

Jesus = His Name, And That Is How He Is In The Davidic Line

**Pastor Jeffrey Grupp, Tecumseh Church of the Nazarene (TCN), Tecumseh, MI,
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In the Gospel of Matthew, we are told how Jesus is the prophesied Son of David, and how He was in the line of David since He was Joseph's son. But this leaves an obvious problem: How can Jesus be in David's bloodline when Joseph is His legal father, but not his birth father, since the Holy Spirit is Jesus's birth Father? There have been many theories purporting solutions to this apparent dilemma, but none, in my opinion, seem too convincing. In this article I will propose a simple and ironclad solution to this, that shows how Scripture reveals Jesus to be in the Davidic line through Joseph in a way that completely solves this apparent "problem."

To my knowledge the solution I will present has not been given hitherto, and scholars, in general, consider this a mysterious problem with no solution. In his famous exegesis of Matthew, France writes:

The "book of origin" has left us with an unresolved problem. Joseph has been shown to be the "son of David," the heir to the royal dynasty of Judah, but in v. 16 [of chapter 1,] Matthew ... indicate[s] that Jesus, the son of Joseph's wife Mary, was not in fact Joseph's son (and Matthew carefully avoids ever referring to Joseph as Jesus' "father"). (France 2007, 47).

Another author used the word "grafted" to say that Jesus could be "grafted" (to use Garland's word [2001, 21]) onto Joseph's Davidic line via His name, and specifically, by Joseph giving Jesus His name. Garland (Ibid.) believes that it is legally (that is, by the legal system) that the name of Jesus is grafted onto David's line, as if the legal system has the power to alter the metaphysics of reality and suddenly engineer Jesus as genuinely being part of that blood-line, just because the legal system says so. I found this a very innovative solution, which for all I know, could be correct, but, alas, I found it a not altogether convincing analysis of how Jesus could be from David's line in Matthew's genealogy.

As is well-known, in the Bible, the name of a person *is equal to* the person (see Mulholland 1993, 139 for a really interesting discussion about this). We see name changes of people in the Bible at points in their lives when they transform from one person to another (Saul to Paul, Jacob to Israel, among many others). As noted in Mulholland's *Invitation to a Journey*, "God says to Jacob, 'What is your name?' Now God knows Jacob's name. Since, biblically, name has to do with the nature of the one who is named, God is saying to Jacob, 'What kind of person are you, really?' And Jacob says, 'I am the manipulator. I am Jacob, the supplanter.' At this moment Jacob's healing begins" (Mulholland 1993, 139). So, the idea I am going to work with here is the idea that name = self.

Now, professional scientists and philosophers have had a difficult time defining what the *self* is: they usually work by this thesis:

Thesis 1: self = a feeling and ultimately a brain process (the academic position).

But not only has it been incredibly difficult so far for academics to merely describe or to define what the self *is*, it is probably even more difficult to (try to) find it in the brain (something professional academics have failed to do). Furthermore, trying to define the self as a part of the mind is too murky and vague, since if the self seems to be a sort of *feeling* (the feeling of being "me"), and feelings are *ineffable* (try to describe the *feeling* of love, it cannot be done). I would guess that in culture-at-large, people usually think of themselves as being a brain, and/or a body (since that is what professional science tells them, without any evidence for that claim), but if self has never been found in those, perhaps we can develop a better thesis of what self is, in accord to what Scripture says, and more in line with the idea that self=a spirit, wherein that name of a thing *is what it is*: you are your name: if I could tear myself apart to the rudimentary atoms of my self, I would find that it is not a biological process, or a set of quantum atoms that makes me up, but rather, it is my name that is the atomic, irreducible base of who and what I am:

Thesis 2: the name = the person/self named

In other words, the person is equal to their name: *you are equal to your name*: the person Sally = her name, and she is not equal to her biology, because she is a spirit, not an animal of flesh.

This is different than the thesis of what a person, or self, is that we are taught in the university, where we are taught that we are a biological animal, made of meat and bone, where spirit does not exist, and where the meat and bone that you are, is, in turn, made out of non-observable subatomic particles and quantum atomic energy points that flash-in-and-out-of-existence. Rather, thesis 2 is the concept that we are a metaphysical entity: what you are is not a blob of evolving atomic bio-goo, but rather, you are an address, a sound, a text, a word—*which is your name*. And this leads us to the thesis that

Thesis 3: Jesus = His name.

And there are many verses that point to thesis 3, such as:

Exodus 15:3 (NKJV)

The Lord *is* a man of war;

The Lord *is* His name.

There are so many verses like this in the Bible, and I am wondering if we shouldn't interpret that "is" in the second as being like an equal sign (=), much in this way:

Two and two *is* four (2+2=4),

where the "is" denotes an equals sign ("=") rather than the possession of a property (the apple *is* red), and wherein the second line of Ex. 15:3 could be written like this:

The Lord *is equal to* His name, or

The Lord *is identical to* His name.

I realize that this may not at all be the traditional way of analyzing this sort of verse, and that it may usually be believed that a verse like Ex. 15:3 is simply telling us what we already know, which is that our Lord's name is "Lord," sort of like saying, "Sally's name is Sally, in case you did not already know." But what if that were the wrong way to approach a verse like Ex. 15:3, and where, instead, something like thesis 3 is what was being denoted in Ex. 15:3.

If that is the case, then the idea that *Joseph* put Jesus in David's line makes a whole lot of sense, by the following thesis:

Thesis 4: Jesus was given His identity, His selfhood, *via his name*, which was given to Him by Heaven, and thus Jesus' identity, his essence, his selfhood, his being, was given to Him by His legal father, Joseph, who was in the Davidic line, and by that naming, Jesus is put into the Davidic line.

In simpler terms, what I am asking is: If we are not biological machines, but rather we are spirits (in God's image), then perhaps the idea of looking at bloodlines and begets is, ultimately, not the whole story in understanding ancestry, and instead, looking at names and soul-lines, for lack of better words, is what is really needed and relevant for fully understanding ancestry.

So, if we believe the Bible to be true, and something more like thesis 3 is correct (and thesis 1 is not), thus leading to thesis 4 for theorizing how Jesus is not legally grafted onto David's line, but rather, was *divinely implanted into it*, then, it would appear that Thesis 4 and a name-implantation by the angel and Joseph put Jesus in the Davidic line.

-Pastor Jeffrey Grupp, Tecumseh Church of the Nazarene (TCON), September 3, 2017

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