

Yeshua, Ben David

“¹⁶ So your house and your kingship will be secure forever before you; your throne will be established forever.” ¹⁷ Just so Nathan spoke all these words and all this vision to David” (2 Samuel 7:16-17).

♪ *“I have sworn to David my servant, your seed shall reign forever, your throne shall prevail through all generations, my covenant holds true... O David, Melech Yisrael, Chai Chai V'kayam”* ♪

The Gospel of Matthew begins the telling of the Good News with: *“The book of the genealogy (Greek genesis, that is, Hebrew bereshit) of Yeshua ha-Mashiach, Ben-David, Ben-Avraham” (Matt. 1:1).* This verse is almost the identical beginning to this week’s *Torah Portion*: *“¹⁹ Now these are the genealogies (tol^edot) of Isaac, Ben-Avraham” (Gen. 25:19).* Genealogy, a word that is not that important to us in America these days, that is, unless you are Jewish! The ethnicity, lineage, and culture of *Messiah Yeshua* counts!

In Matthew we are told what the *tol^edot* of Messiah *Yeshua* is. In particular we are told that: *“Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel” (Matt. 1:12b).* In Luke also we are told: *“...the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, ...” (Luke 3:27)* There is no question that the *Mashiach* had to be from the tribe of Judah and specifically from the direct lineage of King David. In Luke *Yeshua* is: *“the son of Nathan, the son of David” (Luke 3:31)* and in Matthew *“David fathered Solomon by the wife of Uriah” (Matt. 1:6).* Thus, the genealogy of *Yeshua* in Matthew is through Solomon and *Zerubbabel* through his father Joseph while the genealogy of *Yeshua* in Luke is through Nathan and *Zerubbabel* through his mother Mary. Both are descendants of King David but notice the two genealogies converge with *Zerubbabel* son of *Shealtiel*.

Who was this *Zerubbabel* son of *Shealtiel*? When you discover this, you will rejoice with me. At the time our people returned from the Babylonian captivity (≈520 B.C.E.), *Zerubbabel* was the heir to the throne of David and was referred to in Scripture as the “Governor of Judah.” We read about him in Haggai and Zechariah. *Zerubbabel* had the plum line and he is almost always mentioned together with *Joshua* son of *Jehozadak* the *cohen gadol*: *“In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of Adonai came through Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, kohen gadol:” (Haggai 1:1)* Zechariah continues the prophecy. In one of the most oft-quoted Biblical passages ever we once again meet *Zerubbabel*. This time, the Angel of *Adonai* tells us the work of rebuilding the Second Temple by *Zerubbabel* will indeed be completed: *“Then he responded to me by saying, ‘This is the word of Adonai to Zerubbabel saying: “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Ruach!” says Adonai-Tzva’ot... “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this House. His hands will also finish it. Then you will know that Adonai-Tzva’ot has sent me to you” (Zech. 4:6, 9).* So the rightful heir to the throne of David, *Zerubbabel*, the Governor of Judah, with *Joshua (Yehoshua)* the *Cohen Gadol* alongside him were the ones responsible for the rebuilding of the Second Temple.

Matthew reminds us that the Judean monarchy ended with Babylonian captivity. Isaiah (*“Then a shoot will come forth out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch will bear fruit out of His roots” Isaiah 11:1*) nevertheless reminds us that it will spring forth again. Once a mighty tree possessing the throne and the crown of Israel, the prophet foretells of the time that it would be shorn to nothing but a stump. But a new branch (THE BRANCH) one day would grow up from the old stump of the Davidic dynasty. This Branch will be a fruitful one.

Since the time of *Zerubbabel*, no descendant of David has sat on the throne of David reigning over the Children of Israel. Herod was not a descendant of David. In fact, he was not even Jewish! (He was an Edomite, a descendant of Esau!). The Maccabees (Hasmoneans) were not descendants of David. Their Hasmonian kingdom did not last very long. About 60 B.C.E. two Hasmonian brothers waged a bloody civil war. An Edomite noble called Antipater called upon Rome to intervene and the Roman general, Pompey, marched on the land of Israel and settled the civil war by force installing Antipater as

governor. When Antipater died, Caesar Augustus raised Antipater's son Herod over the position of "king of Israel." Herod murdered his wife (a descendant of the Hasmonean family) and had his sons strangled. He also had all of the Sanhedrin murdered. Even Josephus writes about the calamities of Herod's reign. Perhaps this explains why the descendants of King David settled in Nazareth (which includes Joseph & Mary). They knew that Isaiah prophesied: *"For to us a child is born, a son will be given to us, and the government will be upon His shoulder. His Name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God My Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and shalom there will be no end – on the throne of David and over His kingdom – to establish it and uphold it through justice and righteousness from now until forevermore. The zeal of Adonai-Tzva'ot will accomplish this"* (Isaiah 9:5-6).

The angel told Joseph that the child conceived in Mary's womb was of the Holy Spirit. The Hebrew Sages make an interesting observation on the above cited prophesy of Isaiah 9:6,7. In the Hebrew of verse 7 there is a small, seemingly insignificant spelling error in the word translated as 'increase.' The misspelled word is לְמַרְבֵּה, *Lemarbeh*. In that word, the letter מ *mem* appears in its *sofit* form ם, a form ordinarily appearing only at the end of a word. According to Santala (1992), the Zohar implies that the closed ם *mem* of Isaiah 9:6 indicates that the child promised in that verse will be born from a closed womb. The Talmud explains that a closed *mem* indicates mystical and hidden teaching, and in another place it relates the closed *mem* of Isaiah 9 to the sealing up of Messiah's identity. The angel further told Joseph that the child was to be named ישוע. *Yeshua* means salvation. In his announcement of the name, the angel makes a play on the word saying: (וּקְרָאתָ אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יֵשׁוּעַ כִּי הוּא יוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת־עַמּוֹ) *"And you will call his name Yeshua, for he will save (yoshia) his people."* Matthew ends his first chapter by quoting Isaiah 7:14: *"Therefore Adonai himself will give you people a sign: the young woman will become pregnant, bear a son and name him 'Immanu El' 'God is with us.'"*

Yeshua is the righteous and legal heir of the throne of David. When He returns He will rightfully and truthfully sit on the throne of His father David. The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords will rule and reign for a thousand years and then we will live and reign with Him forever and ever. How beautiful is to know these things and be assured that everything in Scripture matches as it should: ¹⁶*"All Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for restoration, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the person belonging to God may be capable, fully equipped for every good deed"* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Amen! Shabbat Shalom!