

Notes

“GOD WITH US” IN ‘ISA EL MASIH’S BIRTH

One cold day a man was walking down the street and saw a flock of hungry sparrows feasting on some grain spilled on the street. As the man took a step towards the birds they became uneasy, pausing from their eating to look around. Upon taking another step, they became increasingly nervous. When he had almost reached them, the whole flock of birds suddenly flew away. The man then reflected for a few moments on what had happened. What had made the birds scatter in flight? He had not meant to harm them. He then realized that he was too big for them. So he wondered, How can I walk among those birds without frightening them by my size? If I could only become a sparrow and fly down among them, they would receive me and know me.

The spiritual analogy may be seen in God's identification with his creatures—man. In the *Taurat* we see that God appeared to Ibrahim through angelic messengers and to Musa through the burning bush. Those to whom God spoke were afraid and could only receive a limited revelation from him. But centuries later the angel of the Lord announced the birth of the Savior of the world, who is El-Masih the Lord (Luke 2:11).⁶ He lived and walked among us.

In the Gospel According to Matthew we have one of the accounts of ‘Isa El-Masih’s birth. Another account is found in the Gospel According to Luke. Let’s look at Matthew’s account.

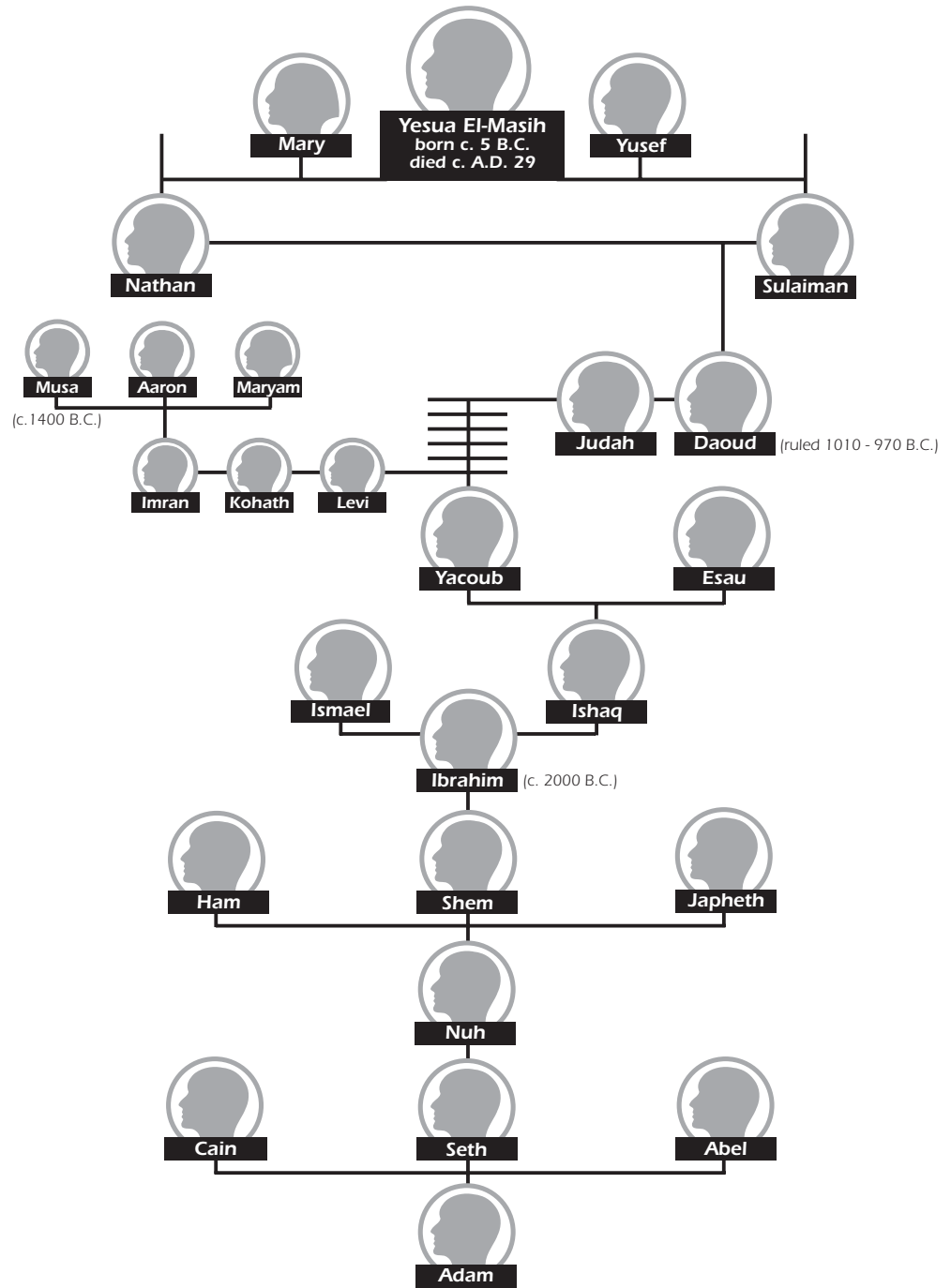
18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

19 Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid

Notes

THE GENEALOGY OF YESUA EL-MASIH ⁷



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Often Muslims wonder why Christians call Yesua the “Son” of God. This does not mean that they believe in more than one god. As we already saw, the Bible and Yesua affirm many times that there is only one God. Polytheism and idolatry are condemned while the unity of God is affirmed. However, within that unity there are distinct persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each person of the one God has distinct roles. Yesua the Son is not a second god, for there is only one eternal Being. Nor did God have a child as a man would. God forbid such a blasphemous thought! Yesua was not conceived in the normal way, but by means of a miracle by God the Holy Spirit. Only in this way could he have a divine nature that was holy, without sin. Nor was he created from dust as was Adam (Surah 3:59), except as to his human nature in having flesh like us. He was not called to “Be” by God, but has always been from eternity. The name “Son of God” means that Yesua El-Masih is the visible expression of the invisible God.⁸ When Yesua is called a “Son” it is speaking of a relationship between God the Father and Yesua. This relationship is not physical, as in a descendant. In the Qur’an itself we see the term *ibn essabil*, which literally means “son of the path.” There we also find *ibn esshaitan*, “son of Satan.” These figurative expressions do not imply physical reproduction, but describe character and relationship.⁹ Likewise, Yesua as the Son of God signifies the close relationship between God the Father and Son. The special close relationship is described in these sayings of Yesua El Masih.

“My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.” For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.” (John 5:17-18)

“I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does.” (John 5:19-20a)

“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the

17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.

(Matthew 16:13-17)

Notes:

Verse 13: "Son of Man" – Yesua's favorite self-designation. This title demonstrated both Yesua's humanity and his divinity. It illustrated his divinity because this is the title used in the prophecy of Daniel 7:14 of one who comes with all authority and sovereign power whom people from all nations worship. His kingdom is eternal.

Verse 14: "Yahya the Baptist" – he was the forerunner of Yesua (Matthew 11:10), preparing the way for his coming by calling people to repentance and faith.

"Elijah" (Elias) – it had been prophesied that this prophet, who did many miracles, would return (Malachi 4:5-6). Jesus taught that John the Baptist was the fulfillment of that prophecy (Matthew 11:14).

Q: How does Peter further define what he means by Yesua being El-Masih (verse 16)?

Q: After being with Yesua for about three years, how was it revealed to Simon Peter to understand who Yesua is (verse 17)?

YESUA'S SELF IDENTITY

Yesua clarified his identity with those who did not believe in him by referring them to the *Zabur*.

41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

42 "What do you think about Christ? Whose son is he?"

"The son of David," they replied.

43 He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says,

44 "The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand

until I put your enemies

Notes

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

Study Four

Notes

under your feet." '

45 If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" 46 No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions. (Matthew 22:41-46)

Notes:

Verse 41: "Pharisees" – a devout group of Jewish religious leaders who strongly opposed Yesua.

Verse 42: "the son of Daoud" – it was commonly known that El-Masih was to be a descendant of King Daoud, in fulfillment of prophecy (Jeremiah 23:5-6; Ezekiel 34:23-24). Do you remember seeing that in the genealogy of Yesua?

Verse 43: "speaking by the Spirit" – the prophet Daoud was inspired by the Holy Spirit of God in the words he wrote down, which have become part of the *Zabur*, the Word of God.

Verse 44: By quoting Psalm 110:1, Yesua was showing that the common view of El-Masih was too limited. He was more than Daoud's descendant, but his sovereign superior.

"my Lord" – Daoud's Lord is El-Masih, who pre-existed before his human birth.

"right hand" – God the Father was saying to God the Son to take the place of honor.

Verses 45-46: Unless the Jews were willing to admit that El-Masih was the divine Lord, they had nothing they could say.

Q: What two natures of El-Masih are illustrated through this passage (verse 45)?

Q: Whose son is El-Masih?

One day when Yesua was walking in the temple courts the religious leaders of Israel came to challenge him. Notice how he clearly tells them who he is.

1 He then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. 2 At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 4 Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. 5 He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

■ **Study Four**

Notes

Q: What is unique about the "one left to send" from the other servants sent (verse 6)?

Q: What does this tell you about what Yesua thought of himself?

Q: What is meant by "He sent him last of all" (verse 6)? Should we expect another prophet after him?

Q: What would the son be heir to?

Q: What did Yesua predict would happen to himself (verse 8)?

Q: How does Yesua see his ultimate triumph (verses 10-11)?

After Yesua was arrested he was first put on trial before the Jewish ruling council of 70 men called the Sanhedrin.

55 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any.

... 61 Again the high priest asked him, "Are you Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"

62 "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

63 The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. 64 "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

They all condemned him as worthy of death.

(Mark 14:55, 61b-64)

Notes:

Verse 61: "Son of the Blessed One" – Blessed One is a substitute used by Jews for God in order to avoid saying God's name in vain.

In this context the high priest is referring to royal messiahship, understood as a man. But the phrase means Son of God.

Verse 62: "I am" – this is the divine name of Yahweh revealed to Musa at the burning bush (Ex 3:14) and the name Yesua used to

