which we would otherwise be unable to construct. Today, it is common to look to science as the means of establishing dates in the past, such as by using various techniques to date rocks, artifacts, and bones, etc. What many people do not realize is the extent to which these techniques are inherently flawed, biased or based on assumptions which are unprovable.

Not to digress too far, but radioactive dating (for example) uses the rate of radioactive decay to date objects. It sounds straightforward - downright mathematical - but before you can calculate the amount of decay in something, you first have to know: 1) how much of the radioactive element was in the environment to begin with; 2) when the rock, bone or other artifact was created, whether it was *made* from radioactive materials (and how old they were) or *exposed* to radioactivity later on (and if so, when and for how long); and 3) what the rate of decay for various radioactive isotopes has been at all times in the past.

The hard truth of the matter is that scientists do not actually know any of these things, and they cannot travel back into the past to observe or measure any of them. They can tell us with a great amount of certainty the prevalence of radioactive materials in the world *today*, how much is present in any specific rock or layer of rock, bone or artifact *today*, and what the rate of decay of various radioactive isotopes is *at present*. But none of that actually answers questions about the radioactivity of objects arising 5,000 years in the past.

Did that animal bone acquire radiation from food consumed by the animal when it was alive, or was the bone exposed to radiation after some man carved it, moved it to another region or habitat, and then buried it with other radioactive objects? Who migrated 500 miles - the animal, or the man, or were both carried away by Noah's flood to a place far away when the sedimentary rock layers later hardened around their carcasses?

So scientists make assumptions - educated guesses, perhaps, but guesses nonetheless - about all of these things. A common assumption is that the historical rate of radioactive decay of various isotopes is relatively constant, when this cannot be verified. The end result is a very precise mathematical calculation based on several assumptions of the scientist, any one or all of which could be wrong, and therefore the result can be very imprecise.

Let me suggest that in considering possible evidence for when things occurred in the past, historical accounts (written by observers at the time) is every bit as competent and credible, perhaps even more so, than guesses by people removed from the events by thousands of years. A consensus of scientists neither constitutes, nor contradicts, an eye-witness. If it's competent testimony about the past you are looking for, I'll take people *who were there* over rocks every time.

But scientists will argue that is how we must proceed to look back in time before there were any human observers. To which I say, that to postulate there even was a time when there were no human observers is itself an unprovable assumption. One that is widely held, no doubt. But if there is one thing the biblical genealogies does for us, it is to give us a historical and intellectual basis for asserting that human observers were around from the beginning of time. In other words, there never

was a time when there were no human observers - unless you count the first five days of creation.

But you raise an objection - wasn't Genesis written by Moses and didn't he live about 2,500 years after creation? Actually, the Bible never says Genesis was written by Moses. It was most likely written by those who lived at the time, which records were handed down to and compiled by Moses. Ironically, you would never know Moses lived 2,500 years after creation *but for the fact* of the biblical genealogies. No scientific calculation would ever yield that result. [Aside: If you want to know who wrote Genesis, consider the repeated statement, *these are the generations of so-and-so* as a possible indication of authorship.]

It is solely because of the data contained in the Genesis genealogies that we are able to construct any kind of useful time line for human history. Granted, the dates of birth and death are not as precise as we would like - there are no months and days, only years, for dates preceding the advent of the Jewish calendar. And most dates indicating a month and day after the advent of the Jewish calendar relate to events other than dates of birth or death.

Nonetheless, it is no stretch to assume the lifespans given are accurate plus or minus one year, so that the law of averages will make the overall numbers fairly accurate. Even if we assume, as a worst case scenario, each lifespan could be off by as much as a full year (more or less), when you realize there are only 77 generations from Adam to Christ (as indicated in Luke's genealogy), it means that the time line between them (based on genealogical data) is about 4,000 years plus or minus only 77 years. Not 100,000 years, or even 10,000 years. Thus, the range for error is pretty darn small, and for purposes of mapping out history, almost negligible.

This makes dating certain events (within a few dozen years) fairly easy. Thus, for example, Noah's flood occurred around 1656 after creation (A.E.), or 2344 B.C. (that is, give or take 10-15 years). The dispersion following the Tower of Babel came a mere 150 or so years later. Abraham was born around 1950 A.E., or 2050 BC. The Exodus occurred about 1460 BC, and David was king in 1,000 BC (again, give or take a few years).

We can tell, within a few dozen years, when all of the O.T. divine covenants were inaugurated (Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic). We can chart, with some certainty, the progress of various nations and key interactions between them, such as the Exodus, the deportation to Babylon, the rebuilding of the temple, etc. In short, the biblical genealogies make it possible for us to see the overall plan of history, to understand its patterns, and (ultimately) to see where it is going.

One of the side lights of biblical chronology is to see which of the patriarchs were alive at the same time. For example, Adam was still alive when Noah's father (Lamech) was born eight generations later. Methusaleh - the world's oldest man at 969 years and Noah's grandfather - died in the year of the flood. Methusaleh and Adam were both alive for an overlap of about 243 years.

How easy do you suppose it could have been for Adam to communicate information - documents, possibly - to Methusaleh, who then passed them on to Noah, who was about 600 years old at the flood? It's not like that information would need to be handed down from father to son over many

generations and thereby subject to corruption. Also remember that prior to Babel, all of mankind lived in the same general region and was not spread around the globe as people are today.

When you realize that Noah was alive for the first 56 years of Abraham's life, and that they could quite possibly have talked directly with each other (even though the nations had scattered by that point), it is conceivable that information going all the way back to creation could have landed in Abraham's hands in only three transfers - Adam to Methusaleh, Methusaleh to Noah, and Noah to Abraham. Just like that, information about the first 2,000 years of human history *as recorded by the people who were there*, could have landed in the care of Abraham to pass down to his descendants. Of course, you have to assume the earliest men were not merely glorified apes who grunted and pointed as their best means of communication. *Ugh! Mwanawana goo goo!*

If we were to take the Genesis genealogies as merely myth or allegory, it would be the same as not having them at all from a chronological standpoint, and we would know none of these things.

At this point I must urge a caution, that history, chronology and the dating of events are not things that lend themselves to extreme mathematical precision or symmetry. I have seen many instances of how people have tried to calculate the exact number of days between biblical events, organize those numbers into mathematical patterns or formulae, and inevitably extrapolate those computations to predict when future events will occur. That is not why the genealogical data is given to us.

Is the data useful for history, chronology and dating? Yes. But it is not full of wondrous secrets waiting to be unlocked by careful mastery and manipulation using number theory. The genealogical data is *historical fact*, not a *mathematical code*. The Bible tells us that God keeps some things hidden until He decides to reveal them. Deut. 29:29; 1 Cor. 2:7; Col. 1:26, 2:3. What that means is that if God has hidden secret truths in the numbers of the Bible, nothing you do can ever unlock or discover those secrets until God is ready to reveal them. I mean reveal them by *His word*. So don't waste your time playing with the numbers. You are not ever going to crack God's code (if there is one) or hack His system. The things God hides cannot be found.

But the general timing, sequence and flow of history is not one of those secret things. These are things which can be known - not based on science, but on eye-witness testimony - and put to good use to enhance our understanding of the world if we are open to it.

3. ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology is generally regarded as the study of humanity, including a descriptive study of human societies - especially race, culture and ethnicity. What I want to do here is briefly consider how these aspects of anthropology are informed by the genealogies of Gen. 10 & 11. I'm not trying to be scholarly here, nor am I playing scientist. I'm just trying to show in a non-technical way how the genealogies inform some basic aspects of our understanding of humanity so as to illustrate the wealth of information the genealogies provide.

Biological anthropology

The starting point of conventional wisdom is that mankind originated at least 100,000 years ago, people gradually evolved from lower ancestral forms of life, and multiple family lines developed more or less concurrently. In other words, popular science completely rejects a history of mankind that is only 6,000 years, the separate (or special) creation of man distinct from the origin of other animals, and the idea that the whole human race is the product of only two original people.

However, there is a slight mathematical problem, wonderfully described in *Evolution and the Population Problem*, Institute for Creation Research, by Henry Morris, Ph.D., March, 1975. See <http://www.icr.org/article/67/>. Compare this with data regarding the current world population at <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>.

The problem is this: if humanity originated the way conventional wisdom posits it, at current or relatively recent population growth rates (between 1% and 2%; currently at about 1.13% per year), there would be a current world population several orders of magnitude greater than what we actually have. Thus, either mankind originated significantly less than 100,000 years ago, or the historic population growth rate was just a tiny fraction of what it is today.

Morris takes the former approach: “an initial population of only two people, increasing at 2% per year, would become 3.5 billion people in only 1075 years. ... [A]n average population growth rate of only (1/2)% would generate the present world population in only 4000 years.” Worldometers takes the opposite approach, positing that human population grew at a rate of only 0.05% for most of world history until A.D. 1800. In other words, that people reproduced at only 0.04% of the current growth rate for 99,000 years. Which is more plausible? Do you see how your answer depends more on your assumptions than it does on the math?

Now start from a biblical perspective, as informed by the genealogies. Namely, that the entire world population started with only two individuals about 6,000 years ago; that all but 8 persons were wiped out about 4,360 years ago in a worldwide flood, and that everyone alive today is a descendant of those eight survivors. I will not rehearse here the math and science involved, but suffice it to say the biblical record is sufficient to explain the origin of the human race and the present population of the world from a very few individuals only a few thousand years ago.

If you want more information on this matter, I gratefully acknowledge and recommend for your perusal: *ABO Blood and Human Origins*, Institute for Creation Research, by Daniel Criswell, Ph.D., February, 2008. See <http://www.icr.org/article/abo-blood-human-origins/>. Criswell concludes: “Whether the origin of blood type O was in Adam and Eve at Creation or whether it arose as a mutational event that took place shortly before or after the Flood, it strongly supports that all humans today are descendants of two individuals or a small group of people that eventually populated the globe.”

Thus, the biblical account of biological anthropology can be reasonably corroborated by math and science and ought to be trusted.

Socio-cultural anthropology

Similarly, standard evolutionary thinking regards nations and cultures as things which developed slowly over time - assuming, in essence, that all nations and cultures have been invented or instituted by men. One of the consequences of this mode of thinking is that nations and cultures can be either retained or disposed of according to the unfettered discretion of the people.

In recent years, this has manifested in two distinct ways: 1) multiculturalism, or the promotion of multiple cultural traditions within a nation; and 2) globalization, or the process of international integration across national borders. The first assumes that all cultures and traditions are inherently equal in value and benefit to mankind. The second assumes that whatever mankind constructed in the past can be deconstructed in the future, leading to a disdain and disregard for nations and national borders.

However, the biblical genealogies inform us of the Tower of Babel experience, which occurred in the vicinity of 150 years \pm 50 years after the global flood ended. There were at that time 70 family groups comprising around 1,000 people (all descended from the eight flood survivors). The fallout from the Tower of Babel is that those 1,000 people were scattered around the earth - not randomly, but "according to their genealogies, by their nations." [Gen 10:32]. Furthermore, each family group was isolated from the others by reason of a language barrier. See, Gen. 11:7-9.

Thus, the biblical record - specifically the Table of Nations genealogy - thoroughly explains the origin of nations among men. The development of distinct national and/or ethnic cultures was a direct result of families being separated from each other by language barriers which took many generations to overcome.

The main upshot of which is this: the existence of nations is neither the idea nor the creation of any man or group of men. Nor are nations the product of a diverse evolutionary development of the human species. Rather, nations are the special and deliberate creation of God. Cultures, on the other hand, *are* the creation of men, the value and benefit of which largely depend on the extent to which they conform to the will of God (meaning, cultural traditions are *not* all equal).

One can reasonably infer from this that God did not intend for men to ever undo what God had done. (Go ahead - try and name anything God has created that mankind has the right to destroy.) This strongly suggests there is a "sanctity" of nations, and it is not the lawful business of mankind to unify the nations under a single government or economy. It is no wonder that evolutionary thinking denigrates the thing God has created (nations) and worships the thing man has created (cultures).

At this point I remind you that in accordance with a biblical worldview, *governments* are instituted (or created) by men, but *nations* are created by God. We must be careful to observe the distinction between nations and governments - they are not the same. For further information on this topic, I expound on it at length in the essay, *The Right to Alter or Abolish the Government*, by Gerald R. Thompson, 2014. See,

<http://www.lonang.com/commentaries/foundation/right-to-alter-or-abolish-government/>.

Linguistic anthropology

Ditto for the analysis of how languages developed. The evolutionary model assumes geographic dispersal caused diversity of languages. In other words, dispersal came first, and the development of separate languages came afterwards over the course of many years. The biblical record, as contained in Genesis, is just the reverse. Yes, of course these two things are linked to each other. But in Gen. 11:9 we are told that God confused the languages of all the people alive at the time of Babel (ostensibly in a single day, not over many years), and *then* the people were dispersed as a direct result. People *had* to disperse, because they could not communicate with each other.

This is repeatedly confirmed by the Table of Nations genealogy. See Gen. 10:5, 20, and 31. Again, the assignment of languages was not random, but was based on family groups. This allowed each family group to propagate and become the progenitors of separate nations. For more information, see *The Mystery of Human Language*, Institute for Creation Research, by Henry Morris, Ph.D., 2001. See <http://www.icr.org/article/mystery-human-language/>. Also, *Human Languages Fit a Young Earth Model*, Institute for Creation Research, by Brian Thomas, M.S., 2011. See <http://www.icr.org/article/human-languages-fit-young-earth-model/>.

These three things - the Bible as fact, chronology and anthropology - serve as a backdrop or context which enables us to then press on to the legal consequences of the biblical genealogies. In other words, now knowing that the biblical genealogies inform us as to how and why human societies were formed, they further help us understand certain key aspects of God's laws which He has revealed to those societies. Of those, I now want to consider four, namely, the *Law of Inheritance*, *Applicability of the Divine Covenants*, *Who Jesus Is*, and the *Virgin Birth*.

4. LAW OF INHERITANCE

Earlier I mentioned that the biblical genealogies, while they sometimes mention wives, mothers and sisters, only trace the male lineage, never the female line. To be sure, there are some instances in 1 Chronicles where the male descendants of a particular woman are delineated, but the biblical genealogies never trace a person's female ancestors or his or her female descendants. Even Mary's genealogy in Luke, though it terminates with her, is strictly concerned with her male ancestors. Why is this?

It is not because the biblical genealogies are part of any ideological system that men are inherently dominant or superior to women. Neither are the genealogies indicative of an unjust social system that oppresses women. Frankly, none of what we are about to discuss was the idea of any man or group of men because - I suggest - it was, and is, God's idea.

I start with the assumption that the genealogies, as much as any other part of the Bible, are God-breathed, Holy Spirit inspired, and ultimately authored by God. Thus, not man invented or man perverted. And if that is the case, it may profit us to ask why God would do things this way, whether there is any way to make sense of it, and what we can learn about our world if this be so.

Let me suggest that there is such a thing as *the law of the nature of inheritance*, which is to say, there is a law of inheritance which is part of the law of nature. In biology, the *law of genetics* is such that each human child takes equally from both parents, one of which must be male, and the other which must be female. However, according to the law of the nature of inheritance (hereafter, the *law of inheritance*), each child takes solely from the father and the mother is disregarded. So while genetics says a child takes from his parents 50-50, for purposes of inheritance a child takes 100% from the father and 0% from the mother. Thus the difference between science and law.

It is most important that these two laws of genetics and inheritance not be confused. The law of genetics applies in the physical realm which mainly pertains to biology. The law of inheritance applies in the legal realm which mainly pertains to authority over property, the right to rule, and also goes to the matters of nationality and ethnicity. Before you get up in arms over gender-equality, let us see what evidence there is in the scriptures for this law of inheritance.

Matthew Genealogy

I have already noted that the Matthew genealogy makes reference to four women in the lineage from Abraham to Jesus, namely, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. I should also note here the general significance of the Matthew genealogy which I will discuss at length later on, namely, that it establishes the right of Jesus to rule the nation of Israel as the heir of David. So this genealogy is pretty darn important.

Imagine, if you will, that the Matthew genealogy was defective and insufficient to establish Jesus' claim to the throne of David. This would be pretty darn important, as well. And that is exactly the result we should expect - *if* the right to rule is to be inherited pursuant to the law of genetics, *i.e.*, 50-50 from the father and the mother. Why? Because there are several women in the lineage which are not Israelite, and at least two of which are not even descendants of Abraham through any child other than Isaac. If the law of genetics is controlling here, Jesus has a real problem.

The scripture does not indicate the nationality of Tamar, but in any event we can be fairly certain she was not Jewish. Why? Because Jews, or to be more precise Israelites, were descendants of the sons of Israel (*i.e.*, Jacob). Tamar, the concubine of Judah, was undoubtedly neither a child or a sister of Judah or any of his brothers, as the sons of Jacob were themselves still in the process of having the first generation of descendants. Tamar may have been a remote descendant of Abraham though one of his sons other than Isaac, but at least she was not an Israelite.

Rahab's ethnic identity is not identified either, but since she was not a part of the Israelite nation which had escaped from Egypt and undergone 40 years of testing in the Sinai, she could not have been Jewish. Most likely she was a Canaanite, since Jericho (where she resided with her father's household) was located in Canaan. And Canaanites were descendants of Ham, not Shem (of the sons of Noah).

Ruth is specifically identified in scripture as a Moabite (Ru. 1:4), or a member of the nation of Moab, who were descendants of Moab the grandson of Lot (Abraham's nephew). Thus, she was not

a Jew or a descendant of Abraham. Bathsheba, in contrast to these other women, appears to have been an Israelite.

But here is the point: none of that matters. The purpose of the Matthew genealogy, remember, is to show that Jesus was a descendant of both Abraham and David. And in reckoning this lineage, the ethnicity of the mother never enters into the equation. It would not have mattered if every single wife and mother from Abraham down to Jesus was a non-Jew. As long as each male in the lineage was a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, then the lineage of Jesus as a descendant of Abraham and David is intact due to the operation of the law of inheritance.

If this were not the case, *i.e.*, the law of inheritance is not what I say it is, then the lineage of Jesus would be tainted or polluted by the presence of non-Israelite women in the genealogy. If, on the other hand, the lineage is untainted, then it must be because the ethnicity of the women is always to be disregarded as irrelevant, strongly suggesting that for all purposes with which the Matthew genealogy is concerned, only the fathers are important in determining the character and quality of that inheritance which is passed to the next generation.

Property Laws

There is an interesting property case in the Old Testament I like to refer to as *In re The Daughters of Zelophehad* found in Num 27:1-11 and Josh 17:3-4. In legal cases, the term *in re* (or, *in the matter of*) refers to a judicial proceeding having some item of property at the center of the dispute rather than adverse parties.

Zelophehad was an Israelite of the tribe of Manasseh who died and was survived by five daughters and no sons. At this point the nation of Israel was still quite young, just having emerged from the 40-year wilderness experience and the rudimentary principles of property transactions were just being established. Moses is still alive. In the immediately preceding chapter (Num 26), Israel had just undergone its second census, being the one which numbered the people emerging from Sinai.

At the conclusion of the census, even before Israel had taken possession of most of its Promised Land, God laid down the rule for property distribution. “The land shall be divided by lot. *According to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit.*” Num. 26:55. So here the law of inheritance was expressly made applicable to property in the land of Israel.

What is unstated, but necessarily implied, is that only the sons would inherit from their fathers. If the second, or any succeeding, generation were also to inherit from their fathers, of necessity the only persons who can inherit must be limited to those who will one day become fathers themselves. Thus, as an initial rule, no provision was made for either wives or daughters to inherit.

But now comes the wrinkle, which had to happen eventually, where a man dies leaving no sons to inherit from him. And now, the daughters of Zelophehad have presented Moses with this exact problem.

Notice that this case presents two problems which must be resolved. First, who was eligible to receive Zelophehad's inheritance: would it be the daughters, would it go to another relative of Zelophehad, or would it escheat to the nation or tribe and be auctioned to the highest bidder? Second, how to guard against the scenario that land allotted to a particular tribe might end up in the hands of a different tribe, thus altering the geo-political structure of ancient Israel?

The two questions are related, but separate. The first relates to what Blackstone called the *laws of descent*, or *who* is eligible to receive *what* from a decedent. The second question relates to the theocratic laws of ancient Israel which, generally speaking, have no relation to modern Gentile nations. But there is an underlying principle of a general nature which controls the outcome in both cases, namely, the law of inheritance.

Let's review what the law of inheritance is: for purposes of inheritance a child takes 100% from the father and 0% from the mother. In the case of Zelophehad, notice there is no mention of his wife. Whether she is alive or dead at the time is irrelevant - under no circumstances can she inherit. In other words, the wife inherits (if at all) *only from her father, not her husband*. Thus, she plays no part in this little drama. As for the daughters, Moses was instructed to "transfer *the inheritance of their father* to them." Num. 27:7. So yes, daughters could inherit in some instances.

In this way the first question (who was entitled to inherit) was answered in relevant part by the law of inheritance: a father's inheritance goes to his children. For the mother's part, anything she may have inherited from her father went to Zelophehad upon their marriage. And if she survived him, the mother was bypassed in allocating the inheritance.

The second question (preservation of tribal integrity) is also answered by the law of inheritance. To understand the problem and its solution, consider what would have happened if the daughters of Zelophehad (of the tribe of Manasseh) shared his estate, and then married men from other tribes of Israel - say, Reuben, Gad, Simeon, Benjamin and Levi. When it came time for the grandsons of Zelophehad to inherit, the land they would take from their father's estates would be regarded as belonging to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Simeon, Benjamin and Levi, respectively. In point of fact, the land would have been assigned to those tribes immediately upon the marriages of Zelophehad's daughters.

This would cause enormous geo-political problems by re-allocating the specific portions of land deeded by God to each tribe. Not to mention the added problem of vesting land in the tribe of Levi, which was prohibited from owning any portion in the land. Num. 18:20. So the solution was simple, *i.e.*, require each of the daughters to marry a man from the tribe of Manasseh, which is what they did. In this way, the geo-political integrity of the various tribes would be maintained.

It is easy for us to get caught up in the tribal geo-political structure of the problem and then dismiss it as something irrelevant to us today. After all, that system was put into place as part of the unique theocratic laws of ancient Israel, which always were, and always will be, inapplicable to Gentile nations. But don't lose sight of the underlying operation of the law of inheritance, which is *not* part of ancient Israel's theocratic laws (because it has far wider application than merely ancient Israel),

and therefore still has importance.¹

Curious, that we see the example of the ancient Jewish laws of descent mirrored in other nations throughout history. According to Blackstone,

“A second general rule or canon is, that the male issue shall be admitted [*i.e.*, inherit] before the female.” “This preference of males to females is entirely agreeable to the law of succession among the Jews, and also among the states of Greece, or at least among the Athenians; but was totally unknown to the laws of Rome.” William Blackstone, 2 *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Ch. 14 (1766).

He then noted the extent to which various other nations did or did not follow the same principle, which it is not necessary for us to review. However, I present this quotation to show that the law of inheritance as I have here described it was not limited to the nation of ancient Israel. One of the tests of whether a rule is part of the law of nature is whether it is commonly recognized among the civilized nations of the world. The law of inheritance is such a law.

Ethnicity

I suggest that ethnicity or nationality also follows the law of the nature of inheritance. Meaning, that every person takes his or her ethnicity from the father and no part from the mother. The rule applies to women and men equally. And while the principle is easily observed with respect to ancient Israel (though not without some controversy), it is by no means limited to that nation. I assert the principle is universal and applies to all nations and ethnicities.

The national identity of ancient Israel was essentially *defined* as “the sons of Israel.” We see this when the initial seed population of the nation, *i.e.*, Jacob and all his household, first came to Egypt in the time of Joseph’s rule and was referred to as the *sons of Israel*. Ex. 1:1. We see it when the nation coming out of Egypt was counted in the first census. “Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel, by clans, by fathers’ houses, according to the number of names, every male, head by head.” Num. 1:2. Similarly with respect to the second census in Num. 26.

Thus, when God called out the *house of Jacob* and the *people of Israel* as a special people among all the nations of the earth (Ex. 19:3-6), it is understood to refer to the *sons of Israel* and their households. The Israelites are referred to as the *sons of Israel* some 30 times in the Bible.

Historical evidence (albeit anecdotal) suggests it is quite possible Solomon had a son with the Queen of Sheba, who returned to her home country (somewhere in the vicinity of Ethiopia, most likely).

1. *Aside:* The foregoing discussion should not be confused with the ancient Israelite law of the birthright, or what we call primogeniture in Anglo-American law. The birthright essentially gave a double portion of the inheritance to the firstborn son, was based on the principle of the firstfruits, and was totally unrelated to the principles discussed here. See, Deut. 21:15-17. Also see the cases of Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:31-34) and Reuben and Joseph (Gen. 43:33; Gen. 49:3; 1 Chr. 5:1-2).

When the son came of age and married, most likely he would have chosen a bride from the local population of Africans. His and his descendants would have looked African, but ethnically would be Jewish, if indeed parentage traced back to Solomon. An identifiable culture of Ethiopian Jews a/k/a *Beta Israel* still exists today.

Yet that result is no different from what happened to *all* the Jews in the diaspora. To the extent the sons of Israel intermarried with local populations their descendants would take on the physical characteristics of the local population, yet would still be ethnically Jewish. This is no mere hypothetical. If you are interested, just look into the history of the Sephardic Jews and Ashkenazic Jews - both the results of intermarriage between Jews and varying local populations.

You may be aware there is a longstanding tradition (via the *Halakha*) that Jewishness is determined not by one's father, but by one's mother. Although, there is a minority report, as it were, which is even older, that Jewishness is determined by one's father. Both sides have citations from the O.T. scriptures and rabbinic writings to back up their claims.

What people fail to take into account is that God has His own way of doing things. He has His own rules for determining Jewishness and He keeps His own records. Thus, when the 144,000 Jews are called out from among the nations in the Tribulation, 12,000 *males* from each of the tribes of Israel (Rev. 7:1-8), God will know exactly who the *sons of Israel* are at that time. Then as now, the question will not be about Jewish *self-identity*. Rather, the question is how *God* operates.

What is ethnicity, if not an inherited nationality? And the universal rule used to determine national identity in the Bible is the *law of inheritance*. See, e.g., the Table of Nations (Gen. 10:5, 20, 31):

The sons of Japheth: ... From these the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations. ...

These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations. ...

These are the sons of Shem, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations.

So we see that before the nation of Israel even existed, the Bible uniformly refers to all national identities as being determined by who the father was, and those ethnicities carried through the male line.

Now for a couple of applications of the law of inheritance to current events *especially* as that law relates to the matter of ethnicity or nationality. First, it strikes me how recent innovations in genetic testing, *i.e.*, as a means of determining a person's ethnicity or ancestry, are limited and, I suggest, extremely misleading. You've seen the advertisements, haven't you? *Send in a swab of your DNA and find out what percentage of various ethnic groups you are.* Ah, but the unstated assumption behind all such tests is this: your ethnicity is governed by the *law of genetics*, counting male and female ancestors equally. Bah, humbug! My recommendation: don't waste your time or money.

Second, there is the favorite topic on everyone's mind of a political bent, that is, what it means to be a *natural born citizen*. This question, to be sure, could warrant its own lengthy essay. But let me

give you a quick and dirty analysis. In interpreting constitutional language written in 1787, we do not look to subsequent statutes enacted by Congress in the 20th Century. Rather, we must look to contemporary sources existing in 1787. And the singular authority on the subject at the time was Emmerich de Vattel, who wrote:

“The citizens are the members of the civil society; bound to this society by certain duties, and subject to its authority, they equally participate in its advantages. The natives, or natural-born citizens, are those born in the country, of parents who are citizens. As the society cannot exist and perpetuate itself otherwise than by the children of the citizens, those children naturally follow the condition of their fathers, and succeed to all their rights.” Vattel, *The Law of Nations or the Principles of Natural Law*, Bk. 1, Ch. 19, §212 (1758).

We see from this quote that Vattel followed the law of the nature of inheritance, in that a person’s citizenship derives principally from his father, not the mother. When considering candidates for political office, such as Barack Obama and Ted Cruz, the question is *not* essentially *where* each was born, but whether the father of each was a U.S. citizen at the time of his birth. And in both of these specific cases, notably, the *mother* of each was a U.S. citizen, but the *father* was not. Meaning, both are/were ineligible to serve as President of the United States.

You should not extrapolate any political leanings on my part as a result of this analysis, since Obama and Cruz are, to say the least, on opposite ends of the political spectrum. But that’s the point - this is not a *political* matter. It is a *legal* matter, and the law is what the law is. This is not my opinion. Let the chips fall where they may.

Spiritual Status

We also see the law of inheritance applied to the Church, the Body of Christ. Scripture indicates Christians are adopted as *sons of God*, not sons and daughters. Gal. 3:26. In a spiritual sense, God has children, but no daughters. Why? Because daughters do not inherit from their father, *i.e.*, God.

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are *sons of God*. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of *adoption as sons*, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then *heirs of God* and fellow heirs with Christ....” Rom. 8:14-17. (Emphasis added.)

Notice how carefully this scripture distinguishes the relationship of the various parties. In other words, notice what the text *does not* say: it does not say that Christians are heirs of Christ. It also does not say Christians are fellow-heirs of God. In order for this whole inheritance thing to work, we have to clearly understand who stands in the position of a father, and who stands in the position of a son. Thus, with respect to God the Father, both Christ and all Christians stand in the same position. And the scripture *nowhere* refers to Jesus as a father.

I am *not* making the argument that women are not or cannot be heirs with Christ. Rather, that

women must be placed in the *position of a son*, spiritually, in order to be a spiritual heir of God the Father. Gal. 4:7. Thus, the N.T. repeatedly refers to all Christians as the *sons of God*. Luk. 20:36; Jn. 1:12; Rom. 8:14, 19; Gal. 3:26; Phlp. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:1-2.

It may not be politically correct in our culture, but this is the way God operates. If your translation of the Bible doesn't carry this concept forward because it serves the false god of gender neutrality, throw it out.

Why should things be this way? Because it is the nature of God, *i.e.*, Father and Son. Did you think it was just an accident, or a cosmic coincidence, that two persons of the divine trinity should be referred to in masculine terms, and none in the feminine? If you don't like things this way, don't take it up with me - take it up with God. But be warned - You can't mess with the law of inheritance unless you mess with the nature of God as a masculine Being, and that is something you can't mess with.

5. DIVINE COVENANTS

The divine covenants, I argue, are the most important aspects of the entire Bible. From a basic *laws of nature and nature's God* perspective, the divine covenants comprise the entirety of the *laws of nature's God*. Think about it. The entirety of the *laws of nature* were impressed upon the world and mankind at the time of initial creation in non-verbal form. Those laws remain, until this creation is destroyed and replaced by new heavens and a new earth, eternal, immutable and universal from the time of creation. We can know the laws of nature apart from the Bible, but as Blackstone said, we can never know those laws without the Bible as well as we can with it.

Everything else we know about the will of God, particularly His will for all men (not merely individual commands) comes from the verbal revelations expressed in the divine covenants. And that is what the laws of nature's God are - the verbal revelations of His will for all men.

Everything we know about early history, the Gospel, the nation of Israel, and the kingdom of Christ has been revealed under, or pursuant to, one of the divine covenants. The covenants divide history into different phases and serve as the main organizing principle for understanding all of scripture. Their importance cannot be overstated.

Thus, it is of paramount importance that we understand which divine covenants apply to which people if we are to accurately handle the word of truth. See, 2 Tim. 2:15. That is where the genealogies come in, because all of the divine covenants run to a stipulated set of descendants except the new covenant in Christ, which is open to all people. The general rule may be expressed as follows: the divine covenants (other than the covenant in Christ), according to the scriptures, apply to those who consented to them at the time and their physical descendants.

Accordingly, before you can understand how the divine covenants apply to you, you must know whose descendant you are. Applying the *law of the nature of inheritance* to the matter, it essentially requires each person to know who is their daddy. And this is what the biblical genealogies tell us -

who our daddy is (and his daddy, and his daddy, and so on). So, what do the genealogies tell us?

Adamic Covenant

The terms of the covenant with Adam relate primarily to the Dominion Mandate (Gen. 1:28-30): “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion” over the entire animal kingdom. Comprehended in this mandate is the authority to have and raise children through the vehicle of the family, and the authority to dominate the earth and all creatures through labor, industry and property. By implication the Dominion Mandate includes the laws of marriage, parental authority and all economic rights. A matter of no small importance is the authority to consume “every plant yielding seed ... and every tree with seed in its fruit” for food.

The biblical genealogies inform us that every person who has ever been born is a descendant of Adam - he is the ultimate father of us all. Therefore, the Dominion Mandate continues to be the foremost purpose of every individual even to this day.

But there is a flip side, namely, the fall and the curse (Gen. 3:16-19). Included in the curse is pain in child-bearing, strife between husbands and wives, the curse of the ground, and of course, death. While the curse is not strictly speaking a part of the terms of the covenant with Adam (because it came after the Dominion Mandate and was a consequence of judgment rather than consent), nonetheless, scripture clearly informs us that the fall and the curse also apply to every single descendant of Adam. Rom. 5:14-18; 1 Cor. 15:22.

Thus, since Adam was the ultimate father of us all, we all experience the consequences of the fall and the curse, including the curse of the ground, death, and what is sometimes called *original sin*, but is more accurately termed *the sin nature*. These consequences are inescapable for any descendant of Adam. “In Adam’s Fall, we sinned all.” *The New England Primer* (1690).

Noahic Covenant

The Noahic Covenant is the covenant God made with the survivors of the great flood which covered the whole earth. Gen 9:1-17. This covenant expanded the food laws to include meat (literally, “every moving thing that lives”), but excluding blood. It further authorized capital punishment for the first time, reiterated the Dominion Mandate, and through the sign of the rainbow, God promised never to flood the earth again. The authorization of capital punishment is understood by many as the initialization of civil government among men, which took practical shape following the Tower of Babel dispersion 150 or so years later (*i.e.*, when the nations were first formed).

The scripture expressly makes the terms of the Noahic Covenant applicable to all of the survivors of the flood and their offspring. Thanks to the biblical genealogies, we know exactly who those people were: Noah, his wife, and their three sons (Shem, Ham and Japheth) and their wives, *i.e.*, eight persons. While none of the four women were descendants of Noah, of necessity all persons born of them would be descendants of Noah, as per the law of inheritance (looking only to the father).

In other words, since the flood Noah has become a sort of proxy for Adam, in that every person alive on the earth today is his descendant, and he is a father (in addition to Adam) of us all. Therefore, the terms of the Noahic covenant continue to apply to every person today, including eating meat, the promise of the rainbow, and yes, even civil authority. And thanks to the genealogies, we know there are no exceptions, *i.e.*, there were no other survivors of the flood.

That is why it is so dastardly, and ultimately subversive, for people to suggest either that: 1) Adam and Eve were not actually the parents of all people, but merely representative of people alive at the time, or worse, did not really exist; and/or 2) the flood was localized (not global) and there were human populations which survived the flood apart from the eight persons in the ark.

If either of these suggestions were true, it would mean: a) some people are more authorized to populate the earth than others (and history is replete with examples of how that kind of thinking plays out in practical terms, *i.e.*, genocide); b) not everyone is subject to the fall (or in other words, people are not inherently sinful); c) people should really be vegetarians; d) capital punishment is a rogue doctrine that has no place among an evolved species; and e) the rainbow is merely a weather phenomena and means nothing with respect to a re-flooding of the world.

Taking the early chapters of Genesis as mere allegory may sound spiritual, but isn't any better. It leads people to say stupid things, like:

“Sure, God wants us to populate the earth - but hey, don't take it too far and go overboard. We've got an overpopulation problem to deal with or we're in big trouble. Yes, God wants us to take care of the animals. But that doesn't make us better than them and it's not like we can treat them (gasp!) like property or anything. We have to be good neighbors and share the earth with our animal friends.”

“Sure, we can eat whatever we want for food, but stay away from red meat and for heaven's sake you'll be so much more healthy if you just stick to fruits and vegetables. It's not like eating meat is a duty or anything like that. OK, we obviously need to restrain evil, but capital punishment? It's barbaric, and so beneath us. God, who gave us life, wouldn't really want us to take life in this way - it's hardly the way to love our fellow man.”

Do you see how crucial the biblical genealogies are to understanding the nature of our world and human existence? If the genealogies are not factual, the divine covenants with Adam and Noah ultimately mean little or nothing. Which of course is exactly the way most people view them today, sadly, even many in Christian circles. Don't let yourself be named among these unbelievers in the historicity of Genesis.

Abrahamic Covenant

The Abrahamic covenant was revealed in three steps: when Abram left Haran at age 75, when he arrived at Canaan, and finally when he was about 85 (accompanied by animal sacrifice). Gen. 12:1-7; 15:1-21. The terms of the covenant had three parts: a) to make Abraham a great nation (numerous

as the stars) via the natural heir of his body; b) to be a blessing to all the families of the earth; and c) to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's offspring forever.

This covenant was later confirmed to Isaac (Gen. 26:4) and to Jacob (Gen. 28:13-14). Wrapped up in the circumstances surrounding the description of the covenant in Gen. 17 is a prophecy predicting the Israelite slavery in Egypt and the Exodus. Also, statements are made contemporaneously with the giving of the covenant that Abraham's faith was counted to him as righteousness. I don't consider either the prophecy or the description of Abraham's faith to be part of the express terms of the covenant *per se*, but whether they are or not is of little consequence.

In Christian circles, much is made of the linkage between Abraham's righteousness, the promise that he would be a blessing to all the families of the earth, and the new covenant in Christ being modeled after the faith example of Abraham. See, Gal. 3:5-9; 16-18. This is all well and good and I do not deny the connection. But the error many people make is to jump to Rom. 2:29 (a true Jew is a spiritual Jew) and then conclude (wrongly) that Christians are the ones to whom the Abrahamic covenant applies. Recognizing the spiritual benefit of Abraham's example is not the same as being a natural/biological heir of his body.

The promise to make Abraham a great nation (numerous as the stars) via the natural heir of his body is just that - a promise relating specifically to his biological heirs. The same is true for the land of Canaan (*i.e.*, Israel) - there are no land rights inherited by Christians from Abraham. Only biological offspring of Abraham have any claim to the land of Israel. Even the promise to make Abraham a blessing to all the earth looks forward to the future restoration of Israel, when all the nations will look to the Jews as a source of blessing. Zech. 8:23.

We must also note that Abraham was not merely the father of Israel, but in fact was the father of many nations, as God promised. Gen. 17:4-5. Not only was Abraham the father of the Ishmaelites, but also the Midianites and other nations. See, Gen. 25:1-6. Yet, the Abrahamic covenant does not apply to any of these offspring of Abraham except the Jews. Why? That is where the confirmations of the covenant with Isaac and Jacob come in.

By these confirmations, God limited the applicability of the covenant to the offspring of all three men, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, meaning Israel only. That is why even God referred to Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as a means of self-identification when he revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush. Ex. 3:6.

Thus, unless you are a biological Jew, the Abrahamic covenant simply does not apply to you.

Mosaic Covenant

I will not go into detail here concerning the Mosaic covenant, which is really the covenant with Israel, since Moses was merely the person who transmitted the terms of the covenant to the nation and was no more or less a party to the covenant than any other Israelite. Broadly speaking, the covenant with Israel contained the Ten Commandments and all the various statutes and ordinances

issued under them. Typically, the covenant is viewed as having three great parts, *i.e.*, the eternal moral law (laws rooted in creation); theocratic laws (relating to national polity); and the ceremonial laws (relating to atonement and the priesthood).

People sometimes get confused by the fact the covenant was issued and confirmed several times. To wit, the covenant was initially adopted at Mt. Sinai when Israel first escaped from Egypt. Ex. 19:3-7. It was confirmed - as symbolized by re-writing the tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments - shortly thereafter, also at Mt. Sinai in Horeb. Ex. 24:3-8. Both of these occurred before the 40 year wilderness experience. Then, the covenant was re-affirmed in Moab, just before crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land (after the wilderness experience). Deut. 29:1-9.

The so-called *Palestinian Covenant* is nothing more than the renewal or confirmation of the covenant with Israel in Moab. As I said earlier, a divine covenant applies to those who consented to it at the time and their physical descendants. In the case of Israel, everyone who was alive at Mt. Sinai was (at the time of Deut. 29) now dead except for Moses, Joshua and Caleb. So the people in Moab were the next generation of Israelites, but they were all either actual parties to the original covenant or the physical descendants of them.

Meaning, the covenant in Moab was every bit as much a covenant between God and Israel as the original at Mt. Sinai. And none of the original terms was modified. So the parties were the same, and the terms were the same. Thus, the Mosaic covenant and the Palestinian covenant are really one and the same.

And, as the referenced texts clearly indicate, the covenant only applied to the nation of Israel. The Mosaic law never did apply to Gentiles, and nothing in the N.T. makes it applicable to Gentiles. So again, unless you are a biological Jew, the covenant with Israel does not apply to you.

Davidic Covenant

The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:12-16), after a fashion, is a subset of the covenant with Israel. It provides that only the seed (a male descendant) of David may inherit the throne of Israel. This explains why Athaliah (a woman who was of the royal family), when she claimed the throne of Israel for herself, was a usurper and put to death for her treason. 2 Ki 11:1-16; 2 Chron 22:10-12; 23:12-15. In this instance, disregard for the law of inheritance proved to be fatal.

By definition the covenant applies only to biological descendants of David, who was a Jew. Although, as we will see shortly, this covenant has its terminus in Jesus, so if you are a male descendant of David, don't wait around to be crowned. In any event, unless you are a biological Jew, the Davidic covenant really won't have any impact on you.

All of these Old Testament covenants, though divine, are earthly, or temporal. That is, they all pertain to heirs of the physical body. The new covenant in Christ, or the Church Covenant, is a spiritual covenant only. Therefore it does not, and we should not expect it to, run to the benefit of anyone's physical heirs. Participation in the Church covenant is decided on an individual basis,

irrespective of one's ancestry. And of all the divine covenants, only the covenant in Christ applies to Christians (or the Church), *per se*.

If you view the various divine covenants according to the Reformed doctrine of *continuity, i.e.*, that each covenant is a successive chapter in a single unfolding (progressively revealed) relationship between God and His people in which later installments modify or supersede prior ones, then you will necessarily regard the divine covenants as applying to Christians only. In other words, because the Church covenant is the last one to date, it supersedes and in essence controls the prior ones.

However, in order to reach this conclusion you must disregard the plain language of the O.T. texts indicating who each covenant applies to, and this is something I am unwilling to do. No express language in the N.T. cancels out or rescinds the express language in the O.T., and such a cancellation, if God had ever intended it, is far too important to be merely inferred by reading language in an allegorical way.

Until God expressly designates otherwise, we must take each divine covenant as being applicable only to those people (and their descendants) who received the oracles of God at the time and consented to them. And who those people are is directly made known in the biblical genealogies. Thank God He has provided us with a means of certainty in this area, and not left the matter to guesswork.

6. WHO JESUS IS

There are several trinitarian aspects of Jesus (in His own right) in addition to His being a member of the Godhead, *i.e.*, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These include: 1) creator, sustainer and redeemer; 2) prophet, priest and king; and 3) as the model for lawyers - counselor, mediator and advocate. None of these trinitarian aspects relate to the biblical genealogies directly, but there is one peculiar trinitarian aspect of Jesus which does.

Namely, I want to consider that Jesus came as the *Son of Man* (Mk 2:10, 28; Lk 22:48, 69), the *Son of God* (Mk 1:1; Lk 1:35; Jn 1:34), and the *Son of David* (Mt 1:1; 22:42). These three capacities are indicative of, in order, Jesus' *humanity, divinity, and authority*. Each of these is also firmly established in the biblical genealogies. In fact, I go further - but for the biblical genealogies, we would understand much less of these aspects of who Jesus is.

Humanity

The genealogy recorded in Luk. 3:23-38 contains the complete lineage from Adam to Jesus (in reverse order), spanning 77 generations and about 4,000 years. Although she is not named in the genealogy, scholars generally agree this is the genealogy of Mary, the mother of Christ. There are two basic reasons why this is so.

First, it is distinctly different from the genealogy in Matthew (undoubtedly Joseph's genealogy) in that here the lineage passes from David to his son Nathan and then on down to Jesus, whereas Joseph's genealogy passes from David to his son Solomon and then to Jesus. Both genealogies

cannot possibly apply to Joseph - one of them must be Mary's. This distinction has further significance when we consider Jesus as the Son of David (below), since only Solomon's descendants are of the royal line.

Second, it is neither customary nor necessary (from a legal perspective) to reckon lineages through the female line, as per the *law of inheritance*. Thus, the Luke genealogy begins with the words, *Jesus ... being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph*. Yes, the phrase *as was supposed* is an acknowledgment of the virgin birth, but it is more than that. The Matthew genealogy just names Joseph without qualification - here the words *as was supposed* are a clear indication that Joseph is a stand-in and this is not really his genealogy at all because it is Mary's.

But what of it? Well, the one thing everybody knew about Jesus was that He was born of Mary. He had a human mother, and He himself was human. Her line traced back all the way to Adam (as is the same for all of us), and Jesus did not arrive on this earth in a spaceship, via a molecular transporter or by magic. There can be no doubt concerning His humanity by virtue of His having a human mother.

It is important that Jesus be recognized as fully human, because that is what the *incarnation* is all about - *i.e.*, that He is as much human as divine. I will not here digress to explicate the importance of the incarnation, because I am making a limited point: In addition to various declaratory statements in the scriptures that Jesus was human, the biblical genealogies offer proof that this was so. I will however leave you with one quotation that testifies of His humanity:

“And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Php 2:8-11. See also, Rom. 8:3, Gal. 4:4, Jn. 1:14.

Divinity

The Bible tells us straight up that Jesus was born of a virgin. Luk. 1:26-33. That He was conceived by the Holy Spirit is a necessary step in conferring upon Jesus the title of the Son of God. “And the angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son of God.’” Luk. 1:35.

It is this instance, the scripture is not merely an indication that Jesus was a special man, being holy or *set apart for a special purpose* in the same sense that John the Baptist was, for example. For it was said of John, that “he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.” Luk 1:15. But in the case of Jesus He was *actually divine*, being the expression of God in bodily form. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.” Jn. 1:14. “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.” Col. 2:9.

Both the Matthew and Luke genealogies testify to the divinity of Christ by affirming that Jesus had no earthly father. As we have already seen, the Luke genealogy describes Jesus as *the supposed son*

of Joseph. In other words, Jesus was not the *actual* son of Joseph because God was His actual father.

Similarly, the Matthew genealogy concludes with the statement, “Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.” Mat. 1:16. So the Matthew genealogy runs through Joseph, but the scripture goes to some length to explain that Jesus was born of Mary only and *not* of Joseph. Joseph was Mary’s husband, but he was not the father of Jesus. When you put this together with the statement that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, there is only one logical conclusion. Thus is Jesus’ identity confirmed as the Son of God.

It is also necessary that Jesus should have no human father in order for Him to be recognized as the *second Adam*, and/or the *last Adam*. “Thus it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being’; the *last Adam* became a life-giving spirit. ... The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the *second man* is from heaven.” 1 Cor. 15:45, 47. Also see, Rom. 5:14. For like Christ, Adam had no human father. The clear implication of scripture is that no one else since Adam, nor indeed to the end of the world, has shared or will share in this attribute except Christ alone. Any other claims to either a divine nature or a virgin birth are to be regarded as false.

Thus, Christ’s claim to divinity is unique. And the biblical genealogies help establish this fact by showing that every other person ever born had a human father.

Authority

So we see that Jesus’ humanity is established through the lineage of Mary, and His divinity is confirmed by the genealogies of both parents. Yet perhaps the most interesting of these aspects of Jesus has to do with being the Son of David, because we are now faced with a dilemma.

The title of the Son of David refers not merely to any or all descendants of David, but specifically to the one who will inherit the throne David, *i.e.*, the throne of Israel, in fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. 2 Sam. 7:12-16. Of necessity, this descendant of David must come from the kingly line through Solomon, which rules out Mary’s genealogy (which is not through Solomon). The Matthew genealogy, because its opening statement says it pertains to “Jesus Christ, the son of David,” claims to provide the documentation establishing Jesus as the rightful heir. As I said earlier, the Davidic covenant finds its terminus in Jesus.

And the dilemma is this: How can Jesus claim to inherit the right to Israel’s throne from Joseph, when Joseph was not actually Jesus’ father?

This is an important question, since the scripture goes to some length to confirm that Jesus alone will exercise the authority of David to rule over Israel in the future. To wit, the seed of David will have a kingdom lasting forever. 2 Sam. 7:14, 16. The kingdom of the Christ and the throne of David will be established forever. Isa. 9:6-7. “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David.” Lk 1:32. David as prophet foresaw Christ sitting on his throne. Acts 2:29-35.

The answer, I suggest, is quite simple, though never explicitly stated in the Bible. Namely, that Joseph adopted Jesus for legal purposes after his birth and Joseph had married Mary. I know of no other explanation that either fits the facts, or provides a solution as to how the right of the throne passed to Jesus. The whole point of the Davidic covenant was that the throne would only pass to an heir of David. God would not bypass this mechanism - which God Himself put into place - by simply conferring the authority of the throne of David on Jesus either by virtue of His divinity or because God just liked Him the best.

The throne of David is not merely conferred - *it must be inherited*. To be inherited, it must pass through a male descendant of Solomon. And, the only one who could receive such an inheritance is another male descendant of Solomon. We know this not only because of the general rule of the *law of inheritance*, but also because in the specific context of the Davidic covenant, the promise of the throne was given to his male heirs. “When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish *his* kingdom. *He* shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of *his* kingdom forever. I will be to *him* a father, and *he* shall be to me a *son*.” 2 Sam. 7:12-14a.

This last statement, *he shall be to me a son*, is an indication that the Son of David and the Son of God would be the same person. See Lk 1:32, quoted above. Since the whole purpose of adoption (legally) is to confer the rights of inheritance on a son, that must be the means used by God to vest Jesus with the throne of David.

We know the scripture speaks favorably of adoption in other contexts, especially the adoption of believers *as sons* by God. Rom. 8:15, Gal. 4:5. Which makes adoption part of the laws of the kingdom of God and a mechanism God uses to organize His kingdom. So for Jesus to be adopted - not by God, but by Joseph - not for the purpose of entering the kingdom but for the purpose of ruling it - makes perfect sense.

7. VIRGIN BIRTH

We have already looked at the virgin birth of Jesus from the standpoint that it helps establish His divinity. There is another aspect to the virgin birth we should yet consider, and I like to frame it in the form of a question: Why was the virgin birth not merely convenient or miraculous, but absolutely necessary?

In a sense, I am asking why God really had no choice in the matter, but was *compelled* to act in this fashion. Of course, the answer doesn't look to any outside force of compulsion, but recognizes that the world He created was constructed in such a way that He was constrained by His own laws to act in a certain way. Let me explain.

I am referring to the fact that Jesus “knew no sin.” The statement that Jesus *knew no sin* is generally understood to mean not only that he committed no sin in his life (1 Pet 2:22; Heb 4:15; 9:14), but that he also was not born separated from God at his birth, *i.e.*, Jesus did not have *original sin*, or a *sin nature*. 1 Jn 3:5 says of Jesus that “in him there is no sin.” The Bible also informs us Jesus was *God made flesh*, and therefore was in unbroken fellowship with God and could not have any sin in

him, for God is holy (without sin). Jn 14:10-11.

Yet, scripture also clearly teaches that every man born subsequent to Adam suffers from original sin. According to Rom 5:12, “death spread to all men because all sinned,” and Rom. 3:23, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

We know from our previous discussion of the humanity of Christ that Jesus was born fully human, and He was born subsequent to Adam. So, how are these things reconcilable?

You may be tempted to say, “Well, *duh*, Jesus actually had no earthly father because He was the Son of God.” This is a true statement, of course, but it doesn’t answer the next logical question, namely: Why didn’t Jesus inherit a sin nature from his mother, Mary? Before jumping to the obvious answer, let’s consider how Christians typically have answered this question in the past.

Scientific Approach

One approach people have taken is to offer some kind of scientific explanation for why Jesus did not inherit a sin nature from His mother. (I am not going to quote any sources in this section because I don’t want to embarrass anyone by name.)

Thus, for example, people will say that a mother does not exchange blood with her unborn child, and this explains how Jesus was born *sin free*. Here the key word is *unborn*, because the birthing process itself very often results in the exposure of the baby to the mother’s blood. It is the very nature of an unborn baby that it will not stay that way forever, but will eventually leave the mother. We don’t care so much about Jesus in his pre-natal state as we do after He was born. So if this is your explanation, it will only work a percentage of the time. That Jesus *may not have* come into contact with His mother’s blood at His birth is hardly a way to inspire confidence in His sinless nature.

But there is a more fundamental problem with this proposed solution, *i.e.*, that it assumes the sin nature *is in the blood*. There is no biblical basis for this assumption. Sure, the Bible says that *life* is in the blood (Gen. 9:4, Lev. 17:14), and it also tells us that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin (1 Jn. 1:7; Rev. 1:5). But if linking the sin nature to something physical is what you want to do, you would have a much easier case arguing that sin is in the *flesh*, not the blood. Rom. 7:14, 17-18, 25; 8:3. And if you intend to argue that Jesus did not get His flesh (*i.e.*, his DNA) from Mary, that’s a much harder argument to make and/or prove, isn’t it?

Hence, other Christians have argued that by an act of special creation on God’s part in forming the genetic makeup of the baby Jesus, the desired result is achieved, *i.e.*, a baby born without a fallen nature. So then - what? Jesus received no part of his genetic makeup from Mary and God implanted a fetus of wholly new (untainted) genetic material? Of course, such a theory has no biblical support other than the fact Jesus was *born of the Holy Spirit* - but what does that actually mean in scientific terms and how can we know what it means scientifically?

We must also recognize two other facts. First, *all Christians* are born of the Spirit, as the scripture

testifies. Jn. 3:5-8. Yet, that has no physical or scientific consequences for believers. So to assume being born of the Spirit carries genetic consequences for Jesus but not for the rest of us - well, I'd like to see the textual support for that argument from the Bible. Until then, I am not convinced.

Excuse me for pointing out a statement that Jesus *might possibly* have received His DNA from a source other than Mary is a *mere speculation* which can neither be proved nor disproved. Which actually makes the argument a non-scientific argument, ironically. And again, because it is a mere speculation, hardly inspires confidence is asserting that Jesus was sinless as a matter of scientific fact.

Second, the proposed solution essentially holds that Jesus was formed in Mary's womb *ex nihilo*, or out of nothing (if none of His DNA came from Mary). This is the way God formed the universe - out of nothing - but after the initial creation of the world, the scriptures give no indication that God ever created anything else *ex nihilo*. So to assume it here is a bit of a stretch. May I suggest that while the virgin birth was undoubtedly *miraculous*, by itself it does not, and cannot, provide the answer to the question of how Jesus was born sinless.

Why? Because the question of how any human baby can be born without a fallen nature is not a scientific problem, but a legal problem. The legal problem is this: regardless of any act of special creation, how can Mary pass on to Jesus a legal condition or status she does not herself possess (a sinless nature), and how can Jesus avoid having his mother's fallen nature attributed to him by reason of her parentage?

The problem with both of the solutions proposed above is they assume the *sin nature* is a physical or biological phenomenon. Why would anyone assume this? We know from our earlier examination of the Adamic covenant and the Fall that original sin or the sin nature is essentially a *legal consequence* flowing from a legal arrangement (*i.e.*, the covenant). Therefore, wouldn't it make sense to look for a legal solution? But no - historically people have looked for a *theological* solution, or perhaps what is more properly called a *mystical* explanation.

Religious Approach

Enter the Roman Catholic solution, which was to postulate that not only Jesus, but Mary his mother also, was born without sin (the *Immaculate Conception*, referring to Mary's birth). Thus, when Jesus was born of Mary, he was not born subject to the curse.

The Roman Catholic doctrines of the Immaculate Conception (relating to the birth of Mary as being "free from all stain of original sin" [*Encyclical Ineffabilis Deus* of Pope Pius IX]) and the belief that Mary was "free from all sin, original or personal" [*Encyclical Mystici Corporis*, 110] were invented at least in part for the purpose of solving the legal quandary of Jesus being born without sin. By making Mary born without a sin nature herself, it supposedly puts her in the position of being able to pass along a sinless nature to Jesus.

There is an incongruity in the supposition that the flesh, from which the flesh of the Son of God was to be formed, should ever have belonged to one who was the slave of that

arch-enemy, whose power He came on earth to destroy. Hence the axiom of Pseudo-Anselmus (Eadmer) developed by Duns Scotus, *Decuit, potuit, ergo fecit*, it was becoming that the Mother of the Redeemer should have been free from the power of sin and from the first moment of her existence; God could give her this privilege, therefore He gave it to her. [*New Advent: Catholic Encyclopedia: Immaculate Conception.*]

However, even Catholics admit that “No direct or categorical and stringent proof of the dogma [of the Immaculate Conception] can be brought forward from Scripture.” [*New Advent: Catholic Encyclopedia: Immaculate Conception.*] So why rely on something that cannot be proved from scripture, when there is a straightforward solution that scripture supports?

There is an additional logical problem. Logically, the *Immaculate Conception* only removes the problem by a generation, but does not solve it. It solves the sin problem for Jesus *if* Mary knew no sin, but does not explain how Mary could have escaped sin’s curse, even if she was born of a virgin. Because if sin is passed from a mother to her children, a mere virgin birth doesn’t solve anything at all. For the doctrine of the *Immaculate Conception* itself assumes that *Jesus would have inherited Mary’s sin nature if she had one*. If that is the case, why didn’t Mary inherit a sin nature from her mother and how would the “privilege” of God have avoided it?

I hate to pile on the objections, but there is yet another problem with the Catholic doctrine. Namely, even assuming *arguendo* (merely for the sake of argument) Mary was born without a sin nature, she would have had to remain in that condition from the time of her birth until the time of Jesus’ birth. Meaning, she would have had to live many years without ever committing one single sin. It is not enough that she should have been born sin-free - she would have had to live until giving birth to Jesus without falling from grace.

It seems rather unlikely she could have done this, since: a) she was not God; b) the rule that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23) does not carve out an exception for Mary; and c) it only took Satan a matter of a few days (in all probability) to tempt Adam and Eve to the point of committing sin with undoubtedly far fewer temptations available to him than were readily available to Mary throughout her life. That she could have resisted all forms of temptation from her birth into adulthood is remarkable to the point of incredulity.

Legal Approach

The Catholic scholars failed to recognize that: a) the sin nature was imparted to all descendants of Adam as a legal consequence of the Fall *without exception*; and b) the sin nature is inherited by all men according to the rule of the law of inheritance. When you put these together with the *fact* Jesus was not a descendant of Adam (but rather the Son of God), and the *law* of inheritance which requires the sin nature to be taken exclusively from the father and not any part from the mother, the analysis sorts itself out rather easily.

Namely, Jesus inherited no sin nature from His mother Mary, and it matters not one whit whether she was sinless or not, so long as God was His father. Nor does it matter whether Jesus took any blood or DNA from Mary, as these are entirely irrelevant considerations for the legal question.

As I said earlier, the virgin birth of Jesus was absolutely necessary, and by that I mean it was *legally* necessary. Without it, there is no other way Jesus could have been born human and yet not be tainted by original sin.

Notwithstanding his being born of a woman in the physical sense - and even perhaps his inheritance of DNA from her - he did not, and could not, inherit a sin nature from her because inheritance comes only through the father, not the mother. But there was no physical father, hence, no one to inherit a sin nature from. And a virgin birth is the only way this result could be achieved.

There is also no other explanation of the virgin birth which is adequate to produce the result the scripture demands, *i.e.*, an absolutely sure and trustworthy mechanism by which we *know* beyond any doubt Jesus was born sinless. No scientific or religious explanation will get us there. Only the legal rule of the law of inheritance is sufficient to produce this result.

And the law of inheritance is a legal rule we are made aware of chiefly because of the biblical genealogies. So let us be very thankful God placed the genealogies in the Bible for us to learn from.

In light of the above analysis, it is plain to see why the basic premise of *The Da Vinci Code* is so diabolical and heretical. To postulate that Jesus, who knew no sin for His entire lifetime, had children via Mary Magdalene (or anyone else - it doesn't matter who), or that He had sexual relations with anyone at any time, is to postulate that Jesus did have or could have had children who were not born under the curse.

After all, as per the law of inheritance, the descendants of Jesus would not be subject to the Fall, since they would not have inherited a sin nature at birth. They would not be spiritually lost or need a savior, they would not be under the curse of the ground, and they ostensibly would not need to die (*i.e.*, they would be immortal).

If we were to allow for even the remotest possibility that Jesus could have had any physical offspring, it raises the possibility that there would be, in effect, two distinct races of man on the earth today, which would subvert and destroy the axioms that all men must die, that all men have sinned, and that all men need a savior.

You can bet your bottom dollar that even if you never heard of the law of inheritance until you read this essay, Satan was well aware of it long ago. The devil knows *exactly* which ideas have the most potential to subvert and pervert a true understanding of godly principles, and which principles people are generally ignorant of. Satan doesn't just attempt to destroy philosophical fine points, he goes after things which are the most foundational. And you can't get much more foundational than the absolute universality of the curse, sin and death.

POSTLUDE

The biblical genealogies are much more than lists of ancient names. They are a type of anchor for the whole Bible, but especially for the first eleven chapters of Genesis. But the anchor only holds if the genealogies are taken as historical fact, not as myth or allegory. When accepted as fact, the

genealogies corroborate and lend credence to accepting the rest of the Bible as fact. The genealogies help secure not just the history of the Bible, but a biblical view of history. They provide crucial information about dates and times we would have no other way of knowing. And they supply information about the development of populations, nations and languages that pre-dates most, if not all, other human records.

Typically, to the extent the biblical genealogies are viewed as being important at all, their importance is limited to sociological purposes, or to bolster a young earth theory among adherents of creation science. While those applications exist, to be sure, I hope you can see that the primary significance of the genealogies is *legal*.

The primary significance of the biblical genealogies, as I see it, is they teach us about the law of the nature of inheritance. This law is not some vestige of a patriarchal society long gone, but is in fact a part of the fabric of nature, woven into that fabric by God Himself because it reflects the nature of who He is. Consequently, the law of inheritance is eternal, applying to everyone, everywhere, at all times.

Besides being useful to explain the underlying reasoning behind the property laws of ancient Israel and the spiritual adoption as sons, the law of inheritance has many more applications. Because of this law, we know how to determine ethnicity (*i.e.*, biological nationality) and how to understand our own position with respect to each of the divine covenants between God and men down through history. The law of inheritance helps explain key aspects of who Jesus is, why the virgin birth was absolutely necessary, and how it was possible that Jesus could be sinless (and thereby an appropriate propitiation for our sins).

The preceding paragraph, in a nutshell, describes what is at stake if the biblical genealogies are not taken as fact. If they are read as mere myth or allegory, they lose their power to explain so many things that are absolutely foundational that we lose one of the key anchors which connects the scripture to reality. In short, we would be far worse without them.

Unfortunately, the significance of the genealogies is neither widely understood, nor widely taught. In fact, when it comes to God's law of inheritance, I daresay few Christians have ever heard of it. It is disgraceful that most Christians are completely unaware of something so basic as the law of inheritance, and a real shame that the Church is doing so little to educate people about it. "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Ps. 11:3.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God Heb. 5:12-6:1.

You see, the things I have here discussed are part of the meat of the Word of God. But this isn't

rocket science - you don't need a seminary education or an advanced degree in anything to understand it. You only have to know how to read. The subjects addressed in this essay ought to be a staple of teaching in every church so as to build up the saints, but they are not.

Instead, what we get in our churches all across America are repeated bottle feedings of milk, *i.e.*, the elementary teachings of Christ as Savior, the need for personal repentance or piety, and general exhortations of faith. Maybe it's just me, but I've been a Christian since the age of eight and I had all the basic doctrines of the Church mastered before the age of 18. I've been tired of hearing the same old re-tread sermons on faith and love and service ever since I was 14, which was a long time ago (let me tell you), and the church situation has only gotten worse since then.

As a consequence of which, I feel compelled to write an essay like this one telling people about basic truths every Christian young or old should know. But they do not, because no one in the churches is teaching it to them - even those who *claim* to teach the *whole counsel of God*. I would be surprised if anyone of our so-called Christian seminaries is teaching their students these basic truths either. Shame on the seminaries, and shame on their graduates, for not inquiring into such things.

I could name many similar topics of basic biblical doctrine which are being totally ignored in our churches today, for example, the nature, extent and application of each of the divine covenants, the nature and extent to which equality, religious freedom, private property, economic liberty, family relationships and mankind's dominion over the creation all spring from a literal understanding of Genesis, and so on. The list is endless of things churches naming the name of Jesus are ignoring from the Bible.

God's people having been playing dumb too long, and it is to our everlasting shame. *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

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