



## **Lekh Lekha**

*Torah:* Genesis 12:1-17:27

*Haftarah:* Isaiah 40:27-41:16

**See message notes [beitshalom.us](http://beitshalom.us) for parasha specific messages**

*Ketuvim Shlichim:* Matthew 1:1-17

**Specific to today's message**

November 9, 2024

### **Disciples of Yeshua 3**

*Shabbat Shalom Mishpacha.* What can we say about what happened this week except thank You, ADONAI! Thank You, Yeshua! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! We have been praying for months and months for a reprieve, another chance for the body of Messiah to have a level playing field on which to operate. With the election of Donald Trump, we have been given that chance. Now, we must pray that in his governing, he will make godly decisions based upon prayer and seeking the will of ADONAI. Our government is not a theocracy, and we don't seek to have an organized religious body lead it. But we do want the Body of Yeshua to be engaged in it, participating and voting according to Scriptural values, carrying out their duties as citizens of the Republic. We pray for our elected officials that each would seek G-d's guidance and have the people's welfare at heart.

We reject abortion, homosexuality, and transgenderism as abominations before ADONAI and a perversion of His Word by those who do these things and call themselves followers of Jesus. At the same time, ADONAI has commanded us to love the people who do these things as ourselves, which is our goal. Our rejection of their distortion of Scripture does not reject them as individuals. We must seek ways to show that. While we can't participate in their programs and platforms, we can love them and seek their good. We also reject any form of racism, believing that ADONAI has created us all equal and that there is no place that this equality should be more evident than in Yeshua's Body. As *mishpacha*, family, we love and respect each other even though we may sometimes differ in our opinions.

Our prayer for our nation has been answered, but it is not a revival in Yeshua's Body, which has been in decline for several years. It's time for a spiritual turn-around, just as there has been a turn-around in the political body. According to Pew Research, in 1972, when they began tabulating these statistics, 90% of Americans identified as Christians. That began to fall dramatically in the 1990s, and by 2007, it had fallen to 68%, and just two years ago, 2022, the number stood at 63%. Why has this happened? One answer is the secularization of America. The missing people from Yeshua's body are now present in worldly categories, and some have become a part of the liberal political agendas. We do need revival, but we must first have repentance. We pray that those who have called upon Jesus, but have strayed will return.

As members of the Messianic Jewish Movement, we are staunchly for the *Torah*. We believe that the Bible does not teach against the seventh day Sabbath, the food laws, or any other command that can be obeyed today without the presence of the Levitical Priesthood or the Temple. While we are generally not teaching for the Church, we do want them to hear a specific message. We respect the right of Christian leaders to determine doctrine and theology but wish them to know more about the Hebraic roots of the Church and hope that they will focus and teach more on it. There is no question that the Bible is a Jewish document, and it contains many Hebraic grammatical constructs that contribute significantly to the richness of the events portrayed. Understanding the Jewishness of the Bible also helps to fight anti-Semitism within the Church and brings an increased understanding of ADONAI's resurrection of the Nation of Israel in the latter days. The writings of Yeshua's disciples are a witness to Jews of their Messiah. Many Jews have commented about being struck by the Jewishness of the Book of Matthew, even in its Christian form. How much more will they recognize their Messiah if He is allowed to put on Jewish clothes? In Egypt, Joseph was dressed as an Egyptian, not only wearing the clothing but also the eye makeup of the Egyptian rulers of that day. His brothers didn't recognize their brother. Today, Yeshua is mostly clothed in Gentile garb, and it's difficult for His Jewish brothers and sisters to recognize Him. Our goal is to present Yeshua as the Jew He is and His disciples as the Jews they were. This connects the modern nation of Israel to the promised Israel of God, which will soon be established by ADONAI. That will happen when all Israel is saved, and Yeshua returns as Messiah, Son of David. We pray that the Church will seek to learn more about the Jewishness of the Bible.

To illustrate the Book of Matthew's initial effect on some Jews when they first read it, I would like to begin by telling the story of *Moshe Imanuel Ben-Meir*, who was born and raised and lived and died in Israel. His story is told in the book *Jerusalem To Jerusalem*. Born in Jerusalem in 1905, he met his Messiah in the 1920s and served Him all his life. He lived through World War I, World War II, the war for the independence of Israel in 1948, in which he served, and also the Six-Day War in 1967.

When *Moshe* was born, Israel was called Palestine and under the rule of the Ottoman Turks. During World War I, the Turks were allied with Germany, and there were both German and Turkish soldiers in Jerusalem. Food was very scarce, and many people were starving. *Moshe* tells how the Turkish soldiers would break into their house and steal their food. When his family began hiding the food, they beat them until they said where it was hidden. *Moshe's* grandmother died from starvation during that time. But he was also privileged to watch Jerusalem be liberated. He wrote that the British General Allenby began by sending up airplanes to fly over and around Jerusalem, two-winged, open cockpit airplanes buzzing around and around. Seeing them, the Turks all fled, and General Allenby took Jerusalem in December 1917 without firing a shot.

While walking in Jerusalem one day, *Moshe* found a little book on the ground. It was a New Testament. We have to believe that ADONAI allowed someone to lose that book so that *Moshe* could see it or that someone purposefully lost it, hoping for the right person to find it. When *Moshe* first read Matthew, he was immediately struck with the idea that this was a Jewish book. The little book was not in English but in Hebrew and was entitled *Sefer ha-Brit ha-Chadasha*, "The Book of the New Covenant." The first line he read shocked him. It said: *Eleh toledot Yeshua ha-Mashiach Ben-David Ben-Avraham*, "these are the generations of Yeshua the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham." In just a few minutes, we will begin today's study with the Book of Matthew and learn that there were 42 generations in

Yeshua's genealogy up to and including Joseph. *Moshe Ben-Meir*, reading that there were 42 generations, sought Biblical understanding of what he was reading, and related the 42 generations in Yeshua's genealogy to the 42 stops, or resting places from Egypt to *Eretz Yisra'el* as found in Numbers 33. At the beginning of the 42 stops, he noted that Moshe took them out of Egypt and that Yehoshua, Joshua, led them into the Promised Land. At the beginning of the 42 generations, he noted that *Avraham* received the promise of what *Ben-Meir* called "the promise of the Blessed Seed." He saw that at the end of the 42 generations is a greater *Yehoshua*, a more outstanding Joshua, *Yeshua*, in whom all the promises culminate and are fulfilled. The very Jewishness of the Book of *Mattityahu*, Matthew, led *Ben-Meir* and countless other Jews to Yeshua their Messiah.

Yeshua, the Son of G-d, was born into the world as a Jewish man, the son of a Jewish virgin. It was a miraculous thing brought about by ADONAI, who incarnated His Son in *Miryam's* womb. After Yeshua's birth, *Miryam* had sons and daughters, including his half-brothers *Ya'acov* (James) and *Yehudah* (Jude), both of whom wrote letters that were included in the *Ketuvim Shlichim*, the writings of Yeshua's Apostles. Yeshua's tribe, Judah, was foretold in the *Torah* by His ancestor Jacob, who said: 10 "*The scepter will not pass from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs will come. To him will be the obedience of the peoples.*" (Genesis 49:10 TLV). Last *Shabbat*, we covered many prophecies about Yeshua's birth and His future reign as King of Israel. It was not a secret that ADONAI planned to send a *Mashiach*, an Anointed One, to Israel. It was pointed out last week that the Prophet Micah identified Him as an eternal being, a deity: 1 *But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah— least among the clans of Judah— from you will come out to Me One to be ruler in Israel, One whose goings forth are from of old, from days of eternity.* (Micah 5:1 TLV). Even the Magi, the Babylonians who later came to worship the infant Yeshua in *Beit Lechem*, knew by reading the *Tanakh* that a *Mashiach*, an anointed One, was to come.

The first seventeen verses of Matthew chapter 1 deal with the genealogy of Yeshua. This is one of two genealogies found in the Gospels for Him. The other is in Luke, and the two are significantly different. Why would ADONAI give two different genealogies? The simplest explanation may be to show that both of Yeshua's earthly parents were descended from King David. Matthew's genealogy shows Yeshua's descent through his legally adopted father, *Yosef*, Joseph. At the end of His genealogy, Matthew wrote: 16 ..., "*and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Miriam, from whom was born Yeshua who is called the Messiah.*" (Matthew 1:16 TLV). He didn't say that Joseph was Yeshua's father but that he was the husband of Yeshua's mother. Joseph was not Yeshua's biological father but was His legal father through marriage to Yeshua's mother, *Miryam*. And, Joseph took Yeshua as his son, having named Him Yeshua according to the Angel Gabriel's instructions.

Why did ADONAI specifically choose *Yosef* to be *Miryam's* husband? Two reasons that we know of. One was because the Davidic line came down through Solomon, and Joseph was a descendant of Solomon. A second reason was that, as Matthew attested, Joseph was righteous, the man ADONAI chose to be the earthly father of His Son. Because descent was passed from father to son, not mother to son, Yeshua had to have a legal, earthly father.

The genealogy in Luke chapter 3 considers Yeshua's descent through his mother, *Miryam*, a lineage, which comes from David's son Nathan. Given in reverse order, it begins: 3 "*Yeshua was about thirty years old when He began his ministry. He was the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli,*".. (Luke 3:23 TLV). Although Joseph was Yeshua's

adopted father, the people in the neighborhood likely believed that Joseph was Yeshua's biological father, as that was how the family was presented until Yeshua began His ministry and it was time for everyone to know the truth. Heli would have been *Miryam's* father, Yeshua's grandfather. *Miryam* was descended from King David through his son Nathan, Bathsheba's fourth son by David: *31 ..., the son of Nathan, the son of David.*" (Luke 3:31b TLV). Yeshua is identified as "the Son of David" through both of His earthly parents: through His son Solomon via His adopted and legal father, *Yosef*, and through His son Nathan via His mother, *Miryam*.

Yeshua's genealogy in Matthew chapter 1 is an example of one type of Hebrew exegesis, a way of expounding something significant in the text. Most everyone reading verses 1-17 knows this is an incomplete list. Matthew did not intend this listing of ancestors to be Yeshua's actual genealogy through Joseph. The complete list of Joseph's ancestors can be found in 1st and 2nd Kings and 2nd Chronicles, including the four that were left out of this list. Those who want to be critical of these verses ask why Matthew did not accurately list Joseph's ancestors. But why? He was not being dishonest because it was never intended to be an accurate list. By controlling the number of ancestors in Joseph's genealogy, Matthew conveyed a concealed Hebraic message, using symbolism to emphasize his point. Yeshua's other ancestors are still there between the lines but unwritten. Matthew knew about the others in Joseph's ancestry but chose to leave them out, writing it so that those who remained would form the pattern to make his point.

He wrote the genealogy in three sets of generations. We will not read the full list, just the result: *17 "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the Babylonian exile are fourteen generations, and from the Babylonian exile until the Messiah are fourteen generations."* (Matthew 1:17 TLV). Three sets of fourteen generations are a total of 42 generations. Four generations were left out: (1) Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram and Athalia; (2) Queen Athalia, who reigned but was not a descendant of David; (3) Jehoash, sometimes called Joash, another son of Ahaziah and (4) Amaziah, the son of Jehoash. The men were descendants of Athalia, the daughter of Omri, King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, who worshipped *Ba'al* and other false gods.

There are 46 generations from Abraham to Joseph. By reducing the 46 generations to three sets of 14, a total of 42 generations, Matthew could use the symbolism of *gematria* to code a message. *Gematria* is a Hebrew system that uses numbers to hint at an underlying message. A system of letters and numbers, it assigns a numerical value to a name, word, or phrase based on its Hebrew letters. Something similar came onto the scene fifteen or twenty years ago. Called ELS, Equidistant Letter Sequence, its proponents believe that G-d has encoded specific messages in the Hebrew of the *Tanakh*. They devised wild claims, such as finding the name Hitler and many modern events encoded in the *Tanakh*. Most theologians have debunked it. The system of *gematria* that Matthew and other Jews used was not like that and is an accepted way of making a *midrash*, which, in its pure form, is not connected to *Kaballah*, Jewish mysticism.

This is how we understand it. Each Hebrew letter is assigned a number, beginning with *alef* as 1 and ending with *tav* as 400. The letter ד *dalet* has a numerical value of 4 and the letter ו *vav* has a numerical value of 6. The word *David*, in Hebrew (דָּוִד), ד ו ד *dalet vav dalet*, has the numerical value of 14; 4 plus 6 plus 4. Having devised three groups of 14 generations leading to Yeshua, Matthew used *gematria* to state boldly: *David! David! David!* This is about Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel, being the "Son of David," something many Jewish

readers of Matthew readily see. The three generations of fourteen is Matthew's message to the reader proclaiming: Son of David! Son of David! Son of David! – in other words, "This is the Messiah of Israel!" I learned this over twenty years ago but can't remember where.

This brings us back to what *Moshe Ben-Meir* discovered as he read the genealogy of Yeshua. He saw that at the end of the 42 generations, there is a greater *Yehoshua*, a more outstanding Joshua, *Yeshua*, in whom all the promises culminate and are fulfilled. He also noted that Jehoiachin, also called Jeconiah or Coniah, was included in Matthew's generation list even though ADONAI had pronounced a curse on him that he would remain childless (Jeremiah 22:28-30). 2 Kings (25:27-30) tells us that Jeconiah was released from prison in Babylon and that he continued to live out his life there.

After we are given Yeshua's Jewish genealogy, Matthew tells us about His birth: *18 Now the birth of Yeshua the Messiah happened this way. When His mother Miriam was engaged to Joseph but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Ruach haKodesh. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, made up his mind to dismiss her secretly.*" (Matthew 1:18-19 TLV). Understanding ancient Jewish marriage customs gives us insight into what was taking place and allows us to read between the lines of these verses. By saying that *Miryam* was engaged to *Yosef*, we are told they had had *kiddushin*, the betrothal ceremony (sometimes called *erusin*). In the 1<sup>st</sup> century, the betrothal period was usually around one year, and sexual intimacy did not take place until the actual marriage was performed, a ceremony called *nissuin*. *Yosef* and *Miryam* were betrothed but not married when *Yosef* noticed *Miryam*'s pregnancy. Since he knew that he had not been intimate with her, he assumed that she had been unfaithful but did not want to publicly disgrace her by calling attention to it. *20 But while he considered these things, behold, an angel of Adonai appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Miriam as your wife, for the Child conceived in her is from the Ruach ha-Kodesh. 21 She will give birth to a son; and you shall call His name Yeshua, for He will save His people from their sins"* (Matthew 1:20-21 TLV). The angel told Joseph that he was to name the child Yeshua. In Jewish tradition, the father names the child. The Greek text says: "You will call the name of him *Iésous* (ee-ay-sooce')." *Strong's Online Concordance* tells us that *Iésous* is the Greek form of Joshua. We will talk more about Yeshua's name next *Shabbat*.

The Bible I use is the Tree of Life Version, a Hebraic-oriented translation that puts back some of the Jewishness of the content. As we read, this allows us to understand that even though written in English, this is a Jewish document. I believe that the original language of Matthew was Hebrew. Nothing in Scripture states that, but several extra-biblical sources tell that Matthew was initially written in Hebrew. (Papias of Hierapolis, Irenaeus of Lyon, and Jerome). This seems to be borne out by the different Hebraic ways of teaching that we encounter, such as Yeshua's genealogy and numerous Hebrew idioms throughout Matthew. I learned many of them in 1984 when I read the book *Understanding The Difficult Words Of Jesus* by David Biven and Roy Blizzard. The final statement in verse 21, "*and you shall call His name Yeshua, for He will save His people from their sins,*" is critical, and we will examine it in Hebrew. There are several Hebrew versions of the *Ketuvim Shlichim* from which Messianic Jews in Israel can read today. As we learned, *Moshe Ben-Meir* had a Hebrew-language version in the 1920's. I am using an online version, the Transliterated Hebrew New Testament, from Hebrew Heart Media.

Here is Matthew 1:21 three ways, in Hebrew, transliterated Hebrew, and in English.

וְהָיָא יִלְדֵת בֵּן וְקָרָאתָ אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יֵשׁוּעַ כִּי הוּא יוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת־עַמּוֹ מִחַטָּאתֵיהֶם:

21. *Ve'hi yoledet" ben v'karata et sh'mo Yeshua ki hu yoshia et-amo me'chatoteihem.* 21 *She will give birth to a son; and you shall call His name Yeshua, for He will save His people from their sins.*" (Matthew 1:21 TLV). Within this verse, we find another Hebraic method of teaching. One word is linked to a similar word to make a point, essentially, a Hebraic pun. In the King James Version, this verse reads *21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for (Greek- gar; for, because) he shall save his people from their sins.* (Matthew 1:21 KJV). There is no semantic or logical connection between the two underlined words, Jesus and save. It was translated from Greek to English without regard for its Hebrew meaning. The "for" in both the TLV and the KJV indicates that the second phrase is linked to and related to the first. Written this way in the KJV and other Bibles, "Jesus" and "save" don't have a logical word connection. Yes, Jesus does save, but the name Jesus does not have the semantic relationship with save that Yeshua has. The problem is that this phrase was originally written in Hebrew, and when read in Hebrew, it's quite different. Yeshua in Hebrew means salvation, but more specifically, it means "YHVH is salvation." Yeshua is a shortened form of *Yehoshua*, Joshua; both names mean ADONAI is salvation. By putting "Jesus" and "save" back into Hebrew, we read: "Name him Yeshua for he will yoshia his people." Here, we do see the connection.

*Yeshua* = ADONAI's salvation

*yoshia* = save

*Yeshua* and *yoshia* are related words, salvation and save. The TLV causes verse 21 to say what Matthew intended: *21 She will give birth to a son; and you shall call His name Yeshua, for He will save His people from their sins* (Matthew 1:21 TLV), meaning, "ADONAI who is salvation will save His people from their sins."

Understanding Scripture is important because it shapes our walk, *halakh* in Hebrew. How we walk, our *halakha*, is what we do based upon our interpretation of Scripture. Our obedience to ADONAI is extremely important. Our salvation is by grace through faith, trusting in Yeshua, and recognizing His sacrificial death as the *kapparah*—the sacrifice that paid for our sins. Trusting in Yeshua gives us the promise of eternal life and makes us covenant partners in the New Covenant that was cut by His blood. But after trusting in Yeshua, we wish to please ADONAI by obeying His commands. To be able to do that, we must learn what He wishes us to do. That is the primary purpose of this series, "Disciples of Yeshua."

With the coming change in national leadership, we pray that our nation, the United States of America, will progress toward a more righteous position in ADONAI's eyes. At the same time, we pray for revival, even a pouring out of ADONAI's *Ruach HaKodesh* upon those called by Yeshua's name, a pouring out in the power and magnitude that His Spirit was poured out upon *Shimon Kefa* and Yeshua's disciples on *Shavuot* in 30 CE. (Acts 1:8). Without revival, our relief will be temporary, and our nation and the Body of Yeshua will continue its decline. We continue next *Shabbat. Shabbat shalom!*