TSC\_130 Genealogies final

**Nancy Dawson** 00:01

Hello, I'm Dr. Nancy Dawson. I'm glad to be here on the podcast with David today to talk about the genealogies of the Bible, which is a topic, maybe you all haven't thought about, but would like to think about and would like to know more about it.

**David Capes** 00:35

Dr. Nancy Dawson, Nancy, good to see you today. Thanks for being with us on the stone chapel podcast. Thank you. Now, this is not your first time to the library.

**Nancy Dawson** 00:45

No, it is not I use this library quite often. I only live an hour north of here in montgomery. So it's just such a great resource. And I love coming. It's quiet. It's resourceful, professional access to wonderful books. So I thank you all for providing such a wonderful place.

**David Capes** 01:07

We are so grateful that you found it. A great place to study. Yeah. So you are Dr. Nancy Dawson. So tell me a little bit about that. Well, let's just backup. Who is Nancy Dawson?

**Nancy Dawson** 01:18

Okay, I grew up in Oklahoma, and went to Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee. Did a master's in plant taxonomy down in Louisiana with a world renowned plant taxonomist. And then we moved to North Carolina. And I did my PhD work. And then I was on faculty at Western Kentucky University. And then we moved back to Texas, and I was over the research aspects of Department of Physiology and Texas, at Texas A&M. And so we've traveled a little ways here and there. But I guess my background has been in biology and cell biology, but I've always had a heart for theology. And so during our sojourn in North Carolina, I was able to go to Duke Divinity School. I had always taught in the church and it was just such a wonderful time in my life where I could go back and kind of meld those two passions in my life.

**David Capes** 02:28

Duke Divinity is a Methodist school. Are you Methodist?

**Nancy Dawson** 02:32

I do go to a global Methodist church now. Okay, but I guess I was raised Baptist. We attended Presbyterian Church. I'm an elder in the Presbyterian Church. And so I think the the roots of Duke are Methodism, I'm not sure how affiliated they are. But yeah, it was a wonderful place to study. I did two years of study there.

**David Capes** 02:59

Wonderful. It's a, we've got some good friends that teach there, they're a part of that and have come through that program. So at some point along your sojourn, you got interested in the genealogies of the Bible. Now, how did that happen?

**Nancy Dawson** 03:12

I know people ask me that. And that's such a good question. I would say I have not even traced my own personal family history, my ancestry.

**David Capes** 03:22

So you're not on ancestry? No, no.

**Nancy Dawson** 03:26

So well, I've had my blood tested. But I would say that the turning point for me was when I was in Divinity School, and I was looking for a resource to find some books that would have most of the genealogies in the Bible so that I could see and trace those lineages and I could not find one. So at that time, I started just reading through Scripture. And because my background is in science, and scientists like to categorize things, I just started reading through the Bible. And I...

**David Capes** 04:13

Were you automatically categorizing things?

**Nancy Dawson** 04:15

Yes, So I would get those those lineages in Genesis and start looking for who was related to who? And then I just kept going and so that began in like, 2000. I finished well, I did First and Second Chronicles around 2007.

**David Capes** 04:36

Now that's, there's a mother lode, of of genealogies in the Chronicle.

**Nancy Dawson** 04:41

That's a lot, that's that's the peak. Yeah. Especially First Chronicles, one through nine. And then I finished Old Testament around 2013. And I finished New Testament around 2015. So it was a long drawn out journey, methodical, persevering, adventure.

**David Capes** 05:05

Well, all of that is going to end up in a new book that you're publishing with Zondervan academic called all the genealogies of the Bible. I'm excited about this book, I think it's gonna be great. I even quoted you that early version of your work. And the book that I'm working on, called 'Matthew through Old Testament Eyes'. So I found that really helpful what you were doing in that book. So all right, for those who don't know, if you're reading the Bible, where are you going to find things like genealogies? I mean, most people who've been reading the Bible through will find one in Matthew chapter one, verse one, and a lot of times, they'll just skip right over it. Because boy, a bunch of hard names, there. So where are you going to find them in the Bible?

**Nancy Dawson** 05:48

Well, they're they're parsed out through Scripture. So you see quite a few in Genesis, definitely, and Joshua, and all the Judges. And then you have Ruth, the Boaz-Ruth story, at the end, it's kind of a transition genealogy to the book, Books of Kings. And so I traced all of the kings of Judah and Israel. And then when you get to Chronicles, that is just so steeped in names, kinship groups, lineages, and so you, you find that it often is the back end to what has even started in Genesis. So I call a lot of the genealogies constructed because I would, I would start, like the ancestry of someone from Genesis maybe, and then the nuclear family might be in Samuel. And then you would have the descendants, and they're in Chronicles.

**David Capes** 06:53

So you're pulling from different books not all laid out on one page.

**Nancy Dawson** 06:56

No. That's what typically has taken place. In the books that have been published, they'll be like, either list genealogies, like the Table of Nations in Genesis 10, or something like all the people that returned from exile in Israel, or Nehemiah. What I tried to do is construct them. So you could see the full breadth of who this person is where they lie. And time. And so genealogies are very tied to chronology as well. So each of the charts, and there's about 280 of them in the book. So each chart has a title, that's the main character, it might be genealogy of King David, or genealogy of Deborah the judge of Israel. Then it's followed by really a, a time period comment. So this is an anti diluvian figure, this is a patriarchal figure. This is a person that's a prophet in the pre exile, post exile, that kind of thing. And so,

**David Capes** 08:10

Sort of historical marker. Where do they fit in?

**Nancy Dawson** 08:13

Yes, where do they fit. And then they're followed by the genealogical tree itself, which is, which are the lineages. And then there's a commentary that follows that, and those were written by myself and then the Old Testament scholar on the work was Dr. Eugene Merrill, out of Dallas Theological Seminary. He is a wonderful man and scholar. And I've just learned so much by working with him for like, three and a half years. And then the, the New Testament contributing editor was Andreas Kostenberger. And so they vetted the charts, did explications of some of the things, just checked my work. And so it's very sound, it's exciting to have it where there's a lot of competence to what you're bringing, this isn't just, you know, my personal view on genealogy.

**David Capes** 09:19

So it really is a composite work then. So let's say I want to ask kind of a functional question about how did the genealogies function within these texts? I mean, what what, when somebody wrote a genealogy, partial or a whole genealogy of somebody? What were they trying to do at that point?

**Nancy Dawson** 09:39

I feel like the genealogies are this underlayment over all of the biblical narratives. They are kind of the underpinnings. I think of them, sort of in two metaphor type ways. One is you are constructing a house and if you've ever driven by a construction site, you see the foundation, you see the stud walls, you see the cross timbers. And that's what genealogies are very much like the, of course, the cornerstone in the foundation is God's word and Jesus himself. But those vertical lines are like pillars, and they represent strategic lineages, those of like Abraham or David, there's a lot of emphasis on Saul. And of course, we're trying to understand, of course, what's happening with Jesus's genealogy. That's one way to think about them. It's the house of God, who are the people that form that part of that household. And you are trying to see all the kinship groups how one person is linked to another person, who's their offspring, who are their ancestors, and so on. So that's one major way. And you see this general transition in scripture from Old Testament, it was the bet, the house, the house, the household. And it's the house of God, of course, we think of like that as being the tabernacle, or the first temple or the second temples, or Zerubbabel's temple, when they come back. Those are the houses but what you see is there's a general transition in New Testament, it becomes the nails. It's the the spiritual house. It's those that have the faith of Abraham, that are brought into the house of God. And so it it the house is really meant for both Jews and Gentiles. And so you see that general transition. The other metaphor, I would like to say is, it's like a living tree. And the trees that were of revered status in Old Testament, or the cedars of Lebanon, because that wood was used to cut and formed the major timbers in like Solomon's temple. That is a living tree. And so you have the main main trunk, you have the branches, the lateral branches, and then the leaves are like the people. And so it's, it's a house that's growing. We serve a living God, it's, there's this dynamic relationship, not static, and it says, He is not the God, God of the dead. He's the God of the living. And so we are subsumed into that large massive entity that is like a massive tree or cedar of Lebanon.

**David Capes** 12:50

Yeah. Paul likens it to an olive trees in Romans. Yes, it is. And, and the whole emphasis there is on the grafting in of the Gentiles. Some, some had been, you know, you prone to certain kinds of fruit trees, and, you know, you kind of discard those, but other things are grafted in. So it's, it's fascinating. So they function a variety of ways, then.

**Nancy Dawson** 13:15

Absolutely. They tell who can hold a particular office like a priest. Someone, you can't just say, Well, I would like to be a priest and offer this sacrifice. We know what happened to some of those kings. You don't want to do that. No, you have to be in a certain lineage to be a priest, or a Levite, or a king.

**David Capes** 13:41

There's a lot more emphasis, it seems like to me in the ancient world, on family, in kinship, in lineage.

**Nancy Dawson** 13:49

And they valued it.

**David Capes** 13:50

Yeah, they did. And I wonder when that changed exactly? You know, I heard somebody say one time well, family is the reason we go to therapy. You know, and not not we don't find our identity with family so much and think about all of our ancestors in that way. But

**Nancy Dawson** 14:06

There is that verse in New Testament talks about endless genealogies. And this is someone that's like saying, well, I want to show that I am related to King David. And so they go through all these gyrations and these things that are not true. It's like us saying, I for sure am related to somebody that was on the Mayflower or I'm, yeah, I'm related to George Washington or Abraham Lincoln and, and so that's, that's the, where they're, they're putting a negative emphasis on genealogies. But clearly they are so fundamental and important to understanding really the narratives and interpreting them correctly.

**David Capes** 14:56

Now when I look at the genealogies you know, we go Father, Son, you know, etc, and sort of in a straight line. But my understanding is from reading some of your work is that sometimes a generation might be skipped over. Absolutely. In other words that that you may not include every single individual in that line. Maybe if they weren't known, or if they did something embarrassing. I don't know why, but, but is that true? Is that how it works?

**Nancy Dawson** 15:25

Well, I would say, in general, that is more the exception than the rule. So you take the first family. Adam and Eve, and you have Cain, Abel and Seth, but it says that there's other sons and daughters. So it makes that brief statement, but it does not go in, there's no genealogies traced for those other sons and daughters. Now, someone like Matthew, who is providing this very well laid out genealogy of Jesus, he, he's trying to conform it with the aim of having 14, 14 and 14 generation groups. And so he, he omits four kings, three in a row, and then another one, the father of Jechoniah, which was Jehoiakim. And so those kings are deliberately omitted, but you know that they exist by looking at the Old Testament, clearly they are there. So in general, those three kings in a row, they caused apostasy in Judah. And so he, that was his selective choice, but I would say in general, most of the children, the offspring, the siblings, are given. And, but we know Solomon had lots of wives and concubines. And so his genealogy is fairly straightforward in that first generation, because it only talks about some of them. And so that will be a case where you get an abbreviation.

**David Capes** 17:16

Yeah. We're just about out of time and I'm fascinated by all this, but let's, I'm afraid to even ask the question, because I know it take us 30 minutes to answer it. But in particular, in the New Testament, we have two genealogies for Jesus one in Matthew, one in Luke, we don't have one in John, we don't have one in Mark. But they're different because they have a different starting place and a different ending place. Any, just teased us a little bit, kind of talking about your book, "All the Genealogies, the Bible' that's coming out in 2023 in Zondervan. So give us, give us a sense.

**Nancy Dawson** 17:50

Okay, so one of my main goals was to try to understand Jesus's genealogy. It's, it's been very difficult in past history, it's because you have the names of different people. And so it's like, can you harmonize these and I can say, number one, by looking at all of the genealogies, I can tell you that they're both patrilineal descent of Jesus.

**David Capes** 18:20

 Patrilineal. That means, through the Father?

**Nancy Dawson** 18:23

Yes, and that is how, I would say 99.9% of genealogies in the Bible are all patrilineal. There are a few exceptions. But I found by looking at First Chronicles three where it's talking about Zerubbabel and Sheltiel. So there's four names in common in Matthew and Luke's genealogy, and that is David, King, David. Joseph, which is Jesus's father, and then two other people Shealtiel and Zerubbabel. And that whole thread of redemption hangs on those two people who lived at the time of the exile, which is the time when, you know, we're talking about, is Judah goes into captivity in 586 and they do not come back and return and build the temple until 516. During that whole destruction of Jerusalem, many, many people are killed. Children, many widows and so you come down to these two people. And so what I found is that there is a chiasm, there's a chiastic structure between David and Shealtie, to his son Zerubbabel, and then from Zerubbabel, it splits again, and it goes to Joseph and Jesus. And so Joseph is, Joseph is the earthly father of Jesus, but and you wouldn't think that the genealogy would go through him, but it does.

**David Capes** 20:01

What is, is an adoptive kind of genealogy. Is that a catefory? As a scientist, is that a category?

**Nancy Dawson** 20:08

Yes, it's um. I would say Leverett marriage, which is addressd in Deuteronomy 25. That is at, definitely at play. I found 10 places in Jesus's ancestry, where there was some type of second marriage. Now that is not what I expected. And that is probably not what your audience would expect. But you can see it clearly in somebody like David and Bathsheba. Bathsheba was the former wife of Uriah. But then David takes her in marriage. Okay, Judah, takes and has children by Tamar, who was formally married to his other two sons Er and Onan.

**David Capes** 20:56

Briefly married they were. They weren't married very long.

**Nancy Dawson** 20:58

Very briefly before they're killed. But Ruth was married to Mahlon. And eventually she marries one of the spies, Selman. And so you see this .

**David Capes** 21:10

Ruth?

**Nancy Dawson** 21:11

Ruth marries, she was married to Mahlon. Okay. And then he dies. And so she's a Moabite. And Boaz the judahite takes her as a kinsman redeemer. And so I found this repeated pattern of where one woman is married to two different men in succession, not at the same time, but in succession.

**David Capes** 21:40

And usually because of death.

**Nancy Dawson** 21:42

Yes, yes. And so it's very fascinating. It's hard to tease out and then when it came down to understandings, really the ancestry of Mary and Joseph, I had to look at some extra biblical material. I was very selective. I use like five extra biblical sources. And those provided what I thought, we're consistent with scripture, not real spurious things that are just legendary of nature, but believable and credible. And so I could trace Mary and Joseph's ancestry back. So I hope this will be a great resource.

**David Capes** 22:28

Yeah, we're talking to Dr. Nancy Dawson, about her book that's coming out in 2023. 'All the Genealogies of the Bible' published by Zondervan academic. Thanks, Nancy, for being with us today.

**Nancy Dawson** 22:40

You are very welcome. Thank you.

**David Capes** 22:43

One of the things I love about doing these podcasts is that inevitably, I learned something, whether I wanted to or not. And today I did, and I hope you enjoyed that as much as I did. For more info about our guests, check out our show notes. They're there for you. Subscribe to the podcast. We'd love to hear from you. Leave us a comment, rate us. You know the drill. We're on Apple and Google Spotify and iHeartRadio and Stitcher and other places. I want to say thanks to those that make this podcast possible. Cathy Capes, Josalyn Solis, Phil Keaggy, and the Lanier Foundation. Let's give it up for them. Cue the aplause track. (clap, clap) Thanks for listening. Hey standby for a nugget of wisdom from Dr. Nancy Dawson.

**Nancy Dawson** 23:30

I don't know what your interests might be. Mine initially was not to really study genealogies. I committed myself to reading slowly and methodically through scripture, and just began in Genesis. And I must say that that was a turning point for me. God had been preparing me ever since I was nine, and committing my life and then teaching in the church and all that I. I would say that is the turning point. If you will submit and study scripture, God will speak to you in His Word. And you will be given a task of some sort that meets with your abilities and your passions. And for me it was the genealogies were a natural outflow of classification really, that I learned with plant taxonomy, but it's very similar. It was like a crossover kind of, of field. And so I'm just thankful that God works in each of us differently, but at the same time, the same and that we're all part of that house and family of God.