

Small Group Guide

The Hidden Gems in the Genealogy of Jesus | Luke 3



Before You Begin

Encourage group members to come with open minds. This session digs into a passage that is easy to skip over, but as the sermon reminds us, sometimes the thing we assume is boring turns out to be the most rewarding.

Key Takeaways

- 1. The Bible is telling one unified story.** From Genesis 5 to Luke 3, Scripture consistently narrows its focus to a single line of people pointing toward the Messiah. Other sons and daughters existed, but the text follows one thread on purpose.
- 2. God's plan cannot be derailed.** Even when a curse was placed on the royal lineage of David through Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin in Jeremiah, God had already arranged a solution. Jesus received the legal right to David's throne through Joseph's adoption and the blood right through Mary's separate lineage, bypassing the curse entirely.

3. The differences in the two genealogies are not contradictions. Matthew traces Joseph's biological royal line. Luke most likely traces Mary's lineage through Joseph's adoption into her family. Both lines lead back to David, and both were necessary for Jesus to be the Messiah without the curse blocking him.

4. Zerubbabel connects the two genealogies. Outside of the names shared from Abraham to David, Zerubbabel is the only name appearing in both Matthew's and Luke's genealogies. He was promised by the prophet Haggai to carry the royal seal of the Messiah's line, and that promise held.

5. The Bible was written for you, but not necessarily to you or about you. Its primary purpose is to reveal who God is, what he desires from us, and to point us to the Messiah. Understanding that purpose changes how we read difficult passages.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- What is something you used to think was boring or unimportant that you later discovered was actually fascinating? What changed your perspective?

Digging into the Text

- Luke 3:23-38 traces Jesus all the way back to Adam and then to God. Why do you think Luke chose to go further back than Matthew did? What does it say about Luke's purpose in writing his gospel?
- The sermon points out that Genesis 5 mentions other sons and daughters but only follows one line. Why do you think Scripture narrows its focus this way? What does that tell you about how God works?
- The names Joshua and Jesus share the same root meaning. The sermon draws a parallel between what Moses and the law could not do and what Joshua accomplished by leading Israel into the promised land. How does that parallel deepen your understanding of what Jesus came to do?

Going Deeper

- The curse on the royal lineage in Jeremiah seemed like a dead end for God's promises. How does the way God worked around that curse through Joseph and Mary affect your confidence in his promises today?

- The sermon states that God was not surprised by the curse on Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin and had been planning the solution since Adam. What does that say about the nature of God's knowledge and sovereignty?
- Have you ever faced a situation that seemed like a dead end to a promise God had made or a hope you were holding onto? How does the story of the genealogy speak to that experience?

Personal Reflection

- The sermon closes by noting that God has made promises to us just as he made promises throughout the lineage of the Messiah. Which of God's promises do you find hardest to hold onto? Why?
- Knowing that God's plans always come to fruition, what is one area of your life where you need to trust him more deeply right now?

Practical Applications

This Week, Try One of the Following:

1. **Read Genesis 5 alongside Luke 3:23-38.** Sit with both passages and notice how the names overlap. Let the intentionality of Scripture's structure build your confidence in God's authorship of history.
2. **Trace a promise.** Identify one promise from Scripture that is meaningful to you. Spend time this week looking at how God has kept that same promise or a similar one throughout the biblical story. Write down what you find.
3. **Revisit something you have been skipping.** Whether it is a difficult passage, a book of the Bible you have avoided, or a spiritual discipline you have written off, commit to approaching it with fresh eyes this week. Ask God to show you what you have been missing.
4. **Share the story.** The genealogy is a powerful apologetic tool. Practice explaining to someone in your group, or to a friend or family member, why the two genealogies of Jesus are not a contradiction but actually work together to show that Jesus is the only one who could have been the Messiah.

Closing Thought

The sermon puts it plainly: God has been keeping his promises since Adam. A list of names that most people sleep through turns out to be one of the strongest arguments for the trustworthiness of Scripture and the sovereignty of God. The enemy thought a curse had ended the story. God had already written the next chapter. That same God has made promises to you, and he has never once failed to keep them.

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by praying specifically over the promises of God that group members shared during discussion. Ask God to give each person the faith to trust that what he has started, he will finish.

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

God's Unfolding Plan: From Creation to Salvation



Day 1: The Story Beneath the Story

Reading: Genesis 5:1-8; Luke 3:23-38

Devotional: A list of names seems like an unlikely place to find hope, yet God hides treasure in plain sight throughout Scripture. The genealogy of Jesus in Luke's gospel traces all the way back to Adam, the son of God, revealing that redemption was never an afterthought. From the very first generation after the fall, God was already threading the needle of salvation through human history. The same Bible that records humanity's failures also records God's quiet, persistent faithfulness working through ordinary people across centuries. When life feels like a list of unremarkable days, remember that God is writing a story through them.

Reflection: Where in your own life might God be working in ways that seem ordinary or hidden right now?

Application: Set aside ten minutes today to journal about a moment in your past that seemed insignificant at the time but later revealed God's hand at work.

Day 2: The Appointed One

Reading: Genesis 4:25-26; Romans 10:9-10

Devotional: When Abel was killed and Cain was exiled, it may have appeared that sin had derailed God's purposes entirely. Then Seth was born, whose name means "the appointed one." God did not scramble for a solution. He already had one. The lineage pointing to the Messiah continued without interruption. Romans 10 reminds us that the conclusion of that long lineage is a promise available to every person: confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord and is raised from the dead, and you will be saved. What began with Seth's appointment ends with your invitation.

Reflection: Have you personally accepted the promise that the entire biblical story was building toward?

Application: Write out Romans 10:9-10 in your own words as a personal declaration of faith and place it somewhere you will see it throughout the day.

Day 3: When the Curse Meets the Promise

Reading: Jeremiah 22:24-30; Galatians 3:13-14

Devotional: Jeremiah's curse on the royal line of Jehoiachin looked like a dead end for the messianic promise. The very lineage through which the Savior was supposed to come had been declared off-limits. Hell may have celebrated. But God was not surprised, and he was not defeated. Galatians 3 tells us that Christ became a curse so that the blessing of Abraham might come to all people. God's answer to the curse in Jeremiah was not a workaround born out of desperation. It was a plan ordained before the curse was ever spoken. No obstacle you face has caught God off guard either.

Reflection: What situation in your life feels like a curse blocking God's promises from reaching you?

Application: Pray specifically over that situation today, asking God to reveal how he may already be working around what feels like an insurmountable barrier.

Day 4: Two Lines, One Savior

Reading: Matthew 1:1-17; Micah 5:2

Devotional: Matthew traces Jesus through Joseph's royal biological line, giving him legal right to David's throne. Luke traces the line of Mary, giving Jesus the blood connection to David without the curse attached to the royal succession. God used two people, two lines, and two genealogies to accomplish what no single human lineage could do alone. Micah had promised that the ruler of Israel would come from Bethlehem, and that his origins were from ancient times. God's precision in fulfilling that promise through the specific intersection of Joseph and Mary's families is staggering. His plans do not depend on ideal circumstances. They depend on his sovereignty.

Reflection: How does God's meticulous faithfulness in fulfilling prophecy strengthen your confidence in his promises for your own life?

Application: Identify one promise from Scripture you have struggled to believe. Research one way God has already fulfilled a similar promise in biblical history and let that strengthen your faith today.

Day 5: Plans That Cannot Be Stopped

Reading: Haggai 2:20-23; Ephesians 1:9-11

Devotional: Zerubbabel was given the royal seal of promise by the prophet Haggai, marking him as the one through whom the Messiah's line would continue. He appears in both Matthew's and Luke's genealogies, the only name outside of Abraham to David to appear in both. God's plan crossed every exile, every defeat, every curse, and every generation to arrive at exactly the right moment in exactly the right person. Ephesians 1 tells us that God is working all things according to the counsel of his will. That same unstoppable plan includes you. The God who kept his promises from Adam to Zerubbabel to Jesus is the God who keeps his promises to you.

Reflection: What promise of God are you tempted to believe has been derailed by your circumstances or your failures?

Application: Make a list of three specific promises God has made to his people in Scripture. Spend time in prayer today surrendering your doubts about each one, choosing to trust the God whose plans have never once failed.