

Matthew: Presents Yeshua, King Messiah.

INTRODUCTION

The Good News of Matthew is the best place to start if you want to get to know Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah.

However, to get a full picture of who the Jewish Messiah is we need to understand his background, his family, and his religion.

Most commentators are not well-versed in first-century Jewish practices and thought, especially regarding the "traditions of the Elders" that Yeshua so often spoke about.

Rabbi Barney Kasdan, rabbi of Kehilat Ariel, Messianic synagogue located in San Diego, CA. has written a messianic commentary on Matthew entitled: "Matthew: Presents Yeshua, King Messiah.

Rabbi Barney Kasdan understands the Jewish Jesus and his connection to the rabbinical ways of his day. He has access to many sources which shed light on the Jewish customs and practices of that day. Things that are necessary in aiding us to understand the messiah, whom we all love and serve.

Therefore, as we go through the "Good News of Matthew", we will be using Barney Kasdan commentary as one of the main sources of references.

However, we will also be using other commentaries and sources as the Ruach directs us.

In this study, we will be looking at the:

- The Preparation for King Messiah
- The Program of King Messiah
- The Final Presentation of King Messiah

The consensus of early historians (Irenaeus, Origen, and others) is that Matthew was the writer of the "good news of Matthew".

Matthew was tax collector or publican. Publicans were a collector of public revenue or taxes.

The publicans were not looked upon favorably by the people of Israel. Because they worked for the Romans and because they were known to raise the taxes above the normal tax fees.

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The Romans formed "joint-stock companies," where they would buy certain Jewish provinces for periods of five years.

The collection of customs duties in a particular region were "farmed out" by the Romans to the highest bidder.

Men would meet with the Roman senate and bid for cities they wanted to collect from.

The bidder paid the tax in advance to Rome, then made his own living by charging commission on tolls and customs at a higher rate of tax they decided themselves. This would become a very easy way of charging whatever they liked!

Consequently, tax collectors were placed in the same category with sinners. And yeshua was often criticized for eating with publican and sinners.

Matthew 9:11 TLV

(11) When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why does this Teacher of yours eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Matthew was one of yeshua disciples

Matthew 9:9 CJB

(9) As Yeshua passed on from there he spotted a tax-collector named Mattityahu sitting in his collection booth. He said to him, "Follow me!" and he got up and followed him.

Matthew's Hebrew name is mat-thah'-yos or Mattityahu [G3161] which means "gift of Yah.

Matthew personally lived with Yeshua during the 3 1/2 years of his earthly ministry to Israel. And was eyewitness to most of the events he records

He saw the resurrected Yeshua and he awaited the pouring out of the Ruach HaKodesh/Holy Spirit on the day of Shavuot/Pentecost (Acts 1:13).

After that, Matthew's name is not specifically mentioned again, although he was no doubt included in the ministry of the apostles in the expansion of the early Yeshua movement.

Historians speculate that, after his years in Israel, Matthew was sent as an apostle to Ethiopia and Persia.

Matthew's account of the life of Yeshua is a natural bridge between the Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures) and the entire Brit Chadashah (New Testament) because of its Jewish context.

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For example, the writer begins his account with the genealogical link to the forefather of the Jewish people (Abraham) and in the same verse connects Yeshua to the messianic house of King David (1:1).

He likewise addresses issues of importance to observant first-century Jews, such as Shabbat (12:1-14) and the Temple tax (17:24-27).

In the course of his record, Matthew cites many of the great messianic prophecies of the Tanakh in order to make his case for Yeshua as the King Messiah.

It is documented that Matthew uses nearly twice as many references to the Tanakh than do the other Gospel writers (61 quotes for Matthew, 31 in Mark, 26 in Luke, 16 in John). It is evident that Matthew is writing with a strong focus on his own people.

Matthew also includes several conflicts between Yeshua and some of the religious leaders of the day.

The book is written in Greek. However, there is reference to Hebrew being the original language of the scroll.

The early church historian Eusebius notes, "Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he was able" (Ecclesiastical History, III, xxxix, 16).

While we have not found this Hebrew gospel account (yet), it is not surprising to Messianic Jews that Matthew as a Jew wrote to Jews in Hebrew!

No doubt the Gospel of Matthew stands out as a message for all peoples—to the Jew first and also to the non-Jew.

Romans 1:16 CJB

(16) For I am not ashamed of the Good News, since it is Elohim's [God's] powerful means of bringing salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting, to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile.

With this in mind, we should say that Matthew's account describes faith in Yeshua not as a conversion to a new religion for Jews but as the fulfillment of the messianic hope for Israel.

Matthew 5:17-18 CJB

(17) "Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete.

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(18) Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud (י) or a stroke will pass from the Torah—not until everything that must happen has happened.

There is considerable debate as to the exact dating of the Gospel of Matthew. There is no clear statement internally or from external sources that can date the scroll with certainty.

Some early fathers dated Matthew as early as even the late 30s CE/AD, speculating that it was probably the earliest Gospel.

Many today feel best about a date of 50-70 CE/AD, as this would satisfy most of the questions.

The year 50 AD approximates the dispersion of the early Messianic Jews from Jerusalem, which would include Matthew himself.

It is more logical that Matthew is recording his gospel for the benefit of the Jewish community in Israel to prepare for the challenges of the near future.

The purpose of Matthew seems abundantly clear from the very first verse of the Gospel: “This is the genealogy of Yeshua the Messiah, son of David, son of Avraham” (1:1).

As a son of Avraham, yeshua is shown to be the fulfillment of the promised one who would bless all the families of the earth.

As a descendant of King David, Yeshua is shown to be from the very family that the Messiah must come from.

From this opening verse all the way through his closing chapter, Matthew’s purpose is to confirm that Yeshua of Nazareth is King Messiah, the promised one for Israel. He is the Messiah in all that the concept implies.

Yeshua is certainly the King who will offer and ultimately bring the promised Kingdom of Elohim through the Messianic Kingdom.

Israel will be the center of the world and Jerusalem will be the center of international worship in this promised kingdom.

As this King Messiah, Yeshua heals the hurting, feeds the hungry, and teaches the depths of the Torah.

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Yeshua is born in the city of David (Beit-Lechem), and the messianic title Mashiach ben David (Messiah Son of David) is found nine times in Matthew's account.

What is surprising at first glance is that Matthew also highlights a secondary mission of the Messiah as the suffering one, Mashiach ben Yosef (Messiah Son of Joseph).

It is debated in the rabbinic literature just how the Messiah can fulfill the two apparently conflicting pictures of his work.

He is undoubtedly to be the King of Israel, but many scriptures describe the Messiah as also suffering and even being killed (Isaiah 53; Zechariah 12).

Matthew addresses this issue, as do the Talmudic rabbis. Some rabbis had the view that there might be two messiahs to fulfill the two different missions (Tractate Sukkah 52a), whereas Matthew reconciles this issue by describing one messiah coming at two different times.

Matthew 24:30-31 CJB

(30) "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, all the tribes of the Land will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with tremendous power and glory.

(31) He will send out his angels with a great shofar; and they will gather together his chosen people from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Matthew's purpose is clear. Based on the evidence he sees and presents, Yeshua is King Messiah for Israel and ultimately for all the nations.

It is through yeshua, the king Messiah, that all who will believe in him will inherit eternal life. And will live with him in the eternal kingdom, which he will establish on earth at his second coming. With power and great glory.

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Part two Chapter 1:1-5

The Preparation for King Messiah

Messiah Prepared Through His Lineage 1:1-17

Matthew's purpose in writing the good news of Matthew is to confirm that Yeshua of Nazareth is the Messiah, and the King that was promised to Israel.

Matthew focuses on the kingship of the Messiah. It is a book written by a Jew to Jews. Jews were expecting a Messiah who would take their sins away and would also be a unique king of Israel which would reign on David's throne.

Isaiah prophesied that one would come who would suffer on behalf of Israel's sins.

Isaiah 53:4-6 TS2009

- (4) Truly, He has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains. Yet we reckoned Him smitten, stricken by Elohim, and afflicted.
- (5) But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our crookednesses [iniquities]. The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.
- (6) We all, like sheep, went astray, each one of us has turned to his own way. And יהוה [Yahweh] has laid on Him the crookedness [iniquities] of us all.

Isaiah also prophesied that the messiah would be a descendant from King David.

Isaiah 11:1-10 CJB

- (1) But a branch will emerge from the trunk of Yishai [Jesse], a shoot will grow from his roots.
- (2) The Spirit of Yahweh [Adonai] will rest on him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and power, the Spirit of knowledge and fearing Yahweh [Adonai]—
- (3) he will be inspired by fearing Yahweh [Adonai]. He will not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear,
- (10) On that day the root of Yishai [Jesse], which stands as a banner for the peoples—the Goyim [nations] will seek him out, and the place where he rests

will be glorious.

Therefore, based on prophecy, anybody who claimed to be the messiah, must come with full background credentials. That is the only way the Jews would accept that Yeshua is who he says he is.

The Jews relied strongly on one's genealogy. When the people returned to Israel after 70 years in Babylonian captivity, Only the priests who could prove their ancestry were allowed back. The ones who could not were excluded from the priesthood.

Paul said the time came when Yah fulfilled his promise to Israel.

Galatians 4:4 TS2009

(4) But when the completion of the time came, Elohim sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under Torah, [born into a culture in which legalistic perversion of the Torah was the norm (cjb)]

There were some in Israel who did not believe Yeshua was the promised one. , Therefore Matthew presented to Jews the messiah's family lineage to show that he meets the requirements set by the Tanakh for who the Messiah must be a descendance from.

Matthew 1:1 CJB

(1) This is the genealogy of Yeshua the Messiah, son of David, son of Avraham:

Being the son of Avraham, emphasizing first, that Yeshua is a Jew by birth. The Jewish nation came through Avraham as promised by Yah.

Genesis 12:2-3 CJB

(2) I will make of you a great nation, I will bless you, and I will make your name great; and you are to be a blessing.

(3) I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Not only would Abraham be blessed by his covenant with Yah, but also through Avraham the Gentile world would be blessings.

Consequently, the phrase son of Avraham implies that Yeshua is qualified to be the redeemer promised not only to the Jewish people but also to all nations.

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The other phrase son of David provides an important link in the qualifications of the Messiah. It was to King David that Elohim promised an eternal throne from which one of his descendants would rule.

2 Samuel 7:5,12,16 CJB

(5) "Go and tell my servant David that this is what Adonai [Yahweh] says:.....

(12) When your days come to an end and you sleep with your ancestors, I will establish one of your descendants to succeed you, one of your own flesh and blood; and I will set up his rulership.

(16) Thus your house and your kingdom will be made secure forever before you; your throne will be set up forever.' "

Since the days of David, it has been a tradition that the Mashiach must therefore not only be a Jew but be from the specific family of the house of David.

This Davidic emphasis provides the proper qualifications to prove to the Jewish readers that Yeshua is the promised King Messiah.

Matthew now moves into a rather lengthy genealogical list that gives further details of the qualifications of Yeshua as the Messiah-King.

This list answers some important questions. From a Jewish perspective, these details are not only necessarily required, but also quite enlightening to, the messianic qualifications.

However, many readers may be tempted to skip these details. Especially the gentile communities.

I recently learned that a pastor spoke of yeshua genealogy, not to show that yeshua is Jewish, but to show that Yeshua was a black man.

Although, we are familiar with some of the names in the genealogy, like Jacob, Boaz and Solomon, there are many names we are not familiar with. Nevertheless, they are vital in connecting the ancestry of Yeshua.

I am not going to spotlight all the names in the 42 generations of Yeshua's ancestors.

Matthew 1:17 TLV

(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.

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However, I strongly suggest that you study them in your own study time. There are Several points that should be highlighted.

In studying the list we see that there are gaps between names, sometimes of several generations.

This happens when the writer has a particular point to make. In Matthew's case, he is clearly focusing on the three sets of 14 names.

By intentionally skipping over particular names that could have been included in the list, Matthew is emphasizing the Davidic connection to Yeshua as King Messiah, the Son of David.

An interesting detail of Matthew's genealogy of yeshua is unusual because he includes four women: Tamar, Rehab, Ruth and Bathsheba.

Women were usually not included in the genealogies.

To make it even more unusual. The four women are all non-Jews. gentile women who each had her own share of spiritual problems.

Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba were all involved in sexual immorality.

Tamar, and Bathsheba were involved in adultery. Rehab was a prostitute, and Ruth was a cursed Moabites.

Matthew 1:3 TLV

(3) Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez fathered Hezron, Hezron fathered Ram,

Tamar was a Canaanite woman. We read about her in Genesis 38.

Genesis 38:13-16 TLV

(13) Then Tamar was told, "Look! Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his flocks."

(14) And she removed her widow's clothes from herself, covered herself with a veil, wrapped herself, and sat by the entrance to the springs on the way to Timnah (for she saw that Shelah had grown up and she had not been given to him as a wife).

(15) When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute because she had covered her face.

(16) So he turned aside to her along the way and said, "Please let me sleep with you" (for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law). "What," she asked, "will you give me to sleep with me?"

Genesis 38:16 ERV

(16) So he went to her and said, "Let me have sex with you." (Judah did not know that she was Tamar, his daughter-in-law.) She said, "How much will you give me?"

Matthew 1:5 TLV

(5) Salmon fathered Boaz by Rahab, Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth, Obed fathered Jesse,

Rahab was also a Canaanite woman.

A descendant of Ham, Noah son. She no doubt was a dark-skinned gentile woman. According to Josephus she ran an inn in Jericho. However, she was also called a prostitute.

Joshua 2:1 TLV

(1) Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent out two spies from Shittim saying: "Go, explore the land, especially Jericho." So they went and came to the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab, and lodged there.

Joshua 6:25 TLV

(25) But Rahab the harlot, her father's household and all who belonged to her, Joshua spared. She has lived in the midst of Israel to this day, because she hid the scouts whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

Hebrews 11:31 TLV

(31) By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she welcomed the spies with shalom.

James 2:25 TLV

(25) And likewise, wasn't Rahab the prostitute also proved righteous by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out another way?

Matthew 1:5 TLV

(5), Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth, Obed fathered Jesse,

The Moabites are descendants of Lot, by his own daughters. It wasn't rape. In fact, Lot didn't even know he had sex with his daughters.

Genesis 19:29-37 TLV

(32) Come on! Let's make our father drink wine so that we can lie with him and keep the seed from our father alive."

(33) So they made their father drink wine that night, and the firstborn came

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and lay down with her father. Yet he did not know that she lay down and got up.

(35) So they made their father drink wine that night as well, and the younger got up and lay down with him and he did not know that she lay down and got up.

(36) So Lot's two daughters become pregnant by their father.

(37) Then the firstborn gave birth to a son and named him Moab: he is the ancestor of the Moabites to this day.

The Moabites were not allowed to fully participate in the riches of Israel. Not because of incest, but because of their historical opposition to, Yah's people, Israel.

This account is told in numbers chapter 22. The king of Moab sent for Balaam to curse israel when they camped in their land after coming out of Egypt. Because of their attitude Yahweh banned them from entering His assembly.

Deuteronomy 23:4-5 TLV

(4) No Ammonite or Moabite is to enter the community of Adonai [Yahweh]—even to the tenth generation none belonging to them is to enter the community of Adonai [Yahweh]—forever—

(5) because they did not meet you with bread and water on the way when you came out from Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam son of Beor from Petor of Aram-naharaim to curse you.

Part three Chapter 1:5-17

The genealogy of the messiah is very important because it shows that yeshua is the promised king messiah. It proved to the first central jews that yeshua indeed is the messiah. While many of the names means little to believers today, there are five people in the genealogy that I believe are of interest to being significant to believers.

In our last lesson we learned that Matthew did something that was not customary when listing genealogies. He included the names of four womens.

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And what is more extraordinary is they were all gentile women. Three were Canaanites and one was a Moabite.

We learned that Rahab was a prostitute. However, she was proved righteous by works when she hid the spies that Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. It was an act of faith. She believed in Yahweh, as a result she and her entire family was saved from destruction and lived among the Israelites and intermarried with them.

Tamar deceived her father-in-law, Judah, into having sex with her by posing as a prostitute. She became pregnant and gave birth to twins. She was considered an honorable woman by Judah, because he lied to her about having his youngest son marry her when he became of age. One of her sons, Perez, is listed in the messiah genealogy.

Ruth, though she came from a nation that Yah banned from assembling with Israel, embrace Yah as her God, and Israel as her people, was honored to give birth to an ancestor of the Messiah.

And so we continue today with The fourth woman, Bathsheba.

[Matthew 1:6 TLV](#)

(6) and Jesse fathered David the king. David fathered Solomon by the wife of Uriah,

The wife of Uriah was Bathsheba.

[2 Samuel 11:3 CJB](#)

(3) David made inquiries about the woman and was told that she was Bathsheba the daughter of Eli'am, the wife of Uriah the Hitti.

Eli'am was one of the 30 mighty men who fought with David

We are not told directly that Bathsheba was a Canaanite. But we can trace her heritage through her grandfather Ahithophel, David's counselor.

[2 Samuel 23:34 TLV](#)

(34....., Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,

The Gilonite were part of the Canaanites that Judah was unable to destroy they lived among Israel and intermarried with them.

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It is not stated that Bathsheba willingly or unwillingly submitted to king Davie.

She could have been an unwilling victim; however, she did become David's wife. And though Yah did not permit this child conceived in adultery to live, Yah loved her son Solomon. He named him Jedidiah, *beloved by Yah*.

2 Samuel 12:24-25 CJB

(24) David comforted his wife Bat-Sheva, came to her and went to bed with her; she gave birth to a son and named him Shlomo. Adonai [Yahweh] loved him

(25) and sent through Natan the prophet to have him named Y'didyah [Jedidiah] [*loved by God*], for Adonai's [Yahweh's] sake.

Therefore, Bathsheba's son, Solomon is an ancestor of the Messiah.

We know from prophecy that Yah planned the birth of the Messiah in advance. Therefore, he also chose who his relatives would be.

So why would he choose four women, all descendant of Ham, a black man, through his son Cain, whom he cursed. one a prostitute, one an adulteress one a deceiver, and one from a rejected nation.

In 2001 forensic anthropologist Richard Neave created a model of a Galilean man for a BBC documentary, Son of God, working on the basis of an actual skull found in the region. He did not claim it was Jesus's face. It was simply meant to prompt people to consider Jesus as being a man of his time and place, since we are never told he looked distinctive.

Matthew's makes it clear that the Messiah came into this world to redeem all categories of humanity: Jew, Gentile, man, woman, slave, and free. One past life is of no consequence when it comes to redemption.

Galatians 3:26-29 CJB

(26) For in union with the Messiah, you are all children of God[Elohim] through this trusting faithfulness;

(27) because as many of you as were immersed into the Messiah have clothed yourselves with the Messiah, in whom

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(28) there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor freeman, neither male nor female; for in union with the Messiah Yeshua, you are all one.

(29) Also, if you belong to the Messiah, you are seed of Avraham and heirs according to the promise.

Yeshua did not come to call the righteous, he came to call sinner to repent. He did not come into this sinful world to live as Elohim. he came to live as men.

These intricate details confirm to us the amazing plan of Elohim as he sets forth his messianic redemption.

The fifth person I want to highlight that Matthew included is king Jeconiah, also known as Coniah or Jehoiachin in verse 11.

Matthew 1:11 TLV

(11) and Josiah fathered Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

As one traces the history of this King, a major potential obstacle arises when it comes to the throne of David.

Though Jeconiah was from the family line of David but he did evil in the sight of Yahweh. And Yah declared that none of his descendent would rule on the throne of David.

Jeremiah 22:30 CJB

(30) This is what Adonai [Yahweh] says: "List this man [Jehoiachin] as childless; he is a lifetime failure — none of his offspring will succeed, none will sit on David's throne or rule again in Y'hudah."

This is potentially an enormous problem in Matthew's list.

Matthew cannot escape the historical fact that Yosef, though in the messianic line of David, is also in the direct line of the evil cursed king of Judah!

Consequently, Joseph would be disqualified to inherit the messianic throne of King David.

This is not an oversight to Matthew. Because his purpose is to prove that Yeshua is the promised messiah that prophesy said would come.

It was prophesied that the messiah's birth would be miraculous.

Therefore, Joseph was not the biological father of Yeshua.

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Luke gives us a totally different list of names in Yeshua's lineage. It does not mean that Luke contradicts Matthew. Luke traces the Messiah through Mary.

In reality, both Yosef and Miryam are of Davidic descent and in the messianic line.

Luke gives the practical answer to the problem presented in Matthew

Whereas Matthew presents Yeshua's line through the cursed line of Solomon and Jeconiah, Luke presents the Davidic connection of Yeshua through the acceptable line of Nathan (Luke 3:31).

Virtually all ancient genealogies in the Bible exclusively focused on the male side. However, if a first-century Jewish writer included a woman's line, there had to be a good reason for doing this.

The human connection of Yeshua through his mother, Myrian has vast theological implications for the essence of the messianic mission.

Therefore, when Matthew came to verse 16 he changed the order of words from a man fathering another man. Example:

Matthew 1:15-16 TLV

(15) Eliud fathered Eleazar, Eleazar fathered Matthan, Matthan fathered Jacob,

(16) and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Miriam, from whom was born Yeshua who is called the Messiah.

Here the focus is not on Joseph being the father of yeshua, but on Mary being his mother.

Yeshua is not the son of Joseph. He is the son of ELOhim. Joseph is his adopted legal father.

Messiah Prepared by His Unusual Birth Chapter 1:18-25

Having verified that Yeshua's lineage met the criteria for him to be the Mashiach, Matthew now turns to the actual events of his birth in Israel some 2000 years ago.

Matthew 1:18 CJB

(18) Here is how the birth of Yeshua the Messiah took place. When his mother Miryam was engaged to Yosef, before they were married, she was

found to be pregnant from the Ruach HaKodesh.

Matthew said that they were engaged. that means they had entered into the second step of the first-century Jewish wedding ceremony.

Essentially, the ceremony was broken into three distinct parts, two of which can still be observed in the modern Jewish wedding.

The first step was called shiddukhin, meaning “the arrangement.”

The respective fathers of two children would arrange for the future marriage at a very young age, with hopes of joining two families for the common good.

When the couple was old enough to confirm their desire to be wed, they would enter into the second stage of the ceremony, known as erusin, or “engagement.”

Our modern, westernized engagement is quite different than it was in the New Testament times.

Today, an engaged couple may break off their commitment with no legal repercussions, but a couple in first-century Judea were bound by a much stronger agreement.

To enter into this “engagement” period, the couple would have a public ceremony, under a huppah/canopy, and sign a written contract called a ketubah. In this document, both parties would stipulate what they were agreeing to bring into this new household.

The groom would promise to protect and provide for her, while the bride would promise to bring into the marriage her family dowry.

As the contract was signed, the first cup of the ceremony was blessed, thus declaring publicly their sincere intention.

The erusin/ contract was now official, which would bring the couple into their engagement period.

This engagement was as binding as a legal marriage with one notable exception.

They were **not to live together** nor were they to enter into sexual relations.

The engagement period was a time of preparation for the final marriage step.

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If, for some serious reason, the engagement needed to be voided, the couple would need to obtain a "bill of divorce," a procedure that is still followed in Orthodox Jewish law to this day.

In other words, a couple who had entered the engagement stage were, in fact, considered completely married, although they were not living together yet as husband and wife.

The final stage of the ceremony, *nisuin* (marriage), would take place after the one-year engagement.

Once again, under the *huppah*/canopy, the couple would affirm their intention to enter the marriage. After the marriage ceremony, the newlyweds would live together at the place prepared by the groom.

Matthew said Miryam was engaged to Yosef,

Matthew 1:18 CJB

(18) Here is how the birth of Yeshua the Messiah took place. When his mother Miryam was engaged to Yosef, before they were married, she was found to be pregnant from the *Ruach HaKodesh*.

This means that the couple had entered into the second stage of the ceremony.

They had exchanged public vows, taken the first cup of wine under the Canopy, had signed the contract and were in the one-year engagement period.

No doubt Joseph was both hurt and shocked as well as dismayed to learn that Myrian is pregnant.

Joseph was faced with a terrible choice. Apparently, he did not accept her explanation of being impregnated by the *Ruach Hakodesh*. But because he loved her, he did not want to hurt her.

There were two ways of dealing with an unfaithful wife in Israel.

According to Deuteronomy 22:13-21 a violation of sexual chastity during any part of the marriage covenant was punishable by stoning to death.

Verse 21: then they are to bring the young woman out to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city are to stone her with stones to death.

A second choice was to divorce the woman and send her away.

Deuteronomy 24:1 TLV

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(1) "Suppose a man takes a wife and marries her. Now if she doesn't find favor in his eyes because he has found something indecent in her, he is to write her a certificate of divorce, hand it to her and send her out from his house.

Matthew tells us that Joseph was a righteous man.

Matthew 1:19 CJB

(19) Her husband-to-be, Yosef, was a man who did what was right; so he made plans to break the engagement quietly, rather than put her to public shame.

However, Joseph was chosen to be yeshua, earthly father to care for him and Mary. Therefore, neither a divorce nor stoning was an option.

The miraculous thing that was happening here is, that the time had come for yah to fulfill his prophecy to save Israel's as well as the whole world's sin.

Isaiah 7:14 CJB

(14) Therefore Adonai [Yahweh] himself will give you people a sign: the young woman [Or: "the virgin."] will become pregnant, bear a son and name him `Immanu El [God is with us].

However, Joseph did not realize this at that time.

How many times have we tried to take matters in our own hands, when Yah is working out his plan in our lives? We only focus on our own plans. On doing things our way.

The things you may be facing, may seem unreal. But it does not mean that Yah is not in it working everything out for your own good.

Paul say in-

Romans 8:28 TS2009

(28) And we know that all *matters* work together for good to those who love Elohim, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

Yah was working out his purpose in the lives of Myrian and Joseph.
Do you know what his purpose is for your life?

Are you willing to submit your life to him?

Part Four Matthew 1:20-25

Mary and Joseph were engaged to be married. Unlike modern day engagement [especially in the west], this engagement was as legal as marriage. An agreement was signed by both parties in a public ceremonial. However, the couple could not live together or become intimate until the final stage of marriage. The groom would go and prepare a place for his bride.

If it became necessary to end the engagement, they would need to get a divorce.

Matthew tells us that before that final step of marriage when the couple would move in together and consummate their marriage, Joseph learned that Miryam was pregnant.

Matthew 1:18 CJB

(18) Here is how the birth of Yeshua the Messiah took place. When his mother Miryam was engaged to Yosef, before they were married, she was found to be pregnant from the Ruach HaKodesh.

Matthew 1:19 CJB

(19) Her husband-to-be, Yosef, was a man who did what was right; so he made plans to break the engagement quietly, rather than put her to public shame.

This meant that Joseph made plans to get a quiet divorce from Miryam without exposing her as an adulteress, which was punishable by stoning to death.

Matthew 1:20

(20) But while he was thinking about this, an angel of Adonai [Yahweh] appeared to him in a dream and said, "Yosef, son of David, do not be afraid to take Miryam home with you as your wife; for what has been conceived in her is from the Ruach HaKodesh.

Luke said that Miryam was a virgin.

Luke 1:26-27 TLV

(26) Then in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by Yahweh [Adonai] into a town in the Galilee named Natzeret

(27) and to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Miriam.

Matthew said Miryam's pregnancy was in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in 7:14.

Matthew 1:22-23 TLV

(22) Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by Adonai through the prophet, saying,

(23) "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and give birth to a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which means "God with us."

Yeshua is the son born of a virgin.

The Messiah would have the uniquely divine task of removing the sins of mankind, therefore he needed to have a unique nature. He would be born of a woman. Not just any woman, but a virgin woman. One who has not been intimate with any man.

Even though the woman is a virgin, the messiah would have the blood of the woman in his veins. Because a woman's blood does not mix with the Fetus in her womb.

There are two Hebrew words for virgin, *almah* and *betulah*.

The word *betulah* means a confirmed virgin. However, *almah* can mean either a virgin or a young woman.

It is from the Hebrew that the prophet

The prophet Isaiah uses the word *almah* to refer to the virgin in 7:14.

Isaiah 7:14 CJB

(14) Therefore Adonai [Yahweh] himself will give you people a sign: the young woman [Or: "the virgin."] will become pregnant, bear a son and name him `Immanu El [God is with us].

Most Jewish commentators say that the Hebrew word *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 can have a number of meanings.

it is used many times to refer to a woman of marriageable age who is not yet married and, in that culture, presumably a virgin.

However, the Scriptures use both Hebrew terms interchangeably at times. as seen in Genesis 24. Rebecca is called both an *almah* [24:43] and a *betulah* in Genesis 24:14.

So why does Isaiah use almah instead of betulah in 7:14?

When we look closely at Isaiah 7, we learn that Isaiah is speaking of a dual fulfillment. He is speaking of two sons.

One son would be a sign to Ahaz, king of Judah that he would save them from their enemies. His name Immanuel would encourage the people that yah was with them and they would not be destroyed.

Isaiah is speaking of a child born in his day, as well as of a future son born by miraculous means.

Perhaps, that is why Isaiah used the word almah. the term almah is flexible to describe the natural birth of a son in 8th century BC, as well as a supernatural conception some 700 years later.

The term betulah would not cover the natural birth of a son in 8th century BC, because it means a virgin. But the term almah would be adequately flexible to describe both events.

The Hebrew actually reads Ha-almah (the virgin) with the definite article.

This is how it appears in the **interlinear** bible.

5959 [e]
hā·‘al·māh,
הַעַלְמָה
the virgin
Art | N-f

Therefore, Isaiah seems to be referring to a particular woman whom his readers would know.

He did not say a woman, but the woman. Meaning a special chosen woman.

In genesis 3:15, Yah said the seed of the woman, in some unusual, way will bruise Satan's head. Yah had already chosen the woman who will bring this seed into the world.

Isaiah agrees with genesis 3:15. the young woman will give birth to a son. This son will be called Immanuel. Meaning ELOhim is with us.

According to the New Testament, Miryam is revealed as the woman who fulfills both Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 7:14 by bringing forth that promised Redeemer.

The Good News of Matthew

She is to be honored as a woman who showed incredible faith in Elohim [God] yet is not to be exalted beyond her humanity.

Consequently, Matthew recounts how, after the birth of Yeshua, the couple lived together in a normal marriage relationship.

And so, the angel further said to Joseph.

Matthew 1:21 CJB

(21) She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Yeshua, [which means 'Yahweh saves,'] because he will save his people from their sins."

Thus, the Messiah's name is explained on the basis of what he will do.

The name Yeshua comes from the Hebrew root for "salvation," which tells us his purpose for coming into the world.

Yeshua is the original form of the Greeks word translated as Yesous. Yesous has been translated into various dialects around the world. Most English bibles uses the name Jesus. However, Jesus does not mean salvation.

In fact, Strong's Greek dictionary defines Iēsoús [ee-ay-sooce] as ' from Hebrew origin yehôshûa' [yeh-ho-shoo'-ah], Jehoshua, Jehovah-saved.

So, Matthew says.

Matthew 1:24-25 CJB

(24) When Yosef awoke he did what the angel of [Yahweh] Adonai had told him to do—he took Miryam home to be his wife,

(25) but he did not have sexual relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Yeshua.

Part Five Matthew 2:1-12

Messiah Prepared by Regal Acclaim 2:1-23

Not only does Matthew present the messiah as the promised king who will rule on David's throne, but also as the one who will save the world from sin.

As Joseph was told in a dream.

Matthew 1:21 CJB

(21) She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Yeshua, [which means 'Yahweh saves,'] because he will save his people from their sins." Therefore in another vital proof of Yeshua's messianic qualifications, Matthew tells us that not only is messiah from the lineage of David, but he was also born in Bethlehem, the city of David.

Matthew 2:1-2 TLV

(1) Now after Yeshua was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, magi from the east came to Jerusalem,
(2) saying, "Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

Since the birth of King David, Bethlehem was designated as the city of David. It was a village located just five miles outside of Jerusalem.

The prophet Micah, said the Messiah, the future ruler of Israel, would be born in Bethlehem.

Micah 5:1 TLV

(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.

There were two cities named Bethlehem. Therefore, Matthew said Yeshua was born Bethlehem of Judea, to distinguish it from the other village by the same name, Bethlehem in the land of Zebulun which was some seven miles north of Nazareth.

It was necessary for Yeshua to be born in Bethlehem of Judah. Because prophecy said the King Messiah was to come from the kingly tribe of Judah

Matthew does not give us any details about the messiah birth. Only that he was born in Bethlehem of Judah.

However, Luke not only tells us that the messiah was born in Bethlehem of Judah, but he also provides information about the place in which he was born. Thus, making it easy for the shepherd to find him.

Luke 2:1,3 CJB

(1) Around this time, Emperor Augustus issued an order for a census to be taken throughout the Empire.

(3) Everyone went to be registered, each to his own town.

Luke 2:4-7 CJB

(4) So Joseph, because he was a descendant of David, went up from the town of Nazareth in the Galil to the town of David, called Beit-Lechem, in Y'hudah,

(5) to be registered, with Miryam, to whom he was engaged, and who was pregnant.

(6) While they were there, the time came for her to give birth;

(7) and she gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him in [Swaddling] cloth and laid him down in a feeding trough, because there was no space for them in the living-quarters.

Because Luke doesn't give any details about the place of birth and only said Miryam wrapped the baby in [Swaddling] cloth and laid him down in a feeding trough, has led most westerners to believe that the messiah was born in a stable among domestic animals.

Again, we must keep in mind that the gospel was written by Jews to Jews within the culture of the first century. Jews who were well versed in scripture would know the place where the messiah would be born.

The rabbinic scholars were expecting the Messiah to be born in a place called Migdal Eder (Tower of the Flock).

This is based on what the prophet Micah said in chapter 4.

Micah 4:8 CJB

You, [O Migdal-Eder] tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, to you your former sovereignty will return, the royal power of the daughter of Yerushalayim.

Mig-dawl ay-der was the watchtower that guarded the Temple flocks that were being raised to serve as sacrificial animals in the Temple.

The Good News of Matthew

The shepherds who kept the flocks were special trained men who wrapped them in "swaddling cloths" to protect them from injury. Because the animals who were sacrificed could not be hurt, damaged, or blemished.

These shepherds were perhaps Levites, and when the angels told them the baby was wrapped in swaddling clothe, they knew exactly when to go to find him.

In addition, this place would be ceremonial clean.

John the Baptist called Yeshua the lamb of Elohim who takes away the sins of the world.

Yah arranged for Yeshua, his lamb, who would be sacrificed in Jerusalem for the sins of the world, to be born in the very place where other lambs were born who were destined for temple sacrifice.

Matthew said Yeshua was born "in the days of King Herod".

He was called Herod the Great. (c. 73-4 B.C.E.) he founded the Herodian dynasty (see [Luk_3:1](#)), which ruled the Land of Israel and its surroundings from 37 B.C.E. until the war with Rome in 66-70 C.E.

Though technically Jewish by birth, since his family was from the Edomites [descended from Esau], who had been forcibly converted to Judaism under the Hasmonean Maccabees in the second century B.C.E.

Herod, reconstructed and enlarge the Second Temple, which had been built under Zerubbabel (see the book of Haggai) in 520-516 B.C.E.

Herod was consistently paranoid about his power. He had all his rivals exterminated, including those of his wife's family.

He had fifteen children and even exterminated, some of his own children. [JNT Comm]

Not only was the place of Yeshua's birth important to Matthew but also to the magi who were seeking this newborn king.

Matthew 2:1-2 TLV

(1) Now after Yeshua was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, magi from the east came to Jerusalem,

(2) saying, "Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

The Good News of Matthew

The term magi can mean magicians, wise men, or astrologers. Because some of these practices are condemned in the Torah, it is assumed that this group consists of non-Jews (cf. Deuteronomy 18:9-13).

However, Magi were not merely sorcerers or magicians, although the term "magician" comes from this word; nor were they simply astrologers, although they did observe the stars.

They were sages, wise men, often in positions of responsibility but sometimes commanding respect because of their wisdom even when not holding office. These Magi came from the Medo-Persian Empire or Babylon. [JNTC]

Therefore, we can more easily understand how these magi would have knowledge of such details of Jewish theology.

Babylon was still the place of residence for the majority of the Jewish community even as Matthew was writing in the first century.

According to history, Daniel, a young Jewish captive arose to political prominence in the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar.

Around the year 500 BC. Nebuchadnezzar recruited several Jewish youths to be trained in "every matter of wisdom and understanding" (Daniel 1:17-20).

Among them were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego.

[Daniel 1:20 CJB](#)

(20) and in all matters requiring wisdom and understanding, whenever the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and exorcists in his entire kingdom.

This would provide a natural connection between these wise men and their understanding of Jewish tradition.

Therefore, these magi or wise men could have been Jews from Babylon, who were familiar with Daniels writings and came in search of the Mashiach. Yah's star led the Magi to Jerusalem perhaps because, since Bethlehem was only five miles away, it was necessary for them to go through Jerusalem. When king Herod heard about a king being born who would rule in Judah he became agitated or troubled.

After summoning the head priest and Torah scholars to learn where the king would be born, Herod sent the magi to Bethlehem with instruction to return

to him with the information so he too could go and worship the king.

Herod was known for exterminating all who were a threat to him. Those who may replace him as king.

Matthew 2:7-12 CJB

(7) Herod summoned the Magi to meet with him privately and asked them exactly when the star had appeared.

(8) Then he sent them to Beit-Lechem with these instructions: "Search carefully for the child; and when you find him, let me know, so that I too may go and worship him."

(9) After they had listened to the king, they went away; and the star which they had seen in the east went in front of them until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.

This was no regular star but would better be explained as a manifestation of the Sh'chinah (glory) of Elohim that appears at many dramatic events in history.

No doubt these biblically literate magi, were familiar with the messianic prophecy in Numbers 24:17.

Numbers 24:17 TLV

(17) 'I see him, yet not at this moment. I behold him, yet not in this location. For a star will come from Jacob, a scepter will arise from Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab and the skulls of all the sons of Seth.

How appropriate that Elohim would use the Sh'chinah in the manifestation of a star to direct these seekers to the true King Messiah, Yeshua.

Matthew 2:10-12 TLV

(10) When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great gladness.

(11) And when they came into the house, they saw the Child with His mother Miriam; and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

(12) And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another way.

The messiah was probably two years old when the magi found him. He was no longer in the manger at Mig-dawl ay-der. Notice in verse 11, *And when they came into the house.*

Once in the house, they proceed to offer gifts to the new king—gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The Good News of Matthew

Each of these gifts is highly symbolic of spiritual truth.

- Gold was considered an expensive gift fit for royalty.
- Frankincense was used in oil fo temple incense.
- Myrrh (Hebrew mor) was often an anointing oil used in preparation for death (John 19:39-40).

All three ingredients of the Magi gifts are prophetic symbols of the purpose of the Messiah's arrival—to be King, Priest, and Redeemer.

Conclusion.

When we read our bible, we see that everything from genesis to revelation was strategically planned and implemented El Elyon. All to achieve his purpose for humanity and the world.

Everything surrounding the birth of the messiah,

1. his conception [By the Ruach],
2. his city of birth [city of David whose throne he would occupy],
3. his place of birth [for temple sacrifices, life in the blood],
4. even the gifts from the Magi.

Were all neatly fitted together, to provide us with a clear picture of Yeshua, Yah's salvation.

He gave himself to redeem humanity from sin. He is now ministering as high priest in the heavenly sanctuary on our behalf.

He is coming to establish his kingdom and reign as king forever and ever and ever.

Matthew 2:13-23

Matthew is writing to the first central Jews who were aware of the messianic prophecy written in the Tanach. Therefore, in addition to establishing the messiah's authenticity through his genealogy he continually shows that everything surrounding his birth was in fulfillment of prophecy.

Even the gifts from the magi were a testimony of the purpose of the messiah's birth. Yeshua would be our redeemer, our high priest, and our king.

The magi who had been instructed by Herod to bring him news of the child's location, were told in a dream not to go back to Herod.

Matthew 2:12 CJB

(12) But they had been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they took another route back to their own country.

Some Bible translations say "*being warned by God*", other say "*being divinely warned*". While other just say "*had been warned*".

To say that the magi was warned by Elohim, does not mean that Yah spoke to them directly. Yah had been communicating to Joseph through his angel.

And the Greek word used in warned of God, can also mean angel.

Thayer Definition

G5537 *chrēmatisō*

2b) to be the mouthpiece of divine revelations, to promulgate the commands of God.

Therefore, more likely it was Yah's angel who spoke to the Magi, as he had been speaking to Joseph.

The angels, who are Yah's ministers to humanity, were there to assure that no harm came to the messiah.

We can always rely on yah to protect us from dangerous situations. When the Jews made plans to kill Paul, his nephew being there was no accident. He warned the authorities of their plans and Paul escaped without being harmed.

Not only did the angel protect yeshua, but they also protect us, His people, today.

Hebrews 1:14 TLV

(14) Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out for service to those about to inherit salvation?

Herod had no intentions of worshiping yeshua. To him Yeshua was a treat to his position as king. Therefore, his purpose was to kill the child.

Herod was known for his paranoia and erratic behavior.

Although his family was officially Jewish as a result of the mass conversion of the Idumeans around the year 200 BCE, Herod was identified more as a pagan king than a leader of Israel. Herod lived a superficial Jewish lifestyle

Herod had a history of eliminating those whom he perceived were his rivals. Including two of his own sons because he feared that his throne was in jeopardy.

Matthew 2:13-15 CJB

(13) After they had gone, an angel of Adonai appeared to Yosef in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave. For Herod is going to look for the child in order to kill him."

(14) So he got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt,

(15) where he stayed until Herod died. This happened in order to fulfill what Adonai had said through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

The family, therefore, heeds the warning of the angel and flees by cover of night to the historic land of Egypt. Egypt was under the Roman government and there were many Jews living there at that time.

Matthew 2:15

(15) where he stayed until Herod died. This happened in order to fulfill what Yahweh [Adonai] had said through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Matthew notes that this action is part of a dual fulfillment of Hosea 11:1.

However, the original scripture that Matthew is quoting is Hosea 11. is not referring to the messiah. But to the whole nation of Israel's Exodus from Egypt in the days of Moses.

Hosea 11:1 CJB

(1) "When Isra'el was a child, I loved him; and out of Egypt I called my son.

Matthew sees a secondary fulfillment of this prediction in the specific son of Israel, Yeshua, coming out of Egypt as well.

Matthew's point is that the Messiah is the collective representative of all of Israel.

There is another aspect to be considered about yeshua in relation to Egypt. When we think of Israel coming out of Egypt, we think of redemption.

One of Yeshua's purposes was to redeem Israel from sin. By connecting Yeshua coming out of Egypt with Hosea 11, the Jews would know that as Yah brought the nation out of bondage to Egypt the messiah will also bring the nation out of bondage to sin.

And not only the nation of Israel, but the entire world, would be redeemed from sin by the atoning blood of messiah, Yah's lamb.

Matthew 2:16-18 CJB

(16) Meanwhile, when Herod realized that the Magi had tricked him, he was furious and gave orders to kill all the boys in and around Beit-Lechem who were two years old or less, calculating from the time the Magi had told him.

(17) In this way were fulfilled the words spoken through the prophet Yirmeyahu [Jeremiah],

(18) "A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and lamenting loudly. It was Rachel sobbing for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no longer alive."

The Good News of Matthew

True to his reputation, Herod goes into a fit of paranoid rage. To eliminate any perceived threat to his throne, he gives orders to murder every Jewish boy under the age of two who happens to be residing around Beit-Lechem.

Matthew once again sees a dual fulfillment of prophecy in which history, in a sense, is repeating itself.

This quote is from Jeremiah 31:15 (v. 14 in Hebrew), where the prophet hears a voice of grief over the destruction of the Jewish people by Babylon's army in 586 BCE.

Jeremiah 31:15 TLV

(15) Thus says Yahweh [Adonai]: "A voice is heard in Ramah—lamentation and bitter weeping—Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they are no more."

Rachel is one of the mothers of Israel, who is in anguish over the plight of her people.

In Jeremiah 40:1, we are told that it was in Ramah that Nebuchadnezzar gathered the exiles before their deportation to Babylon.

This prophetic word is doubly appropriate, as Rachel is the mother of the very tribe where the village of Ramah is located in the territory of Benjamin, about 10 miles from Beit-Lechem.

As the first event was fulfilled by the Babylonian deportation, so too is there anguish in Ramah in the first century over the tragic murder of Jewish children.

How much greater the grief would be if the Messiah, the hope of Israel, had been slain prematurely.

Matthew 2:19-23 TLV

(19) But when Herod died, behold, an angel of Yahweh [Adonai] appears in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

(20) saying, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and go to the land of Israel, for those seeking the Child's life are dead."

The family remained in Egypt until the death of Herod was confirmed. Upon his death in 4 BCE, the kingdom was divided among his three sons.

Archelaus receiving the territories of Judea, Samaria, and Idumaea. the Jewish people dreaded Archelaus as much as they did his father.

Matthew 2:19-23 TLV

(21) So he got up, took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel.

(22) But hearing that Archelaus was king of Judea in place of his father Herod, he became afraid to go there. Then after being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the region of the Galilee.

It is quite understandable that Yosef, in obedience to the angelic vision, avoided the land of Judea and, Herod's son, in the process.

So the family returned directly to the Galil and settled in their original hometown of Natzeret.

Matthew 2:23 TLV

(23) And he went and lived in a city called Natzeret, to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets, that Yeshua shall be called a Natzrati.

Matthew again brings out a messianic prophecy, which relates to this part of the life of Yeshua. As spoken by the prophets, the Messiah would be called a Natzrati (Nazarene) which, in the mind of the writer, directly relates to the town in the Galilee.

The only problem is that the town of Nazareth is not mentioned in the Tanakh, nor does any specific prophecy make this statement.

It is not that Matthew is ignorant of the fact that there is no such verse that specifically mentions Natzeret.

There is no doubt that Matthew must be read with an understanding of their use in first-century Jewish literature.

In the context of Matthew 2:23 and other similar verses, this would be more of, a broad application derived from specific biblical statements.

To quote Rabbi Barney Kasdan "In this case, any educated Jew would understand the connection between the town of Natzeret and the Mashiach. The town's name is, in fact, derived from the Hebrew word for "branch," which would call to mind a common term for the Messiah himself.

Isaiah 11:1 CJB

(1) But a branch will emerge from the trunk of Yishai [Jesse], a shoot will grow from his roots.

Jeremiah 23:5 CJB

(5) "The days are coming," says Yahweh [Adonai] when I will raise a righteous Branch for David. He will reign as king and succeed, he will do what is just and right in the land.

What Matthew is pointing out is a good play on words that the Netzer (Branch) is now residing in the city called Natzeret (Branch).

Instead of being a contradiction or mistake, this verse actually underscores the messianic qualifications of Yeshua in a manner that many first century (and modern) Jews would appreciate.

In Matthew's mind, Yeshua is perfectly qualified to be Israel's King Messiah, and he no doubt hopes that his readers will continue to explore that possibility.

Matthew 3:1-7 John the Immerser Prepares the Way

Messiah Prepared by Mikveh 3:1-17

Matthew now jumps ahead in his chronology of the life of Messiah to the start of his public ministry.

Matthew does not give us any details of the messiah childhood. He skips from the young boy of about two years old to the mature man of about 30.

Luke 3:23 TS2009

(23) And when יהושע [Yeshua] Himself began, He was about thirty years of age, being, as reckoned by law, son of Yosëph, of Ęli,

Luke, however, records the family's visit to Jerusalem when Yeshua was 12 years old. Some say that **12 years old is the age of accountability in Judaism**, when a young person takes on the responsibilities of the religious community. However, it is 12 years old for girls and 13 years old for boys. Also bar mitzvih did not begin to be celebrated until the middle ages.

However, it is possible that Luke's records this event because it served as an **important transition** in the life of Yeshua as a **traditional Jew**. (Pirke Avot 5.24).

Yeshua was at the age when he was ready to take on the responsibility of his father's business.

Luke 2:49

He said to them, "Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I had to be concerning myself with my Father's affairs?"

Matthew records the **next vital transition** in the **preparation** of the Messiah.

Since Yeshua **is** the promised King and redeemer of Israel, it is necessary for him to go through **a preparation**.

Part of that preparation would be a **mikveh** (ritual immersion). It was customary in Judaism for the priest to immerse themselves in a milveh before entering the temple to minister.

As yeshua was entering into his ministry he would also need to be immersed in preparation. Because yeshua did all that the torah required to be done. After all, in a sense, he did write the manual.

Therefore, Matthew 3 begins by introducing the person who would carry out this symbolic task.

Matthew 3:1-3 TLV

(1) In those days, **John the Immerser** came proclaiming in the wilderness of Judea,

(2) "Turn away from your sins, for the kingdom of heaven is near!"

(3) For he is the one Isaiah the prophet spoke about, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, '**Prepare the way of Adonai [Yahweh]**, and make His paths straight.'"

John was Yeshua cousin, who was born just six months before yeshua. (cf. Luke 1:56-57).

John's means, "**Yahweh is a gracious giver**".

John was appointed to prepare the way of the Mashiach.

He was called John the Immerser because he was one who performed ritual immersions within the context of Judaism.

The Hebrew noun form of "**immersion**" is t'vilah, which the Greeks called baptidzo, meaning "**to totally immerse or dip**."

In secular usage, the term is often used to describe the process of dipping a piece of cloth in a dye in order to change its appearance.

The cloth would take on the "identification," of the dye. because the cloth is now identified with the **color of the dye**.

The meaning of immersion [T'vilah] is a complete immersion to **identify** with a particular event or message.

When we are baptized into the Messiah, we take on **his character**. We become as he is.

The Good News of Matthew

This act of immersion would take place in a **proper pool**, called **mikveh** (**from Kaveh, a collection of water**).

Numerous mikva'ot were found on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, as well as in any sizable community throughout the Land.

John, therefore, was not teaching something **new** but calling on Israel to **identify** with the message Elohim had given to him.

His message was a **powerful one** that attracted a large following: **Turn from your sins to God.**

Matthew 3:2 TLV

(2) "Turn away from your sins, for the kingdom of heaven is near!"

John was not calling Israel to convert to **a new religion** but to **return** (t'shuvah) to the source of their faith, the **Elohim of Abraham**.

Israel had **turned away** from that spiritual relationship with Yah.

The **Greek word** from which repent is from is [Meh.Tuh noy·uh] "metanoiete," means "**change your mind, have a complete change of heart**, to think differently".

The **underlying** Hebrew concept is expressed in the word "t'shuvah" [**teshuvah**] meaning "**turning** or **returning**".

Therefore, John's message to Israel was for them to repent, **t'shuvah**" by "**turning**" from their sins and "**returning**" to Elohim.

Note that there is not only a "**from**" but a "**to**," for turning from one's sins is impossible unless **at the same** time one turns to Elohim.

Otherwise, one only turns from **one set of sins to another!** Each individual must **t'shuvah** [repent], but it requires Elohim's grace to be able to do it.

John was fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah.

Matthew 3:2 TLV

(2) "Turn away from your sins, **for the kingdom of heaven is near!**"

The Good News of Matthew

Matthew use of the term "Kingdom of **Heaven**" instead of Kingdom of **God**.

According to **Rabbi Barney Kasdan**

*"Matthew **As a traditional Jew writing to a Jewish audience**, it would be common to refrain from pronouncing or writing the **holy name of God (YHVH)**.*

*As the Talmud clarifies, "In the **Sanctuary the Name was pronounced as written**, but beyond its confines a substituted Name was employed" (Tractate Sotah VII.6).*

*A solution **still common today** in the Jewish community is to use substitute terms for YHVH such as ADONAI (LORD) or HaShem (the Name).*

*In the Talmudic writings, we often find the word "Shamayim/heavens" as a **substitute for the name of God** since it refers to the entire universe that he has created.*

*When Matthew uses the term "Kingdom of Heaven," then, he is not speaking of a different kingdom but is simply using a **very Jewish way** of referring to the Creator.*

For such traditional Jews of the first century, the Kingdom of Heaven is, in fact, the Kingdom of God".. Isaiah 40:3).

Matthew 3:3 TLV

(3) For he is the one Isaiah the prophet spoke about, saying, "**The voice of one crying in the wilderness**, 'Prepare the way of Adonai [Yahweh], and make His paths straight.'

Matthew said John was fulfilling the vital ministry **of preparing the way for Messiah**.

In fact, this is the message the angel gave to John's father Zechariah.

Luke 1:13,17 TLV

(13) But the angel said, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give birth to your son, and you will name him John.

(17) And he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, **to turn** the hearts of fathers to the children and the disobedient ones to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready for Yahweh [Adonai] a prepared people.

Matthew 3:4-9 TLV

(4) Now John wore clothing from **camel's hair** and a **leather belt** around his waist, and **his food was locusts and wild honey**.

(5) Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan.

(6) **Confessing** their sins, they were being **immersed by him** in the Jordan River.

(7) But when he saw many **Pharisees and Sadducees** coming to his immersion, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"

(8) Therefore **produce fruit** worthy of repentance;

(9) and do not think that you can say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father"! For I tell you that from these stones God {Elohim} can raise up children for Abraham.

The surprising note that his food consisted of **locusts and wild honey** has certainly raised some questions. It is true that locusts may be eaten according to the laws of kashrut (dietary laws), as seen in Leviticus 11:22, and there is a discussion in the Talmud defining the characteristics of kosher versus unkosher locusts (Tractate Chullin 65a).

Leviticus 11:22 CJB

(22) Specifically, of these you may eat the **various kinds of locusts**, grasshoppers, katydids and crickets.

Yet, a more viable translation has been offered as the Greek word for "**locust**" (akis) has a very similar sound to the word for "carob" (karis). Indeed, to this day in Israel, the carob tree is called the "St. John's tree," which probably sounds more appetizing than the insect!

Whatever the case, the people who were heeding the message of John were coming in droves to make the symbolic gesture of their repentance and were **fully immersed** in the Jordan/Yarden. By this mikveh of repentance, they were **identifying** with what John preached and preparing themselves for the imminent appearance of the Messiah.

The Good News of Matthew

Matthew shares some intriguing details of the mikveh ministry of Yochanan [John]. It is not surprising that many traditional Jews came to hear the message of Yochanan and received his exhortation.

Even many of the P'rushim and Tz'dukim (Pharisees and Sadducees) responded favorably by seeking this mikveh of repentance.

Notice again that they did not perceive this immersion as some **new religious** expression or conversion, but they understood that this particular mikveh was one of **repentance and preparation for the Mashiach**.

This all looked **good on the surface**, yet Yochanan perceives that the respondents' **hearts are not right**.

John is clearly not seeking popular approval when he cries out, "**You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?**" While it is a shockingly straightforward rebuke, it is no different from what the prophets of previous generations have spoken (cf. Psalm 58).

The Immerser even calls into question their motives for seeking this mikveh of repentance since they **have no fruit that will prove it**. John also reproves this particular crowd for their anticipated response, which relies on their relationship **with Father Abraham**.

The belief is **that all Jews**, by virtue of our relational connection to righteous Abraham, enjoy the benefits of his standing before Elohim/God.

This common doctrine is found often in the prayer service and rabbinic writings (e.g., Avot section of the Amidah prayer).

The Talmud even assures us **that all Israel** has a place in the world to come (cf. Tractate Sanhedrin 10.1).

To this, John issues a **rebuke** that Elohim/God can raise up for Avraham sons from these stones!

Matthew 3:10-12 TLV

(10) Already the axe is laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire!

(11) "As for me, I immerse you in **water for repentance**. But the One

coming after me is mightier than I am; I am not worthy to carry His sandals. He will immerse you in the **Ruach ha-Kodesh and fire**.

(12) His **winnowing fork** is in His hand, and He shall clear His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn; but the chaff He shall burn up with inextinguishable fire.”

Indeed, the **axe is at the root of the trees** in anticipation of Elohim’s judgment on all that is false.

At this point, John clarifies some of **the distinctions between his mikveh of repentance** and the **mikveh of the coming Messiah**.

The current immersion is said to be **only in water** to symbolize the act of t’shuvah/repentance.

But the **Mashiach will immerse** the people in the **Ruach HaKodesh** (Holy Spirit) and with fire.

While the immersion of Yochanan was **important**, the immersion of Messiah would go **even deeper into the spiritual call of Israel**.

The **first** was an **outward call** to prepare for the Kingdom. The **second** would be the **reality of the Kingdom** as experienced by the indwelling of the **Ruach HaKodesh** [Holy Spirit].

The promise of the **Ruach HaKodesh** goes back to prophecies of **Joel** and **Ezekiel**. Joel predicts a time to come when the Ruach will be poured out on all humanity, especially upon Israel (2:28 English/3:1 Hebrew).

Similarly, Ezekiel foresees a time in the Messianic Age when Israel will receive a **new heart and a new Spirit** (36:24-27).

In other words, Yochanan’s mikveh was similar to other types of immersions found in **first-century Judaism**, whereas **Yeshua’s mikveh** would be of a **different**, spiritual dynamic.

The promise here is of Yeshua bringing the predicted times of spiritual filling to those **who desired it**.

This seems to be why Yochanan humbly asserts that he **is not worthy** to carry his sandals, the sandals of his master.

(11) “..... **But the One coming after me is mightier than I am; I am not worthy to carry His sandals.**

A **secondary part** of Yeshua’s immersion would include **fire** as well.

(11) “..... He will immerse you in the **Ruach ha-Kodesh and fire**

Usually, the symbolism of fire in the Scriptures represents **judgment or purification.**

The context of Yochanan’s statement here emphasizes that when this Messiah appears, there will be **not only the blessing** of the Spirit, but also **judgment by fire** for those who refuse to follow.

Matthew 3:12 TLV

(12) His **winnowing fork** is in His hand, and He shall clear His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn; but the chaff He shall burn up with inextinguishable fire.”

In **ancient days**, the winnowing fork was a **farm instrument** used to throw the harvested grain into the air. The wind would then separate the heavier wheat grain from the lighter straw of the kernel. The valued wheat would then be stored for future use, while the **scrap would be burnt** or destroyed as useless.

In this case **of spiritual harvest**, that which is useless would be burnt with unquenchable fire, a graphic depiction of the judgment known as Gei-Hinnom in Jewish literature (later called Gehenna or Hell in Greek literature).

This is a valley outside Jerusalem used in ancient times as a trash dump and was even a place of pagan, human sacrifice at times. Gei-Hinnom (valley of Hinnom) was, therefore, an apt symbol for the real place of judgment to come in the Messianic Age.

In short, this passage teaches **that every person**, believer or non-believer, will experience an immersion of the Messiah when he appears. It will either be a **mikveh of blessing** with the indwelling Holy Spirit, or it will be a mikveh of fire and judgment.

The Good News of Matthew

This message caused quite a stir in Israel at this time. It is still a vital message for **all of us to consider** for our **own spiritual lives today**.

In revelation 21 we are told that all those who are **not** victorious in the messiah will be thrown in the **lake of fire**.

Revelation 21:8 CJB

(8) But as for the cowardly, the untrustworthy, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those involved with the occult and with drugs, idol-worshippers, and all liars—their destiny is the lake burning with fire and sulfur, the second death."

Where do you stand in your relationship with the messiah?

Yeshua Baptism

Matthew 3:13-17

What transpires next is **truly amazing**, as Yeshua himself makes that trip from the Galilee to the place of John's immersion ministry.

Matthew 3:13-14 TLV

(13) Then Yeshua came from the Galilee to John, to be immersed by him in the Jordan.

(14) But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be immersed by You, and You are coming to me?"

Yochanan clearly realizes his submission to Yeshua, as reflected in his question as to why Yeshua is coming for the mikveh. We may ask the same question: If Yeshua is the true Messiah, **why would he need to be immersed by Yochanan?**

Matthew 3:15 TLV

(15) But Yeshua responded, "Let it happen now, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill **all righteousness.**" So John yielded to Him.

Yeshua gives the answer in stating that **it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.** It is important to remember that the **key** symbolism of mikveh in Judaism is that of **identification**

Yeshua clearly did **not need to repent** of any sins, since he is described as the sinless son of Elohim.

Hebrews 4:15 CJB

(15) For we do not have a cohen gadol [high Priest] unable to empathize with our weaknesses; since in every respect he was tempted just as we are, the only difference being that **he did not sin.**

However, it does make sense that he would **identify** with the **message** of Yochanan [John] and put his stamp of approval upon it.

Likewise, it makes sense that part of **all righteousness** would **include** the **symbolic cleansing of a priest** before the start of a time of ministry.

It is fitting for Yeshua to take a mikveh [ritual bath] as **a public testimony** that this is the **start of his ministry to Israel.**

Matthew 3:16-17 TLV

(16) After being immersed, Yeshua rose up out of the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the **Ruach of Elohim descending** like a dove and coming upon Him.

(17) And behold, a voice from the heavens said, "**This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased!**"

As Yeshua comes out of the water, there is a **public manifestation** of the Ruach Hakodesh [Holy Spirit], which appeared like a dove.

Interestingly, this is the **same symbolism** for the Ruach Hakodesh seen in **rabbinic literature**.

Therefore, this would have significance meaning to the Jewish people.

One passage of **the Talmud**, in dealing with the Creation account of Genesis 1:2, states that

“The Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters—**like a dove** which hovers over her young without touching them” (Tractate Hagigah 15a).

In another Talmudic expression, the text says that **a voice from heaven testified**, “This is my son, whom I love; I am well pleased with him.”

The classical rabbis called this mysterious manifestation the **bat-kol (daughter of the voice)**. *A heavenly or divine voice which proclaims Elohim’s [God’s] will or judgment, His deeds and His commandments to individuals or to a number of persons, to rulers, communities, and even to whole nations.*

After the **last of the prophets**, it was considered that Elohim [God] provided the bat-kol to still **give guidance to the people** (Tractate Yoma 9b).

How interesting it is that the **bat-kol testified, after** the last of the prophets and **before** the New Covenant was established, that **Yeshua is indeed** Elohim’s [God’s] son.

To Matthew’s audience, this was a **voice to be taken seriously**.

It had been foretold in the **TENACH/Scripture** that Elohim has a son.

Psalms 2:7 WEB

(7) I will tell of the decree. Yahweh said to me, “**You are my son**. Today I have become your father.

Proverbs 30:4 CJB

(4) Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has cupped the wind in the palms of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who

established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and **what is his son's name?** Surely you know!

Isaiah 9:5 CJB

(5) For a child is born to us, **a son is given to us**; dominion will rest on his shoulders, and he will be given the name Pele-Yo`etz El Gibbor Avi-`Ad Sar-Shalom [*Wonder of a Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace*],

Now this person, this son who had been spoken of in the TENACH **has come to Israel** and was starting his **priestly ministry** in the **traditional** way of a mikveh bath [ceremonial cleansing] an emersion by John the immerser as part of his preparation for ministry.

He was making a public statement of his intention to begin his priestly ministry which would lead to his final assignment on earth as the messiah, that I to give himself as a sin offering on behalf of the world.

Yeshua had one more test to past before he could launch his public ministry. That one we will discuss in chapter 4.

What are you doing to prepare yourself for the ministry to which yah has called you to.?