

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? – WHOSE SON IS HE?

The editor of a contemporary answers the above question in a very unsatisfactory manner. Rejecting, with undisguised contempt, the doctrine of the "immaculate conception," and laboring to prove unworthy of credence the simple story of the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy relative to it, found in Matthew and Luke, boldly assumes the position that Christ is the natural son of Joseph. But will he accept the legitimate consequences of this position? We shall see.

That Christ is the son of David the Jews, blind as they were, understood perfectly; but, having no faith in his immaculate conception, they were utterly unable to answer the final question: "If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" Can our contemporary do better than they from the same stand-point?

But Israel's Messiah, the Christ of the Bible, is not only the son of David, but he is the divinely-appointed heir to David's throne. The purpose for which I write is to show from the Scriptures that if Jesus of Nazareth is the natural son of Joseph, he can never sit on David's throne, and, consequently, is not the true Messiah.

If we can believe the Record (and, if not, we know nothing about the matter), Joseph must trace his descent from David, back through that long line of kings beginning with Solomon. This question, then, demands an authoritative answer. Can the real heir to David's throne come in that line? The careful Bible student will learn two things:

1. If Solomon had obeyed God as did David his father, the throne of David would have been established in his line forever; consequently, the deathless heir to that throne would have come of

his seed just as certainly as of David's. Proof: "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, he will not turn from it, of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne forevermore" (Psa. 132:11,12). But in what line? "And of all my sons (for God hath given me many sons), he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel...Moreover [beyond all this], I will establish his kingdom forever if he will be constant to do my statutes and my judgments as at this day" (1 Chron. 28:5-7).

2. Had they been thus obedient, the throne of David would not have been overturned, nor his crown profaned "by casting it down to the ground," but there would have been an unbroken line of kings from David to Christ. Proof: "If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee [be cut off from thee, from the throne – margin] (said he) a man on the throne of Israel" (1 Kings 2:4).

It is a principle, the correctness of which few will question, that whatever is clearly promised on condition of obedience is forfeited if that obedience is not rendered. On this ground alone we must conclude that David's throne and kingdom cannot be established forever in Solomon's line. If we are right in this conclusion, the Scriptures will sustain the position. "To the law," then, "and to the testimony": "And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart...If thou seek him he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off forever." (1 Chron. 28:9). Again, "And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel...Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee...I will surely rend the kingdom from thee....Notwithstanding, in thy days I will not do it – for David

thy father's sake; but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit, I will not rend away all the kingdom, but will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake and for Jerusalem's sake, which I have chosen" (1 Kings 11:9-13). Thus, ten out of twelve parts of "the kingdom of the Lord over Israel" was rent away from Solomon's line immediately after his death, and the remaining portion was retained, not for his sake, but for David's and Jerusalem's sake.

Let us now listen while God declares his purpose concerning the two last kings in Solomon's line: "Thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David" (Jer. 36:30). Of Jeshoniah, or Coniah as he is sometimes called, we read: "As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence.... Is this man Coniah a despised, broken idol? Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (Jer. 22:24-30). **[R468 : page 4]**

Two things seem very certain: 1. If Christ is the son of Joseph, he came in Solomon's line; and if the kingdom is restored to that line, it was just as really rent away from David, who obeyed God, as from Solomon, who disobeyed him – all his promises and threatenings to the contrary notwithstanding. 2. If he is Joseph's son he not only came in Solomon's line, but he is "this man's" seed; and yet the whole earth is called to hear the solemn declaration, "NO MAN OF HIS SEED SHALL PROSPER, SITTING ON THE THRONE OF DAVID, AND RULING ANY MORE IN JUDAH" (Jer. 22:30).

I think I have fully sustained the position taken at first, that if Jesus of Nazareth is the natural son of Joseph, he can never sit on the throne of his father David, and, consequently, is not the true Messiah. But he is not the son of Joseph; and I am not disposed to leave this subject until I have shown, not only that he did not come in that line, but that it was predicted that he should not so come. But, first, let me quote a prophecy which is very suggestive, coming as it does immediately after the last one named above: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper....In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby he shall be called (by), JEHOVAH – OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." [See Young's translation.] (Jer. 23:6.) Compare these two prophecies and draw your own conclusions. But I wish to make a point here. The editor, before referred to, thinks Matthew's application of Isaiah's prophecy is extremely absurd. "And the fact that Isaiah names the child Immanuel, while the angel names Mary's child Jesus, is proof that the two are entirely different, and bear no relation to each other whatever." Will he also claim that this Branch, raised up unto David, bears no relation to Mary's child, because the latter was named at his birth Jesus, and not "OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS"?

Even the long-suffering of God has a limit, and Solomon's line of kings reached it at last. This is the record of it: "And thou profane, wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end. Thus saith the Lord, Remove the diadem and take off the crown: this shall not be the same [how shall it be then?]; exalt him that is low and abase him that is high." Every one must admit that Solomon's royal line is the high branch of the Davidic house. This, then, must be abased, and a low branch exalted, when, after the predicted overturning, the throne, the kingdom and the crown shall be given to him "whose right it is." Mary seemed to catch the inspiration of this truth when she exclaimed: "He hath regarded the

low estate of his handmaiden; for, from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed. He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree." If you will turn to Luke 3:23 and onward, you will find that, while Joseph came of the royal line, as Matthew testifies, Mary came of that obscure one beginning with Nathan.

In conclusion, let me say, that whatever others may do in regard to this question, it is my purpose to "Let God be true," if it makes all men liars.

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