

Dear C.R. Cain,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You asked who was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. You stated that the accounts in Luke and Matthew seem to give conflicting answers.

Although the Matthew and Luke accounts seem to conflict, they actually do not. Obviously, Joseph cannot be the son of both Jacob and Heli. According to Biblical scholars, Heli was actually Mary's father making him Joseph's father-in-law. In Biblical times there was no word for father-in-law, just as there was no word for grandfather. The Matthew and Luke accounts list different lineages. Matthew gives Joseph's lineage and Luke gives Mary's. The two lines diverge following David, Joseph through Solomon and Mary through Nathan. Then the two lines come together again at Salathiel and his son Zerubbabel, and diverge again thereafter. Both Mary and Joseph were equally descended from Zerubbabel. Joseph and Mary were cousins although many times removed.

We hope we have helped clear up this point. Please write us again.

Sincerely,
Christian Questions Radio