

A Christmas Reading

from the four gospels.

Special Excerpt from Palmer's Diatessaron
for Christmas

Translation and Harmonization

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DIATESSARON

Chapter 1

THE BIRTH OF JESUS FORETOLD

Lk 1:26-38

10 And in the sixth month,¹ the angel Gabriel was sent out from God, to a town in Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel went in to her, and said, "Hail, O favored one! The Lord is with you."

11 But she was very troubled by the utterance, and wondered what sort of greeting it might be. And the angel said to her, "Fear not, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and shall bear a son, and you are to call his name Jesus. This man will be great, and be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

12 And Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen, since I am not knowing a man?"

13 In answer the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. For this reason also, the one to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth your relative, even she in her old age has conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her, she who was being called barren. Therefore with God, not one of *these* statements will be impossible."

14 "Here am I, the slave girl of the Lord," Mary said. "May it be to me according to your statement." And the angel left her.

MARY STAYS WITH ELIZABETH

Lk 1:39-45

15 At that time Mary got up and went with speed to the hill country, to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah, and greeted Elizabeth. And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb did leap, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she shouted out in a loud voice, saying, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And how does it come to me, that to me the mother of my Lord should come? For when the sound of your greeting came into my ears, the baby in my womb did leap in exultation. Blessed is she who believed that there will be a completion of the things announced to her from the Lord!"

MARY'S SONG

Lk 1:46-56

16 And Mary said:

"My soul does magnify the Lord
and my spirit did rejoice
in God my Savior,
because he looked toward
the lowly station of his servant.
So behold: all the generations after now
will consider me blessed,
because the Mighty One
did great things for me.
And holy will be his name,

¹ of Elizabeth's pregnancy.

and his mercy
 to those who fear him,
 into age after age.
 Power he wrought with his arm.
 He scattered those who were proud
 in the thoughts of their heart.
 He pulled down rulers from
 their thrones
 and lifted high the humble.
 Hungry ones he filled up
 with good things
 and rich ones he sent away empty.
 He helped his servant Israel,
 remembering about mercy
 'to Abraham and his seed for ever,'
 as he said to our fathers."

17 And Mary remained with her about three months,² and then returned to her home.

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIZER

Lk 1:57-66

18 And the time was fulfilled for Elizabeth to give birth, and she produced a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had magnified his mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

19 And it came about that on the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child, and they were about to call him by the name of his father, Zechariah, and his mother responded and said, "No! He shall be called John."

20 And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives called by that name."

21 Then they signaled to his father, to find out what he wanted him to be called. He asked for a tablet, and wrote as follows, "His name is John." Everyone was surprised. And immediately his mouth was opened, and also his tongue, and he spoke, blessing God.

22 An awe came over everyone who lived near them. And all through the hill country of Judea these things were being discussed. Everyone who heard, kept thinking about it, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

ZECHARIAH'S SONG

Lk 1:67-80

23 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he prophesied, saying:

"Blessed be the Lord,
 the God of Israel,
 because he has turned
 to concern himself
 and has accomplished redemption
 for his people.
 He has raised up a horn
 of salvation for us
 in the house of David
 his servant,
 as he has said through the mouths
 of his holy prophets
 since eons ago,

² Mary went to see Elizabeth when her relative was in her sixth month of pregnancy. Now she stays with her another three months, which makes nine; thus Mary was among those who shared with Elizabeth in the birth of John.

salvation from our enemies
 and from the hand of all who hate us—
 to demonstrate mercy to our fathers
 to remember his holy covenant,
 the oath he swore to our
 father Abraham:
 to give us rescue from the hand
 of our enemies,
 that we may serve him without fear
 in holiness and righteousness before him
 all our days.
 And you, child, will be called
 a prophet of the Most High;
 for you will go on before the Lord
 to prepare his ways,
 to give his people the knowledge
 of salvation
 through the forgiveness of their sins,
 because of the tender feelings
 of our God
 with which the Sunrise from
 on high will look over us
 to appear to those sitting in darkness
 and in the shadow of death,
 to guide our feet along the path
 of peace."

24 And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he was in the deserts until the days of his being presented to Israel.

Chapter 2

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Mt 1:18-25a; Lk 2:1-7

1 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they consummated, she was found to be pregnant, from the Holy Spirit. But her husband Joseph, being a righteous man, did not want to make an example of her, and planned to divorce her secretly.

2 But while he was mulling these things over, an angel of the Lord appeared to him by means of a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, for what is in her is fathered by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to call his name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

3 All this took place in order that what was said by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled, which says: "Behold, the virgin shall be pregnant, and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel," which when translated is, "God with us."

4 And when Joseph awoke from his sleep, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and he took his bride home. But he did not know her³ until she gave birth to a son.

5 And it came about in those days, that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that all the inhabited earth should be registered. This was the first registration that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

³ "Know her" is a euphemism meaning, "he did not have sex with her."

6 Thus Joseph also went up, from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to Judea, to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and line of David; to be registered with Mary, the one pledged to him, who was pregnant. And it came about, that while they were there, the days for her to give birth were completed, and she bore her firstborn son. And she swaddled him and placed him in a feeding trough, because there was no room for them in the inn.

THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS

Lk 2:8-20

7 And there were shepherds in that same region, camping out in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks all night. And an angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone all around them, and they were terrified. And the angel said to them, "Fear not. For behold, I am announcing to you a great joy that will be with all the people. Because for you is born this day, in the town of David, a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord. And this will be a sign to you: you will find a baby swaddled, and lying in a feeding trough."

8 And suddenly there was with the angel a great company of the army of heaven, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest realms! And on earth, peace, good will toward people!"

9 And it came about that when the angels had departed from them into heaven, the shepherds were saying to one another, "Let's go over to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

10 And they went speeding, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the feeding trough. And once they had seen, they revealed about the message spoken to them concerning this child. And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. As for Mary, she kept these words, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, because of the fact that all the things which they had heard and seen, were just as they had been told.

JESUS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE

Mt 1:25b; Lk 2:21-39a

11 And when the eighth day had arrived, the time to circumcise him, he was called the name Jesus, the name called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

12 And when the days of their cleansing according to the Law of Moses had been completed, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male to open a womb shall be called holy to the Lord," and to offer a sacrifice, in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."

13 And behold, a man was in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been communicated to him by the Holy Spirit, that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Anointed. And he came by the Spirit into the temple, at the same time that the parents of the child Jesus brought him to do for him what the custom of the Law required. And Simeon took him into his arms, and blessed God, saying:

"Now, Master, keeping your word,
 you are dismissing your slave in peace.
 For my eyes have seen your salvation,
 which you have prepared in the sight
 of all the peoples;
 a light to be a revelation for the Gentiles,
 and the glory of your people Israel."

14 The child's father and mother were amazed at the things being said about him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, his mother: "Behold, this one is being laid down to cause the stumbling or rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be continually denounced—a sword will be run through your own soul too— so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed."

15 And there was also a prophetess, Hannah, daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. This woman had grown to be very old, having lived with a husband for seven years after her virginity, and then being a widow to eighty-four years of age, one who hardly left the temple but served night and day, in fasting and praying. And coming up at that very time, she gave thanks to God, and spoke about the child to all those expecting redemption in Jerusalem.

16 And so Joseph and Mary had done *for Jesus* everything required by the Law of the Lord.

THE ROYAL GENEALOGY OF JESUS

Mt 1:1-17

17 A record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

18 Abraham begot Isaac,
 and Isaac begot Jacob,
 and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers,
 and Judah begot Perez and Zerah, by Tamar,
 and Perez begot Hezron,
 and Hezron begot Ram,
 and Ram begot Amminadab,
 and Amminadab begot Nahshon,
 and Nahshon begot Salmon,
 and Salmon begot Boaz, by Rahab,
 and Boaz begot Obed, by Ruth,
 and Obed begot Jesse,
 and Jesse begot David the King.

19 David begot Solomon, by her who belonged to Uriah,

and Solomon begot Rehoboam,
 and Rehoboam begot Abijah,
 and Abijah begot Asa,
 and Asaph begot Jehoshaphat,
 and Jehoshaphat begot Joram,
 and Joram begot Uzziah,
 and Uzziah begot Jotham,
 and Jotham begot Ahaz,
 and Ahaz begot Hezekiah,
 and Hezekiah begot Manasseh,
 and Manasseh begot Amon,
 and Amon begot Josiah,
 and Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers

at the time of the exile to
 Babylon.

20 After the exile to Babylon:

Jeconiah begot Shealtiel,
 and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel,
 and Zerubbabel begot Abiud,
 and Abiud begot Eliakim,
 and Eliakim begot Azor,
 and Azor begot Zadok,
 and Zadok begot Akim,
 and Akim begot Eliud,
 and Eliud begot Eleazar,
 and Eleazar begot Matthan,
 and Matthan begot Jacob,

and Jacob begot Joseph,
 the husband⁴ of Mary,
 of whom was born Jesus,
 the one called the Messiah.

21 Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Anointed One.⁵

Chapter 3

THE VISIT OF THE MAGI

Mt 2:1-12

1 Now after Jesus had been born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, Magi from out of the east arrived into Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the one born king of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

2 Upon hearing this, King Herod was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. And having assembled all the chief priests and Torah scholars of the people, he inquired of them as to where the Messiah was to be born.

3 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they told him, "for this is what has been written through the prophet:

" 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land
 of Judah,
 are by no means least among
 the rulers of Judah;
 for out of you will come a ruler
 who will be the shepherd
 of my people Israel.'⁶"

4 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and inquired of them exactly what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and ask diligently for the child. And when you have found him, report back to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

5 And after they had heard the king, they went on their way, and lo, the star, the one they had seen in the east, kept moving on in front of them, until it arrived and stopped over where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with a surpassingly great joy. And upon coming to the house,⁷ they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they fell prostrate and worshiped him.

⁴ See the note at the end of this document discussing comparison of Matthew's genealogy of Jesus with the genealogy in Luke.

⁵ Fourteen plus fourteen plus fourteen equals six groups of seven generations. In Hebrew, in the Old Testament, a group of seven of something is called a week of something. There were six weeks of generations prior to the Messiah, and the Messiah ushered in the Sabbath week of generations. The Messiah brought in another rest from creation. As God took six days to create the First Adam, and then he ceased, so God also took six weeks of generations to create the Second Adam, and then he ceased. Another reason to celebrate the birth of Jesus: the Second Adam brings to us a permanent sabbath rest.

⁶ **3:3** Micah 5:2

⁷ **3:5** Joseph and Mary were now living in a house instead of the stable. This visit of the Magi occurred up to two years after Jesus' birth; see Matt. 2:16, or Diatess. 3:8. It could be that Herod was playing it very safe by killing boys up to two years old. But we know certainly that Joseph and Mary stayed in Bethlehem for quite some time after the birth. After giving birth to Jesus who was a first-born male, Mary was unclean for 40 days (Lev. 12:1-4), and she could not go into the temple for that 40 days. Leviticus 12:4, "...she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary, until the days of her purification are completed." Was she allowed to even touch Jesus, since he was a firstborn male? Exodus 13:12, 15, "You shall consecrate to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your livestock that are males shall be the LORD'S. ...Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD every male that first opens the womb, but every firstborn of my sons I redeem." Thus, Jesus as a firstborn male belonged to God, and was consecrated. Was he always consecrated, or only after he was dedicated in the temple? If he was consecrated always, then Mary could not touch him for 40 days. So how would Jesus be fed? Not by Mary's breasts for those 40 days. The Hebrews did have such a thing as professional nursemaids

And they opened their treasures, and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their country by another route.

THE ESCAPE TO EGYPT

Mt 2:13-18

6 And when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appears by a dream to Joseph, saying, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be there until I tell you, for Herod intends to search for the child to destroy him."

7 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and escaped into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, in order that the thing spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled, which says: "Out of Egypt I called my son."⁸

8 At that time, when Herod realized that he had been fooled by the Magi, he was very enraged, and he sent and did away with all the male children in Bethlehem and all its environs who were two years old and under, in accordance with the precise time he had ascertained from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled, which says:

"A voice is heard in Ramah,
a weeping and loud wailing,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more."⁹

THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

Mt 2:19-23; Lk 2:39b,40

9 And after Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appears by a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go into the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead."

10 So he got up, took the child and his mother and entered the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and returned to live in their own town of Nazareth, so that what was spoken through the prophets would be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.¹⁰

11 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

THE BOY JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

Lk 2:41-52

12 Now his parents would go every year to Jerusalem for the festival of Passover.¹¹ And when he turned twelve years old, they went up, according to the custom of the festival. And when

(Exodus 2:7, 9). At any rate, Joseph and Mary waited in Bethlehem at least those 40 days, until they could go into the temple to dedicate Jesus, pursuant to these scriptures. See also Diatess. 2:12; Luke 2:22-23.

⁸ Hosea 11:1

⁹ Jeremiah 31:15

¹⁰ A *Nazarene* is someone from the town of *Nazareth*, just as a *Houstonian* is someone from the city of *Houston*. A Nazarene is not to be confused with a Nazirite, which is someone who took a time-limited vow not to cut his hair or to eat grapes or drink wine. We know Jesus was not a Nazirite, because he drank wine. But what Old Testament prophecies was Matthew referring to? See my endnote in the back of this document, which addresses this question at length.

¹¹ **3:12** When God sent plagues on Egypt because Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go, the tenth plague (Exodus 11:1-12:30) was that God's destroying angel would kill all the firstborn sons, of both men and animals, in all the land. However, he decreed through Moses that the angel would pass over any household that had the blood of a slaughtered male lamb (or kid) on its doorframe— on the top, and on the two sides, and on the doorstep (the outline of a cross). The *Feast of the Passover* celebrated that deliverance, as prescribed in Exodus 12:1-28. Yeshua bled on his head, his outstretched hands, and his feet, the same four points that the blood of the Passover lamb was to be spilled. Thus, Yeshua was "the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." But some will say, "But in the Passover, only the firstborn were saved; that is not "the sin of the world." God applied an agricultural archetype to the human womb. Just as God demanded the firstfruits of the fields of his people, so also he demanded the firstfruits of every womb. "Every male to inaugurate the

the days were completed and they were returning home, the boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and his parents were not aware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they went a day's journey, and then began looking for him among their relatives and acquaintances. And when they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. And it came about that after three days they found him, sitting in the temple, in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and questioning them. And all those who heard him were amazed at the understanding of his responses. And when his parents saw him, they were stunned. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us this way? Look at how distressed your father and I are, searching for you."

13 And he said to them, "Why would you be searching for me? Shouldn't you have known that I would have to be among my Father's things?" But they did not understand what he said to them.

14 Then he went down with them, and arrived in Nazareth, and continued to subordinate himself to them. But his mother was recording all these words in her heart.¹² And Jesus kept growing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.

THE WORD BECAME FLESH AMONG US

Lk 3:23b-38; Jn 1:1-18

15 He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph,

the son of Eli, the son of Matthat,
 the son of Levi, the son of Melki,
 the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph,
 the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos,
 the son of Nahum, the son of Hesli,
 the son of Naggai, the son of Maath,
 the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein,
 the son of Josech, the son of Joda,
 the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa,
 the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,
 the son of Neri, the son of Melki,
 the son of Addi, the son of Cosam,
 the son of Elmadam, the son of Er,
 the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer,
 the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat,
 the son of Levi, the son of Simeon,
 the son of Judah, the son of Joseph,
 the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim,
 the son of Melea, the son of Menna,
 the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan,
 the son of David, the son of Jesse,
 the son of Obed, the son of Boaz,
 the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon,
 the son of Amminadab, the son of Aram,
 the son of Hezron, the son of Perez,
 the son of Judah, the son of Jacob,
 the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham,
 the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,
 the son of Serug, the son of Reu,
 the son of Peleg, the son of Eber,

womb is mine, is holy to the Lord." When a sovereign demands the firstfruits of your labor, and you yield it, it is a proof that that sovereign owns ALL your labor and fruits. It is a token for the whole produce. For example, when the Egyptians mortgaged their fields to Joseph in exchange for grain up front, from that time on they had to give the firstfruits of their fields to Pharaoh, which signified that Pharaoh owned their field entirely. So it is with the Passover and the firstborn. The blood of the paschal lamb on the door of a house redeemed that entire household; the firstborn was but the firstfruits of that womb, signifying God's ownership by redemption of the entire house. And Yeshua is the firstborn from out of the dead, the firstfruits of those that sleep. And just as Yeshua rose from the dead, the rest of the offspring shall rise from the dead.

¹² Compare Genesis 37:11.

the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan,
the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem,
the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,
the son of Methuselah, the son of Henoch,
the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel,
the son of Cainan, the son of Enos,
the son of Seth, the son of Adam,
the son of God.

16 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

17 Through him all things were made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light for humankind. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not mastered it.

18 There came a man sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify about that light, so that through him all people might believe. He himself was not the light; he came rather to bear witness to the light. The true light, which gives light to every human being, was coming into the world.

19 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, and his own did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, to those believing on his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children generated, not from bloods, nor from bodily desire, nor from a man's decision, but born of God.

20 And the Word became flesh, and moved his tent in among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of an Only Son, passed on from a Father, full of grace and truth.

21 John testifies concerning him, and he cries out, saying, "This is he of whom I said, 'The one coming after me has outranked me, because he existed before me.' "

22 And out of his fulness we have all received, yes, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one ever has seen God; but the Only Begotten Son, who is in the Father's embrace, he has made him known.

Matthew's and Luke's genealogies appear to give conflicting genealogies of Joseph the husband of Mary. Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:28-38

MATTHEW	LUKE
Abraham	Abraham
Isaac	Isaac
Jacob	Jacob
Judah	Judah
Perez	Perez
Hezron	Hezron
Aram	Aram
Amminadab	Amminadab
Nahshon	Nahshon
Salmon	Salmon
Boaz	Boaz
Obed	Obed
Jesse	Jesse
David	David
Solomon	Nathan
Rehoboam	Mattatha
Abijah	Menna
Asa	Melea
Jehoshaphat	Eliakim
Joram	Jonam
Uzziah	Joseph
Jotham	Judah
Ahaz	Simeon
Hezekiah	Levi
Manasseh	Matthat
Amos/Amon	Jorim
Josiah	Eliezer
Jeconiah	Joshua
Shealtiel	Er
Zerubbabel	Elmadam
Abiud	Cosam
Eliakim	Addi
Azor	Melki
Zadok	Neri
Achim	Shealtiel
Eliud	Zerubbabel
Eleazar	Rhesa
Matthan	Joanan
Jacob	Joda
Joseph	Josech
Jesus	Semein
	Mattathias
	Joseph
	Jannai
	Melki
	Levi
	Matthat
	Heli
	Joseph
	Jesus

It should be noted that though Matthew states in 1:17 that there are three sets of 14 generations, there are only 13 generations in his 3rd set. He also left out two generations from the second set which would have made that set 16 generations. After Josiah came Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, according to 2 Kings 23:34 – 24:6. Thus it seems Matthew made these sets for some purpose such as to be a memorization aid or teaching aid.

Following is taken from an article on the Internet:

<http://www.carm.org/diff/2genealogies.htm>

Both Matthew 1 and Luke 3 contain genealogies of Jesus. But there is one problem. They are different. Luke's Genealogy starts at Adam and goes to David. Matthew's Genealogy starts at Abraham and goes to David. When the genealogies arrive at David, they split with David's sons: Nathan (Mary's side) and Solomon (Joseph's side).

There is no discrepancy because one genealogy is for Mary and the other is for Joseph. It was customary to mention the genealogy through the father even though it was clearly known that it was through Mary.

First, realize that the Bible should be interpreted in the context of its literary style, culture, and history. Breaking up genealogies into male and female representations was acceptable in the ancient Near East culture since it was often impolite to speak of women without proper conditions being met: male presence, etc. One genealogy is of Mary and the other of Joseph, even though both mention Joseph. In other words, the Mary was counted "in" Joseph and under his headship.

Second, do any critics actually think that those who collected the books of the New Testament, and who believed it was inerrant, were unaware of this blatant differentiation in genealogies? Does anyone actually think that the Christians were so dense that they were unaware of the differences in the genealogy lists, closed their eyes and put the gospels into the canon anyway hoping no one would notice? Not at all. They knew the cultural context and had no problem with it knowing that one was of Joseph and the other of Mary.

Third, notice that Luke starts with Mary and goes backwards to Adam. Matthew starts with Abraham and goes forward to Joseph. The intents of the genealogies were different which is seen in their styles. Luke was not written to the Jews, Matthew was. Therefore, Matthew would carry the legal line (from Abraham through David) and Luke the biological one (from Adam through David). Also, notice that Luke's first three chapters mention Mary eleven times; hence, the genealogy from her. Fourth, notice Luke 3:23, "And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being supposedly the son of Joseph, the son of Eli," This designation "supposedly" seems to signify the Marian genealogy since it seems to indicate that Jesus is not the biological son of Joseph.

Finally, in the Joseph genealogy there is a man named Jeconiah. God cursed Jeconiah (also called Coniah), stating that no descendant of his would ever sit on the throne of David, "For no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah," (Jer. 22:30). But Jesus, of course, will sit on the throne in the heavenly kingdom. The point is that Jesus is not a biological descendant of Jeconiah, but through the other lineage -- that of Mary. Hence, the prophetic curse upon Jeconiah stands inviolate. But, the legal adoption of Jesus by Joseph reckoned the legal rights of Joseph to Jesus as a son, not the biological curse. This is why we need two genealogies: one of Mary (the actually biological line according to prophecy), and the legal line through Joseph.

Again, the early church knew this and had no problem with it. It is only the critics of today who narrow their vision and require this to be a "contradiction" when in reality we have an explanation that is more than sufficient.