

Bethlehem – Beit Lechem – The House of Bread

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In this [study](study.html) I would like to look at the town of Bethlehem and try to understand the purpose and meaning of this [city](city.html).

BETHLEHEM (Beit-Lechem) (Heb. בית לחם), [city](city.html) in Judah located [five](five.html) mi. ([eight](eight.html) km.) S. of [Jerusalem](city.html).

EPHRATH (Heb. אפרת), an additional [name](name.html) for Bethlehem of Judah. Rashi tells us that this is the place where nobles and aristocrats [gather](gather.html).

**THE GARDEN:**

The story of Beit Lechem (Bethlehem) begins in the “[field](field.html)” where [Adam HaRishon](adam.html) was formed. [HaShem](hashem.html) then brought [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon into [Garden of Eden](eden.html) where:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 2:8-9*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *G-d planted a garden* [*eastward*](east.html) *in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *G-d to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for* [*food*](food.html)*; the* [*tree of life*](eternal.html) *also in the midst of the garden, and the* [*tree of knowledge of good and evil*](thetree.html)*.*

This garden contained every tree which was good for [food](food.html). [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon also came from the ground, as it is said:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 2:7*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *G-d formed man [of] the* [*dust*](rock.html) *of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

“Out of the ground” [HaShem](hashem.html) made the trees to grow and “out of the ground” He formed [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon. We are all the offspring of [Adam](adam.html) HaRishon, so we all share in his work:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 2:15*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *G-d took the man, and put him into the* [*garden of Eden*](eden.html) *to dress it and to keep it.*

The “Man from the ground” ([Adam](adam.html)) was to tend and dress the “Trees from the ground”. Like the trees, [Adam](adam.html) is a [seed](flower.html) in the [hand](fourteen.html) of The Sower. Indeed, The offspring of both the tree and [Adam](adam.html) are both called “[seed](flower.html)”.

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 55:10*** *For as the* [*rain*](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Crain.html) *cometh down, and the snow from* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give* [*seed*](flower.html) *to the sower, and bread to the eater:*

***II Corinthians 9:10*** *Now he that ministereth* [*seed*](flower.html) *to the sower both minister bread for [your]* [*food*](food.html)*, and multiply your* [*seed*](flower.html) *sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)*

Now [Adam](adam.html) was to bring forth [food](food.html) from the earth, but he was to be nourished by The Word of G-d:

***Matityahu (Matthew) 4:4*** *But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the* [*mouth*](body.html) *of G-d.*

[Adam](adam.html) was a man from the ground, and [HaShem](hashem.html) [desires](needs.html) that the ones from the ground should bear fruit. [Adam](adam.html) was “placed” in the [garden of Eden](eden.html) by [HaShem](hashem.html), the most fertile and productive place on earth, that he might bring forth much fruit. There, [HaShem](hashem.html) was going to sow in Man the [seed](flower.html) of His [mitzvot](cmds613.html) (His instruction) and wait for that [seed](flower.html) to be accepted, kept, and made to flourish and bear fruit in the end, to His glory. For when G-d created the grass, plants and fruit bearing trees we are told that He placed their “[seed](flower.html)... upon (AL) the ground.” Therefore, it is written: “the Lord G-d commanded upon [AL] the Man as [one](one.html) would place a “[seed](flower.html) upon [AL] the ground” . Thus, was [Adam](adam.html) commanded not to [eat](eating.html) of the fruit of the tree of [knowledge](thetree.html) of good and evil.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Through the keeping of the [mitzvot](cmds613.html), [Adam](adam.html) was to bring forth fruit, bearing [seed](flower.html), like the trees were to bring forth fruit, bearing [seed](flower.html). [Adam](adam.html) was also commanded to bring [HaShem](hashem.html) the “fruit” of glory by our praise:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 29:2*** *Give unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *the glory due unto his* [*name*](name.html)*; worship* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *in the beauty of holiness.*

[***Bereans***](bereans.html) ***(***[***Hebrews***](bereans.html)***) 13:15*** *By him therefore let us offer the* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *of praise to G-d continually, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his* [*name*](name.html)*.*

We are, therefore, meant to be trees of righteousness which bring forth fruit bearing [seed](flower.html):

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 6:13*** *But yet in it [shall be] a tenth, and [it] shall return, and shall be* [*eaten*](eating.html)*: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance [is] in them, when they cast [their leaves: so] the holy* [*seed*](flower.html) *[shall be] the substance thereof.*

We can trace throughout the Tanach, the imagery of man as a “tree”:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 1:3-4*** *And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The* [*ungodly*](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Cwicked.html) *[are] not so: but [are] like the chaff which the wind driveth away.*

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 52:8*** *But I [am] like a green olive tree in the* [*house of G-d*](housegod.html)*: I trust in the mercy of G-d for ever and ever.*

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***)******92:12*** *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 128:3*** *Thy wife [shall be] as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.*

***Mishle (Proverbs) 11:30*** *The fruit of the righteous [is] a* [*tree of life*](eternal.html)*; and he that winneth souls [is] wise.*

***Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) 2:3*** *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so [is] my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit [was] sweet to my taste.*

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 44:3-4*** *For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy* [*seed*](flower.html)*, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up [as] among the grass, as willows by the water courses.*

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 61:3*** *To appoint unto them that* [*mourn*](mourning.html) *in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for* [*mourning*](mourning.html)*, the* [*garment*](garment.html) *of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, that he might be glorified.*

***Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 17:8*** *For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and [that] spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.*

Thus, in the book of Devarim the people were told to spare the fruit trees and not cut them down “for the tree of the [field](field.html) is man [[Adam](adam.html)].”:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:19*** *When thou shalt besiege a* [*city*](city.html) *a long* [*time*](time.html)*, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest* [*eat*](eating.html) *of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the* [*field*](field.html) *[is] man’s [life]) to employ [them] in the siege:*

**THE** [**FIELD**](field.html)**:**

After the fall, man was [exiled](galuyot.html) from the [Garden of Eden](eden.html), back to the [field](field.html) where he was formed:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 3:23*** *Therefore* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *G-d sent him forth from the* [*garden of Eden*](eden.html)*, to till the ground from whence he was taken.*

[Adam](adam.html) would now have to till the ground and labor to prepare his bread. No longer was [Adam](adam.html) to be in the most fertile and productive place. Now he would be in the [field](field.html) where:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 3:17-19*** *And unto* [*Adam*](adam.html) *he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the* [*voice*](voice.html) *of thy wife, and hast* [*eaten*](eating.html) *of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not* [*eat*](eating.html) *of it: cursed [is] the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou* [*eat*](eating.html) *[of] it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt* [*eat*](eating.html) *the herb of the* [*field*](field.html)*; In the sweat of thy* [*face*](body.html) *shalt thou* [*eat*](eating.html) *bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for* [*dust*](rock.html) *thou [art], and unto* [*dust*](rock.html) *shalt thou return.*

The [field](field.html) must now be ploughed, harrowed, sown and tilled. The wheat must then be reaped, threshed, winnowed and ground. The dough then mixed and kneaded, molded into loaves and baked. All this, before there is bread to [eat](eating.html). Perhaps, that is why it is called “the bread of men”:

***Yehezekel (Ezekiel) 24:22*** *And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover [your] lips, nor* [*eat*](eating.html) *the bread of men.*

And is referred to as “the bread of affliction”:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:3*** *Thou shalt* [*eat*](eating.html) *no* [*leavened*](chametz.html) *bread with it;* [*seven*](seven.html) *days shalt thou* [*eat*](eating.html)[*unleavened bread*](chametz.html) *therewith, [even] the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth* [*out of the land of Egypt*](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Cthebirth.html) *in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.*

“Bread of sorrows”:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 127:2*** *[It is] vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to* [*eat*](eating.html) *the bread of sorrows: [for] so he giveth his beloved* [*sleep*](mashal.html)*.*

“Bread of adversity”:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 30:20*** *And [though] the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy* [*teachers*](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Cteacher.html) *be removed into a corner any more, but thine* [*eyes*](body.html) *shall see thy teachers:*

“Bread of [tears](mashal.html)”:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 80:5*** *Thou feedest them with the bread of* [*tears*](mashal.html)*; and givest them* [*tears*](mashal.html) *to drink in great measure.*

It is “bread gotten by sweat”. It is bread “taken” from the ground by hard and excruciating labor.

If [Adam](adam.html) had kept the [mitzvot](cmds613.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html), he would never have had to extract bread in this manner. He would never have had to labor to extract his own [physical](physical.html) and [spiritual](physical.html) nourishment from the “[field](field.html)”. You see, bread is also a hint to The Word of G-d:

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 8:3*** *And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy* [*fathers*](fathers.html)[*know*](daat.html)*; that he might make thee* [*know*](daat.html) *that man doth not live by bread only, but by every [word] that proceedeth out of the* [*mouth*](body.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *doth man live.*

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 4:4*** *And* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of G-d.*

The grain that is ground to make bread is also a hint to the righteous:

***Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 21:10*** *O my* [*threshing*](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Ctemple.html)*, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *of hosts, the G-d of Israel, have I declared unto you.*

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 3:16-17*** *John answered, saying unto [them] all, I indeed* [*baptize*](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Cforty.html) *you with water; but* [*one*](one.html) *mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall* [*baptize*](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Cforty.html) *you with the Holy Ghost and with* [*fire*](fire.html)*: Whose fan [is] in his* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will* [*gather*](gather.html) *the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with* [*fire*](fire.html) *unquenchable.*

[***Midrash Rabbah***](orallaw.html) ***-*** [***Numbers***](nchart.html) ***IV:1*** *A king had numerous granaries all of which contained much refuse and were full of rye-grass. He was consequently not particular about the quantity of the contents. He had, however,* [*one*](one.html) *particular granary which he perceived to be a fine* [*one*](one.html)*. Said he to a member of his house: ‘Those granaries consist of refuse and are full of rye-grass. Be not, therefore, particular about the quantity of the contents. As regards this* [*one*](one.html)*, however, ascertain how many kors, how many sacks, how many modii it contains.’ Thus, ‘the king’ is the supreme King of kings, the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He; ‘the granary’ is Israel- O thou my threshing, and the winnowing of my floor (Isaiah 21:10). So also it is said: Israel is the Lord’s hallowed portion, His firstfruits of the increase (Jeremiah 2:3); ‘the member of His house’ is Moses, as it is said: My servant Moses is not so; he is trusted in all* [*My house*](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Ctemple.html) *(*[*Numbers*](nchart.html) *12:7). The Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, said to Moses: ‘The* [*idol*](idolatry.html) *worshippers are worthless grain’; as it is said: And the peoples shall be as the burnings of lime; as thorns cut down, etc. (Isaiah 33:12). Be not, therefore, particular about their* [*numbers*](nchart.html)*.* [*Israel*](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Cgen-jew.html)*, however, are righteous; they are all wheat fit for storage, as it is said: Thy people also are all righteous.*

Armed with this [knowledge](knowledge.html), we can now understand why the enemies of Yirmeyahu said:

***Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 11:19*** *But I [was] like a lamb [or] an ox [that] is brought to the slaughter; and I* [*knew*](daat.html) *not that they had devised devices against me, [saying], Let us destroy the tree with the bread thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his* [*name*](name.html) *may be no more remembered.*

May he be as a flourishing [field](field.html) of grain,” said the rabbis concerning the [Mashiach](mashiach.html). And “[kiss](mashal.html) the wheat [BAR=either “wheat” or “son”]”:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalm***](psalms1.html)***) 2:12***[*Kiss*](mashal.html) *the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish [from] the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed [are] all they that put their trust in him.*

This was interpreted by them to mean: “[kiss](mashal.html) the [Mashiach](mashiach.html)”. And this “King [Mashiach](mashiach.html)... from where does he come forth? From the royal [city](city.html) of Bethlehem [literally “house of bread”] in Judah.” Are not kings born to rule, protect, shelter, and provide bread for their subjects? It is very apt that the little town called “House [BEIT] of Bread [LECHEM]” should be [the birth](thebirth.html)place of King David and the prophesied birthplace of King [Mashiach](mashiach.html). Great and extensive is the tradition which says that King [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will come forth from the [tribe](tribes.html) of Judah and the House of David, and that he is to be born in Bethlehem. And it is to this [generation](toldot.html) of [Noah](noach.html) still in [exile](galuyot.html) in the “[field](field.html)” of the [world](worlds.html) from the “garden” of [Eden](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Ceden.html), that [His Majesty](yeshua.html) King [Yeshua](yeshua.html) the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) is to come.

**BETHLEHEM:**

We shall see, in the wisdom of [HaShem](hashem.html), that Bethlehem and its environs is truly a [city](city.html) of kings. But [first](one.html) let us discover that wisdom in the naming of the small [city](city.html) of which the prophet Micah said:

***Micah 5:2*** *“And you Bethlehem- Ephratha, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, from you shall come forth for Me the* [*one*](one.html) *who is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.”*

**Targum Jonathan (Micah 5:2)** Out of thee Bethlehem shall [Mashiach](mashiach.html) go forth before me, to exercise dominion over Israel. Whose [name](name.html) has been spoken of Old from the day of Eternity.

O, thou Bethlehem Ephrata ... although thou art little in the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall come forth unto me a Man, a Ruler in Israel whose goings forth are from the days of old ... that is from the [Seed](flower.html) of David ... who was of Bethlehem Judah. (Abarbanel, Mashmiah Jeshua, fol. 62, c. 2).

Although thou art little among the thousands of Judah, out of thee. Shall come forth unto me a Judge to be Ruler in Israel, and this is the King [Mashiach](mashiach.html). (Rabbi David Kimchi)

In ancient times Bethlehem (“House of Bread”) was [first](one.html) called Ephrath or Ephratha which means “fruitful,” before it became [known](daat.html) by its present [name](name.html). Thus in the book of Genesis we see it referred to as “Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.”:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 35:16-19*** *And they journeyed from Beth-el; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and* [*Rachel*](rachel.html) *travailed, and she had hard labour. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her,* [*Fear*](fear.html) *not; thou shalt have this son also. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his* [*name*](name.html) *Ben-oni: but his father called him* [*Benjamin*](benyamin.html)*. And* [*Rachel*](rachel.html) *died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which [is] Beth-lehem.*

Thus we go from “Fruitful” to the “House of Bread”. This is why we go from barley as the [omer offering](omer.html) after [Pesach](passover.html), to the [two](two.html) loaves of bread as an [offering](korbanot.html) at [Shavuot](shavuot.html). We are going from “Fruitful” to “The House of Bread”.

When the Lord told [Abraham](avraham.html) and Sarah that through their progeny kings would come forth:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 17:6*** *And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make* [*nations*](nations.html) *of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.*

Since [Jacob](israelja.html) acquired [the birth](thebirth.html)right from his brother [Esau](edom.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 25:29-34*** *And* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)[*sod*](sod.html) *pottage: and* [*Esau*](edom.html) *came from the* [*field*](field.html)*, and he [was] faint: And* [*Esau*](edom.html) *said to* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*, Feed me, I* [*pray*](prayer.html) *thee, with that same red [pottage]; for I [am] faint: therefore was his* [*name*](name.html) *called* [*Edom*](edom.html)*. And* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And* [*Esau*](edom.html) *said, Behold, I [am] at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*. Then* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *gave* [*Esau*](edom.html) *bread and pottage of lentils; and he did* [*eat*](eating.html) *and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus* [*Esau*](edom.html) *despised [his] birthright.*

[Jacob](israelja.html) was told that kings would come forth from his loins:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 35:11*** *And G-d said unto him, I [am] G-d Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a* [*nation*](nations.html) *and a company of* [*nations*](nations.html) *shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;*

[Jacob](israelja.html) had [twelve](twelve.html) sons, Reuben being the eldest held [the birth](thebirth.html)right, and it would have been from him that the parentage of a line of kings would have ensued. But Reuben lost his birthright when he [lay with](marriageact.html) his father’s concubine Bilhah at the southern border of Bethlehem by the tower of Edar:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 35:21-22*** *And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar. And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and* [*lay with*](marriageact.html) *Bilhah his father’s concubine: and Israel heard [it].*

[Jacob](israelja.html) had gone there to [camp](stages.html) very shortly after his wife [Rachel](rachel.html) died giving [birth](birth.html) to his youngest child [Benjamin](benyamin.html). [Rachel](rachel.html) expired at the northern border of Bethlehem, which was called Ephrath at that [time](time.html). Thus, right by Bethlehem on its southern border, Reuben, the eldest son lost his birthright to be founder of the royal lineage promised to [Jacob](israelja.html). And on the northern border of the same town, [Benjamin](benyamin.html), the youngest was born from whom Saul ben Kish the Benjamite [first](one.html) king of Israel descended.

***Bereshit 35:19*** *“*[*Rachel*](rachel.html) *died and was buried on the way to Efrat, which is Bethlehem. And* [*Yaakov*](israelja.html) *placed a monument on her grave which is the monument of* [*Rachel*](rachel.html)*’s grave unto this day.”*

Although Beit Lechem achieved fame in later years as [the birth](thebirth.html)place and early home of King David, it is principally associated with the Tomb of [Rachel](rachel.html).

Our Sages tell us that [Yaakov](israelja.html) buried her there on Divine orders so that when Nebuzaradan, the [Babylonian](bavel.html) conqueror of [Eretz Yisrael](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Ccity.html), would lead her children into [exile](galuyot.html) past her tomb, Mother [Rachel](rachel.html) would rise from her grave to [pray](prayer.html) to [Heaven](heaven.html) for their return.

Beit-Lechem became the center of the [tribe](tribes.html) of Judah and was settled by an important clan descended from Peretz, son of [Tamar and Yehudah](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Cflower.html), among whose descendants were Boaz and Yishai the father of David.

***Shoftim (Judges) 12:8*** *And after him Ibzan (also* [*known*](daat.html) *as Boaz [Ibn Ezra, Judges 12:8]) of Beth-lehem judged Israel.*

It was in Beit Lechem that David was anointed as King over Israel:

***1 Shmuel (Samuel) 16:4-13*** *And Samuel did that which* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his* [*coming*](coming.html)*, and said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably: I am come to* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html)*. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html)*. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*’s anointed [is] before him. But* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for [*[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *seeth] not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *looketh on the* [*heart*](body.html)*. Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *chosen this. Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *chosen this. Again, Jesse made* [*seven*](seven.html) *of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hath not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all [thy] children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he [was] ruddy, [and] withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said, Arise, anoint him: for this [is] he. Then Samuel took the* [*horn*](shofar.html) *of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.*

If [One](one.html) wanted to [speak](mashal.html) of the town of royalty, Beit Lechem would be on the tip of the [tongue](spirit.html). This is truly the [city](city.html) of Kings. Thus we see that [His Majesty](yeshua.html) King [Yeshua](yeshua.html), the son of David, also came from Beit Lechem:

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 2:4-14*** *And* [*Joseph*](joseph.html) *also went up from Galilee, out of the* [*city*](city.html) *of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the* [*city*](city.html) *of David, which is called Beth-lehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the* [*field*](field.html)*, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the* [*angel*](angels.html) *of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the* [*angel*](angels.html) *said unto them,* [*Fear*](fear.html) *not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the* [*city*](city.html) *of David a Saviour, which is* [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) *the Lord. And this [shall be] a* [*sign*](signs.html) *unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the* [*angel*](angels.html) *a multitude of the heavenly host praising G-d, and saying, Glory to G-d in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

**CALEB:**

Bethlehem-Judah, the [city](city.html) of King David was founded by Salma:

***1 Divrei HaYamim (Chronicles) 2:50-51*** *These were the sons of Caleb the son of Hur, the firstborn of Ephratah; Shobal the father of Kirjath-jearim, Salma the father of Beth-lehem, Hareph the father of Beth-gader.*

Salma was a direct descendant of the spy “from the [tribe](tribes.html) of Judah called “Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite.”:

***Joshua 14:6*** *Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *said unto Moses the man of G-d concerning me and thee in* [*Kadesh*](stages.html)*-barnea.*

The Kenizzites were descendants of Kenaz, son of Eliphaz, the son of [Esau](edom.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 36:10-11*** *These [are] the names of* [*Esau*](edom.html)*’s sons; Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of* [*Esau*](edom.html)*, Reuel the son of Bashemath the wife of* [*Esau*](edom.html)*. And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz.*

Caleb was also a member of the [tribe](tribes.html) of Judah because he was of the progeny of Pharez [one](one.html) of the twins born from the [union of Judah, the son of Jacob, with Tamar](israelja.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 46:12*** *And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zarah: but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul.*

***1 Divrei HaYamim (Chronicles) 2:18-20*** *And Caleb the son of Hezron begat [children] of Azubah [his] wife, and of Jerioth: her sons [are] these; Jesher, and Shobab, and Ardon. And when Azubah was dead, Caleb took unto him Ephrath (Miriam sister of Moshe), which bare him Hur. And Hur begat Uri, and Uri begat Bezaleel.*

In Salma, therefore, the founder of Bethlehem and descendant of Caleb, the bloodlines of [Jacob](israelja.html) and [Esau](edom.html) were united. There is also ancient rabbinic tradition that traces the genealogy of Beit Lechem’s King David from the [marriage](mashal.html) of Miriam, the sister of Moses, to the same Caleb who was the forefather of Salma, founder of Bethlehem:

[***Midrash Rabbah***](orallaw.html) ***-*** [***Exodus***](exodus.html) ***I:17*** *AND IT CAME TO PASS, BECAUSE THE MIDWIVES FEARED GOD, THAT HE BUILT THEM HOUSES (I, 21). Rab and Levi discussed this.* [*One*](one.html) *says: It means that they established priestly and levitical families; and the other, that they were founders of a royal family.* [*Priestly*](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Cpriests.html) *and levitical families-from Moses and Aaron; a royal family from Miriam, because David descended from Miriam, as it is written: And Caleb the son of Hezron begot Azubah his wife-and of Jerioth-and these were her sons: Jasher, and Shobab and Ardon (I Chron. II, 18). ‘Azubah’ is Miriam; and why was she so called? Because all had forsaken her. He begot’? But she was his wife! This is to* [*teach*](teacher.html) *you, said R. Johanan, that if* [*one*](one.html) *marries a woman for the sake of* [*heaven*](heaven.html)*, he is regarded as if he had given* [*birth*](birth.html) *to her. ‘Jerioth’-because her* [*face*](body.html) *was like the curtains of (yeri’oth) the* [*tabernacle*](mikdash.html)*. And these are her sons’-do not pronounce it banehah (her sons) but bonehah (her builders). ‘Jasher’ is Caleb, because he rectified (yashir) his ways. Shobab,’ because he disciplined (shibbeb) himself. ‘Ardon,’ because he chastised (ridah) his soul. ‘And Azubah died’-to* [*teach*](teacher.html) *us that she was ill and was treated as if already dead, Caleb too forsaking her. ‘And Caleb took unto him Ephrath,’ this is Miriam. And why was she called Ephrath? Because Israel were fruitful (paru) and increased, thanks to her. What is meant by ‘and he took unto him’? When she was healed, he treated her as though he were now* [*marrying*](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Cwedding.html) *her, placing her in the litter, on account of his great joy in her. Similarly, you will find in another place that Miriam is called by* [*two*](two.html) *names on account of the incident that happened to her. Thus it says: And Ashur the father of Tekoa had* [*two*](two.html) *wives, Nelah and Naarah (ib. IV, 5). ‘Ashur’ is Ca*

Thus, in Bethlehem’s prominent son: King David, ran the bloodlines of [Jacob](israelja.html) [Judah-Caleb], [Esau](edom.html) [Kenizzites-Jephunneh], Moabites [[Ruth](ruth.html)-Boaz], and the priestly Levites [Miriam-Caleb]. According to this [Jewish tradition](gen-jew.html), being a descendant of Miriam (Aaron and Moses’ sister), King David and his descendants would have both royal and priestly [blood](body.html) in their veins. Indeed, it is written in the Holy Scriptures that “David’s sons were [priests](priests.html)“:

***2 Shmuel (Samuel) 8:18*** *And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada [was over] both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David’s sons were* [*priests*](priests.html) *(Heb.* [*Kohanim*](priests.html)*).*

And did not King Solomon, David’s son, bless the people, consecrate the middle court of the [Temple](temple.html), and also offer sacrifices himself at the inauguration?

***I Melachim (Kings) 8:53-54*** *And Solomon offered a* [*sacrifice*](korbanot.html) *of peace offerings, which he offered unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*,* [*two*](two.html) *and* [*twenty*](twenty.html) *thousand oxen, and an hundred and* [*twenty*](twenty.html) *thousand sheep. So the king and all the* [*children of Israel*](file:///D%3A%5CBackup%20data%5CWord%5CShavuot%5CRuth%20Portions%5Cgen-jew.html) *dedicated the house of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*. The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that [was] before the house of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*: for there he offered* [*burnt offerings*](offering.html)*, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings: because the brasen altar that [was] before* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *[was] too little to receive the* [*burnt offering*](korbanot.html)*s, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.*

Caleb, the spy and forefather of Salma the founder of Bethlehem was also the ancestor of King David of Bethlehem. The Tanakh and [Jewish](gen-jew.html) tradition hold Caleb in great esteem as [one](one.html) who “wholly followed the Lord,”:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 32:12***[*Save*](salvation.html) *Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

**MIGDAL-EDAR (‘Fold Tower’):**

Migdal-eder: “tower of the flock”, a shepherd’s watchtower near Bethlehem. A place [two](two.html) miles south of [Jerusalem](city.html), near the Beit Lechem road.

We mentioned earlier that Reuben lost his birthright when he [lay with](marriageact.html) his father’s concubine Bilhah at the southern border of Beit Lechem by the tower of Edar:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 35:21-22*** *And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of the flock. And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and* [*lay with*](marriageact.html) *Bilhah his father’s concubine: and Israel heard [it].*

The Targum [Jerusalem](city.html) on Genesis 35:21 states: “And [Jacob](israelja.html) proceeded and spread his tent beyond Migdal-Eder, the place where it is to be that King [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will be revealed at the [end of days](lastdays.html)”.

From this we can understand the Messianic fulfillment of the prophet’s words:

***Micah 4:8*** *And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the* [*first*](one.html) *dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*.*

The Targum translates the “tower of the flock” as being “The Anointed [One](one.html) of the flock of Israel”.

Thus was it fulfilled, by [the birth](thebirth.html) of [His Majesty](yeshua.html) King [Yeshua](yeshua.html), Who was born at Migdal-eder:

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 2:8*** *And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the* [*field*](field.html)*, keeping watch over their flock by night.*

***Kiddushin 55a*** *We learnt elsewhere: If an animal is found between* [*Jerusalem*](city.html) *and Migdal Eder or an equal distance [from the* [*city*](city.html)*] in any direction: the males are burnt-offerings; the females are peace-offerings.*

There’s a story in the [Talmud](orallaw.html), Masechet Derech Eretz (Chapter 4), which relates that once Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar was [coming](coming.html) from Migdal Eder, from his [teacher’s](teacher.html) house, and he was riding leisurely on his horse by the seaside. A certain man chanced to meet him, and the man was exceedingly ugly. Rabbi Shimon said to him, “Raka (simpleton), how ugly are the children of [Abraham](avraham.html) our father.” The other man replied, “What can I do for you? [Speak](mashal.html) to the Craftsman Who made me.” Rabbi Shimon immediately dismounted from his horse and bowed before the man and said, “I apologize to you, [forgive](forgive.html) me.” He replied to him, “I will not [forgive](forgive.html) you until you go to the Craftsman Who made me and say, “How ugly is the vessel which You have made.”

Rabbi Shimon walked behind him for [three](three.html) miles. When the people in town heard of the arrival of Rabbi Shimon, they came out to meet him and greeted him with the words, “Peace be unto you, rabbi.” The other man said to them, “Who are you calling rabbi?” They answered, “The man who is [walking](walking.html) behind you.” Thereupon he exclaimed, “If this man is a rabbi, may there not be any more like him in Israel!” He told the people the whole story, and they begged him to [forgive](forgive.html) the rabbi, and he agreed, only on the condition that he never act in this manner again.

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Much of this [study](study.html) was derived from an excellent set of articles at: <http://www.eliyyahu.com/>

The author was unnamed.

\* \* \*

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1. Bereshit (Genesis) 1:11 / 2:16-17 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)