

How can Jesus be the Son of David?

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Some say that the Virgin Birth means Yeshua cannot be the Messiah. You see, one of the necessary credentials of the true Messiah of Israel is that He be from the line of King David (Isaiah 7:13-14; 9:6/7; Jeremiah 23:5-6). Since Yeshua did not have an earthly father, and it would be this lineage that goes back to David, it is thought that Yeshua could not be of the line of David. In other words, if He was born of a virgin, doesn't this disqualify him from being "the son of

David"?

A Tale of Two Lineages: Yet in fact, Yeshua's Davidic line goes not only through his stepfather, Joseph, but also through His mother Miriam. Though not immediately apparent, Luke's account traces Miriam's genealogical line back to King David: Now Yeshua Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi . . . the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel . . . the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse (Luke 3:23-31).

Scholarship has uncovered interesting things about this genealogy. Descent through the father's side was vital in the first century. The Talmud makes it clear that "only the father's family is called family; the mother's family is not called family" (Yevamot 54b). So when Luke gives Miriam's lineage, he follows the officially authorized and expected route by attaching it to his step-dad, Joseph.

On the Greek phrase "as was supposed," Risto Santala writes, "The Greek phrase corresponds to the Hebrew expression *ke-hozqâ* or *kemô huhzaq*, which mean that the matter had been legally confirmed. Thus, before the law, it was right to connect Yeshua through Joseph to his father-in-law" - that is, Miriam's father - "Heli," or Eli. (The Messiah in the New Testament in the Light of Rabbinical Writings, tr. William Kinnaird, Jerusalem: Keren Ahvah Meshihit).

On the other hand, Matthew records that genealogical line of Joseph himself goes back to King David: . . . David the king begot Solomon . . . Josiah became the father of Jeconiah . . . Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud . . . Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Miriam, of who was born Yeshua who is called Messiah (Matthew 1:6-16, selections).

Reading "begot" in the most natural way - that is, taking it to refer to biological descent - indicates that Matthew records Joseph's genealogy. Thus we have two distinct lineages presented in the two Good News accounts. Joseph came through David's most famous son, Solomon; and Miriam through Nathan, another son of David.

Hence, the two accounts tell us that Joseph and Miriam are both from the lineage of King David. But there is more to the story, since the Tanakh gives some relevant clues as to why Yeshua's unique lineage matters.

Curse of Jeconiah? According to the prophet Jeremiah, Jeconiah (a descendant of King David), had come under a curse and made David's seed through Jeconiah invalid to serve as King: Thus says the Lord, "Write this man down childless, a man who will not prosper in his days; for no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah" (Jeremiah 22:30).

Since Joseph was from that line, no physical son of Joseph could inherit the throne of David. Miriam's line, though, was untainted, thus her son could legitimately lay claim to the Davidic throne.

However, as a stepfather, Joseph was Yeshua's legal guardian. Thus Joseph provides a legal tie to the line of David for Yeshua. Thus, Joseph's genealogy is relevant for Matthew's record. It shows that Yeshua had no father or guardian from outside the line of David that would give Him a non-Davidic lineage.

On the other hand, even if only His mother was in the line of David, it would still be sufficient for Yeshua to be of Davidic lineage. Some traditional Rabbis might protest that the mother's side cannot give genealogical credentials, and it is true that the biblical records are patrilineal. However, in the Scriptures there are clear exceptions regarding the right of a female to pass along the family heritage (Numbers 27:1-7).

So, whether viewed from the stepfather's legal side, or from the mother's biological side, Yeshua is "the son of David," and the authorized Messiah of Israel. In fact, since the Messiah was prophesied to be "virgin-born" (Isaiah 7:13-14), this is the very way the lineage would have had to have been worked out. The fact that the true Messiah not only had to be a son of David, but virgin-born as well, narrows down the field quite a bit. Other than Yeshua, what legitimate claimants are there for the position?

David's Son, David's Lord: Paradoxically, Messiah the son of David was also to be the Son of God--in fact, Messiah was actually to be the Mighty God (Isa. 9:5/6, in Hebrew, El Gibbor). The son of David was not only to reign from David's throne over all Israel, but to have ultimate authority over all of the peoples of the world (Isaiah 2:1-4; 11:10; 49:6). Again, Yeshua is the only claimant with the proper credentials.

In Psalm 2:12 David wrote, "Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, for his wrath will soon be kindled. Blessed are all they that take refuge in him." "Kiss the Son" means to give homage to the Son, as symbolized in kissing the ring of the King. Yeshua is

therefore the only One who has authentic authority over each of our lives. Yeshua is the one, true Son of God to whom we are to give due homage. Yeshua is the one and only Son of David who can give true security to our people for today, and for eternity, even as was prophesied in Jeremiah 23:5-6: "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "that I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is His name by which He will be called: 'The Lord our Righteousness'."

Hope for the Future: One day Israel as a people will enjoy this security when we as a nation return to the son of David, Messiah Yeshua the Lord, even as prophesied in Hosea 3:5: "Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days."

Today as individuals, each of us can return to our true Lord and King, Yeshua, and be saved, dwell securely and receive His goodness. Let us "give homage to the Son" by yielding to His authority through obedience to His Word. As we acknowledge our sins and depend on His atonement, trusting in His sacrifice, we can rest knowing He is The Lord our Righteousness.