

in Jerusalem. "To plant" carries the idea of planting a tree, which can live for centuries. It was the Turkish 'tree' which was uprooted in 1917, having been planted there hundreds of years before.

Raymond Hughes  
Dudley

## The genealogies of Jesus

May I comment on the well-researched and very interesting article by Brother Ed Form of the above title ([Apr. 2005, p. 129](#))?

Matthew begins with the words: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David". Luke writes: "Jesus . . . being (as was supposed [*nomizō*]) the son of Joseph . . ." (3:23). Young's Concordance gives the meaning of the word *nomizō* as 'to reckon as law'. Some of the contexts

in which this word occurs seem not to warrant this precise definition, but would we be justified as reading Luke 3:23 as evidence that Joseph, when registering the birth of Jesus, named him as his own son? And if he did, it follows that Jesus, like Joseph, would be legally of the house and lineage of David. And if Joseph was the last in the line of David, then Jesus would lawfully be heir to the throne.

One thing is certain. If the Most High, Who rules in the kingdom of men, had not moved Caesar Augustus to make that decree when he did, Jesus would have been born in Nazareth and not, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Micah 5:2, in Bethlehem, the city of David. Nathanael asked, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (Jno. 1:46). It certainly came out of Bethlehem Ephratah.

Don Harrison  
Thornton Heath

# Lessons from the life of Elijah

## 12. "Come near unto me" (1 Kgs. 18:29-35)

Stephen Whitehouse

*The prophets of Baal having failed to bring fire from heaven, it is now time for Elijah to call on God to do so. He prepares by taking actions designed to remind the people of God's desire that all twelve tribes of Israel should be united in worshipping Him.*

**F**OR SIX LONG HOURS on Carmel, without intermission, the prophets of Baal had sought their god. But their cries met with no response; no tongue of fire descended to lick up the flesh of the offering. All was quiet except for the sounds of anguish emanating from the self-injured prophets of Baal.

### "When midday was past"

Elijah was tolerant, and patiently observed the foolish efforts of the prophets of Baal until "midday was past" (1 Kgs. 18:29). Quietly he had surveyed all before him with indignation and disdain. Yet, at the same time, how his heart must have been ready to break with compassion for his people!

The false prophets watched the sun rise to the apex of its climb and then saw it steadily decline on its parabolic path. Since Baal was viewed as

the sun god, once midday had past his powers began visibly to withdraw as the sun continued to dip in the western sky. All hopes of Baal's answer were declining with it. Yet they were so intent on calling down fire from heaven that they behaved against all natural reason and logic. They would not cease, for now "they prophesied [*naba'*]" (v. 29) aloud.

The word *naba'* can be understood as meaning 'to prophesy under the influence of a divine spirit' or 'as a false prophet'. They were not prophesying at all, merely babbling under the heavy influence of a false religious doctrine. The RSV captures their frantic behaviour quite beautifully: "they raved on". The picture is so vivid: as the sun gradually descended, their behaviour became increasingly hysterical.

This continued "until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice" (v. 29). The cutting, dancing and extensive bouts of moaning persisted till the appointed time when both the burnt and meal offerings were offered up by the priest (Num. 28:3-8; cf. Ex. 29:38) in the temple at Jerusalem. But why did Elijah wait till this moment? In symbol, he was attempting to unite the two kingdoms as one. As the high priest handled the burnt offering