

## Appendix 11: Joseph of Arimathea and the Line of Nathan

*The Davidic line of kings that ruled over the ancient nation of Judah came through David's son Solomon. At the time of Judah's fall to the Babylonians in 586 B.C., this lineage, as explained in this publication, was continued by a transferal of the monarchy to Ireland.*

The Solomonic monarchy was later moved to Scotland around A.D. 500 and, later still, transplanted into England when King James VI of Scotland became king of all Great Britain. Thus, the current British sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II, is a direct descendant of David through Solomon. But she may be descended from another son of David as well.

This possibility revolves around certain people who lived at the time of Jesus—chief of whom is a man referred to in the New Testament as Joseph of Arimathea, who is identified with Britain in medieval tradition. As we will see, it is a rather fascinating story.

### The immediate family of Jesus

King David had a number of children. Great honor, of course, went to Solomon, who was blessed with riches and the aforementioned dynasty. Yet the greatest honor actually went to David's son Nathan—for from him descended Jesus Christ. [Matthew 1](#) contains the genealogy of Jesus' adoptive father Joseph—son of Jacob (verse 16)—from Solomon. [Luke 3](#), which lists the genealogy from Nathan, might also seem to be the family record of Joseph—but he is here listed as being the "son of Heli" (verse 23). Actually, the literal Greek says only "Joseph of Heli"—not "son of Heli." Now the genitive "of" does imply "son of" throughout the remainder of the genealogy. But in this case, it is widely acknowledged to mean "son-in-law of"—making Heli the father of Joseph's wife Mary, who truly was the mother of Jesus.

Yet Jesus and Mary were not the only ones mentioned in the New Testament who shared this royal lineage from Nathan. Mary had other children besides Jesus. The people of Nazareth asked regarding Jesus: "Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?" ([Matthew 13:55-56](#)). Indeed, these brothers and sisters were also of the line of Solomon, being children Mary had with Joseph.

We also see mention of Jesus' "mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas" ([John 19:25](#)). Jesus' aunt here, also a daughter of Heli, of the line of Nathan, is widely acknowledged from scriptural context to be the "mother of James the Less and of Joses" ([Mark 15:40](#); see verse 47; [Matthew 27:56](#)). James the Less is understood to be one of two of the original 12 apostles named James—James the son of Alphaeus ("James," Paul Gardner, editor, *The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*, 1995, p. 294).

And there is yet another New Testament figure who appears to have been a close relative of Jesus—Joseph of Arimathea. The place name he's identified with occurs in the Old Testament as the home of the prophet Samuel, Ramathaim Zophim ([1 Samuel 1:1](#)). The Septuagint Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures renders the italicized word as Arimathaim. Also known by its shortened form Ramah, this village is apparently synonymous with modern Ramallah, a town about five miles north of Jerusalem.

Referred to as a "rich man" and "prominent council member," Joseph was a "good and just man" who "had not consented" to the kangaroo trial that condemned Jesus (see [Matthew 27:57-60](#); [Mark 15:42-46](#); [Luke 23:50-53](#)). After Christ's death, Joseph, "being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked [the Roman governor Pontius] Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission" ([John 19:38](#)). Then, after preparing it for burial, Joseph laid the body in a rock-hewn tomb in a garden (verses 39-42; and see previous references). The tomb was obviously owned by Joseph, as the Messiah was prophesied to be buried in a rich man's grave (see [Isaiah 53:9](#)).

Mark says that Joseph went boldly to Pilate to request the body of Jesus ([Mark 15:43](#))—and just in time. Barnes' Notes on the New Testament comments: "Unless there had been a special application to Pilate in behalf of Jesus, his body would have been buried that night in the common grave with the malefactors [with whom He'd been crucified], for it was a law of the Jews that the body of an executed man should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath [[John 19:31](#)]. At this critical juncture, God called forward this secret disciple . . ." (1970, note on [Mark 15:43](#)).

### **Evidence of Joseph's kinship**

But on what grounds did Joseph claim the body? Not on his being a disciple, for in the same context we read that he took pains to conceal this fact out of fear of the Jews. Yet how do we square this with the boldness of his request? Let us consider what exactly Joseph was afraid of. It could be that he was concerned the Jews would come after him as they had Jesus. Perhaps fear of reprisal had kept him from revealing that he was a disciple in the past—and his boldness now was in taking an action that revealed him for what he was.

However, there is another way to understand Joseph's specific fear in this instance and his action taken. We later discover that under no circumstances did the Jewish authorities want Jesus' body to fall into the hands of His disciples—out of worry that the disciples would dispense with it and concoct a resurrection fable ([Matthew 27:62-66](#)). Thus Joseph likely feared, in approaching Pilate, that if it became known he was a disciple, the Jewish authorities would pressure the governor into refusing Joseph's request for Christ's body.

Therefore it seems that Joseph must have approached Pilate on some other basis. Simple friendship with Jesus? No. Besides appearing as patronage and discipleship, there would have been another hurdle to jump.

"The Sanhedrin had declared Jesus a criminal. According to both Roman and Jewish law, unless the body of an executed criminal was immediately claimed by the next of kin, the body of the victim was cast into a common pit, where as with others, all physical record of them was completely obliterated. Certainly, the fanatical Sadducean element of the Sanhedrin who sought the total extinction of Jesus, even in death, would have allowed nothing short of a legal claim on the body of Christ" (E. Raymond Capt, Traditions of Glastonbury , 1983, p. 20). The Jewish authorities, who hated and despised Jesus, would surely have resisted his being given an honorable burial in a private tomb—unless there were irrefutable grounds in favor of Joseph receiving the body.

Therefore, we may infer from these verses that Joseph was a close relative of Jesus. This probably accounts for the boldness of Joseph's request—not bold in the sense of facing his fears but bold because it was an assertion of his rights to Christ's body. No other family members of Jesus are mentioned as coming forward. His legal father Joseph, last mentioned when Jesus was 12 years old ([Luke 2:44-52](#)), had evidently died long before—Jesus being referred to in Nazareth as "the carpenter, the son of Mary" ([Mark 6:3](#)).

Mary herself was in no state to deal with the matter—and this would not have been a woman's responsibility anyway. Jesus' brothers were probably in their 20s or teens, perhaps considered too young to assume responsibility over the family—and thus to take care of this unsavory business. Or they could have been away—or were perhaps simply afraid to be associated with Jesus at this time.

In, then, steps Joseph of Arimathea—again, evidently a close relative. By some traditions this wealthy relative had become an adoptive father of the family after the death of Mary's husband Joseph. More specifically, "Joseph of Arimathea is by Eastern [Orthodox] tradition said to have been the younger brother of the father of the Virgin Mary" (Richard W. Morgan, St. Paul in Britain , 1860, 1984, pp. 69-70 footnote)—thus making him Mary's uncle and Jesus' great uncle. Mary's father Heli was essentially a royal prince of the Davidic line of Nathan—and so would Heli's brother have been. So Joseph of Arimathea may well have been of royal blood. (Some claim an earlier tradition reckoned Joseph as the brother of Mary and thus Jesus' direct uncle—which would still have made him of the same family.)

### **The noble decurio**

Joseph was, as we've seen, described as a "prominent council member" ([Mark 15:43](#)). The original Greek here is *euschemon bouletes* . The Amplified Bible gives this as "noble and honorable in rank and a respected member of the council." The first Greek word here

can mean noble in character or, evidently, in birth: "The women who are incited against [the apostle] Paul in [Acts 13:50](#) are 'prominent [ euschemon ],' as are those in [Acts 17:12](#). They belong to a higher social stratum" ( Theological Dictionary of the New Testament , Logos Software).

Of the second word we are told regarding Joseph, "He is also called by St. Mark and by St. Luke a bouleutes , literally, 'a senator,' whereby is meant a member of the Sanhedrin or supreme council of the Jews" ("Joseph of Arimathea," The Catholic Encyclopaedia , 1910, Vol. 8, Online Edition, 1999, [www.newadvent.org/cathen](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen)). Yet because this is a "non-Jewish designation" for the council ( The Bible Knowledge Commentary , Logos Software, note on [Mark 15:52-53](#))—applied to advisors of gentile officials in [Acts 25:12](#)—some say Joseph's office was "in the [Roman] state, and that he was one of Pilate's privy council; [but] his post rather seems to have been . . . [as] one of the great Sanhedrim of the Jews" ( Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible, Logos Software, note on [Mark 15:42-47](#)). This we understand from Luke's comment that Joseph did not vote with them to condemn Christ ([Luke 23:50](#)).

Still, the Greek words euschemon bouletes could be properly read as "noble senator" in the Roman world of the first century—in fact, even in this case since the term senate could denote governing councils of subject nations such as the Sanhedrin: "senatus . . . the Roman senate . . . [but] used also of similar bodies in other nations" ("senatus," The Classic Latin Dictionary , 1941). However, when the Catholic "church father" Jerome produced, in the late 300s, the first version of the Vulgate, the earliest Latin translation of the Bible, he rendered the Greek words above as nobilis decurio .

In the word nobilis we can obviously see the English word "noble." But what of the Latin word decurio ? Besides being a military title, "decurio was applied to a member of the local council or senate of a colonia (a community established by Roman citizens and having full citizenship rights) or municipium (a corporation and community established by non-Romans but granted certain rights of citizenship). Qualifications were numerous, and the position was regarded as an honour. The decuriones had wide powers in local administration, finance and judiciary proceedings" ("Decurio," Encyclopaedia Britannica , Micropaedia, 1985, p. 953). Perhaps Jerome had access to more information about Joseph.

The apocryphal Gospel of Peter says Joseph was a friend of Pilate. Information in such sources is often inaccurate, but it is entirely possible that Pilate knew and respected him, which may have added to his readiness to hand over Jesus' body (of course, this alone would not have been enough to secure the body).

In any event, it seems that Joseph was a man of considerable means. Not just wealthy—but also quite influential. In medieval tradition, he is called Joseph de Marmore, which may bear on that. Some recognize marmore as the Greek and Latin word marmor

meaning "marble"—or perhaps quarried "stone" ( Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : "Greek Dictionary of the New Testament," 1890, 1981, No. 3139; "marmor," Classic Latin Dictionary ). Others see Marmore as a place name. There's La Marmore, the highest peak in Sardinia, the Sea of Marmore between the Aegean and Black Seas, and the Roman province of Libya in North Africa known as Marmarica—all of these evidently named after marble.

Yet there may be another possibility. Joseph seems to have been a wealthy nobleman of Judah with broad influence, certain rights of citizenship and perhaps even a high enough social standing to have regular personal interaction with the Roman governor. Indeed, by tradition he appears to have been a royal prince of the line of David—which would have given him even further status with the Jews. Is it possible, then, that Marmore was actually a title reflective of Joseph's status?

In Hebrew the words *mare morah* would mean "lord dread" or "dread lord" ( Strong's : "Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary," Nos. 4172, 4758)—that is, a lord to be properly feared and respected. Such a title has made its way into more recent times. Note how the Pilgrims referred to the British king in the Mayflower Compact of 1620: "We whose Names are under-written, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the grace of God . . ." Indeed, this has been a rather common way of addressing kings for millennia.

If Joseph bore such a title, it is conceivable that medieval authors, who would likely not have understood it, wrote it down as Marmore, thinking of it as a place he was identified with. Or perhaps they considered it to mean quarried stone, maybe drawing a connection between quarrying and a rather strong tradition surrounding Joseph—his involvement in tin mining in southern Britain.

### **Glastonbury traditions**

We should consider the traditions connecting Joseph with Britain. Regarding him the Encyclopaedia Britannica states: "according to all four Gospels, a secret disciple of Jesus, whose body he buried in his own tomb . . . Joseph is accorded a long history in later literature [much of it mythical] . . . In Robert de Boron's verse romance *Joseph d'Armathe* (c. 1200), he is entrusted with the Holy Grail (cup) of the Last Supper. A mid-13th-century interpolation [a textual alteration believed by scholars to have been made to a 12th-century work by the English historian William of Malmesbury] relates that Joseph went to Glastonbury (in Somerset, Eng[land]) . . . as head of 12 missionaries dispatched there by the Apostle St. Philip" ("*Joseph of Arimathea, Saint*," 1985, *Micropaedia*, Vol. 6, p. 621).

It is generally agreed that William's original did mention the mission sent by Philip and that Glastonbury's founding went back to the time of Christ. Glastonbury is identified by

many as the mysterious Isle of Avalon in the stories of King Arthur. Notice this regarding the remains of an old church there: "Glastonbury Abbey, a ruined abbey in Somersetshire, about 6 miles south of Wells, England. Tradition has it that it was here that Joseph of Arimathea established the first Christian Church in England" ( Collier's Encyclopedia , 1959, Vol. 9, p. 120).

The Encyclopaedia Britannica , 11th Edition, states: "According to the legends . . . the first church of Glastonbury was a little wattled [or thatched] building erected by Joseph of Arimathea as the leader of the twelve apostles [that is, the 12 "missionaries" mentioned earlier] sent over to Britain from Gaul by St. Philip" ("Glastonbury," Vol. 12, on-line at [81.1911encyclopedia.org/G/GL/GLASTONBURY.htm](http://81.1911encyclopedia.org/G/GL/GLASTONBURY.htm)).

An old saying from the English countryside, believed to be a refrain of an ancient miners' song, maintains that "Joseph was a tin man." Indeed, as mentioned, this is understood to mean that he was involved in tin mining and, more importantly, the tin trade with the Mediterranean. Many believe that he actually came often to Britain during the life of Jesus, perhaps even before—and that after Christ's death and resurrection Joseph came again, this time as an evangelist.

This whole story sounds fabulous, to be sure. Yet was it a complete invention of the late Middle Ages—or was it a tradition that went further back? And could there be some actual truth in it?

To answer the first part, there appears to have been a reference to Joseph being at Glastonbury from a certain Melkin, identified as Maelgwyn of Llandaff (ca. 480-550), ruler of Gwynedd in North Wales who was educated at the same school the well-known early British historian Gildas was: "John of Glaston, their [i.e., Glastonbury Abbey's] last historian, writing at the beginning of the fifteenth century . . . quotes in support of the actual burial of Joseph in the cemetery [there] . . . an ancient British historian, named Melkin, who lived before Merlin [the historical Welsh bard Myrddin], and wrote concerning the mission of St. Philip's disciples; that they died in succession, and were buried in the cemetery: 'Amongst them Joseph of Marmore, named of Arimathea, receives perpetual sleep. And he lies in linea bifurcata near the south corner of the oratory, which is built of hurdles [wattle].'

"It is worth remarking here that when [Henry VIII's royal antiquarian John] Leland visited Glastonbury, about 1540, Abbot Whiting admitted him to the library of the monastery, in which he found a fragment of Melkin's history, *Historiolam de rebus Britannicis* : an author, as he tells us, entirely unknown to him. He read this fragment with great interest and pleasure, and found in it the very narrative quoted above. Doubtless the manuscript was the identical one employed by John of Glaston, whose chronicle was unknown to Leland. Melkin was placed by Leland in his catalogue of British writers, and figures accordingly in the works of his copyists" (Robert Willis, *The*

Architectural History of Glastonbury Abbey , 1866, chap. 2, on-line at [vrcoll.fa.pitt.edu/medart/image/England/glastonbury/mainglastonbury.html](http://vrcoll.fa.pitt.edu/medart/image/England/glastonbury/mainglastonbury.html)). If legitimate, this puts the first known historical mention of Joseph at Glastonbury 700 years before the mention generally accepted as first by modern scholarship.

### **Tin mines of southern England**

What, then, of any truth in the stories? As elsewhere pointed out in this publication, the tin trade with Britain had been going on since the days of the Phoenicians ("Industries, Extraction and Processing," Encyclopaedia Britannica , 1985, Macropaedia, Vol. 21, p. 424). In the ancient Mediterranean world, the British Isles were referred to as the Cassiterides, the "Tin Islands"—the primary source, along with Spain, of Mediterranean tin. This was still the case in Roman days. "The Cornish tin mines [of Cornwall in southwest England] were famous by the time the Romans conquered Great Britain in the 1st century AD" (p. 424).

Other metals were mined in Britain as well. "Specimens of Roman-British lead (from the Mendip mines [near Glastonbury]) have been found in various parts of the Roman Empire. About 1950 an ancient Roman drain-pipe, bonded with lead, was found at Ostia, the sea-port of Rome. Analysis showed the lead had been mined in the Mendips" (Capt, p. 35).

Furthermore, there is evidence that Jews were involved with some of these mines, as explained by Dr. Bernard Susser, a Jewish rabbi, in his 1993 book *The Jews of Southwest England* , originally written as his 1977 Ph.D. thesis at the University of Exeter in England. It is available on-line at [www.eclipse.co.uk/exeshul/susser/thesis](http://www.eclipse.co.uk/exeshul/susser/thesis) . In it he states: "Jewish settlement in Devon and Cornwall, the two most South-Westerly counties of Great Britain, began in the remote mists of Biblical and Roman times . . .

"The presence of smelting ovens in Cornwall and Devon which are called 'Jews' Houses' or 'Jew's Houses' ( White's Devonshire Directory (1850) . . . p. 41 . . . ) may point to early Jewish participation in the mining industry . . . This type of oven was in use from the second century B.C. until about 1350 A.D. and was called by eighteenth century tanners 'a Jew's House' (A.K. Hamilton-Jenkin, *The Cornish Miner* (1962), p. 68f . . . ). The tin from a Jew's House was known as 'Jew's House tin' (W.C. Borlase, *Antiquities of Cornwall* (1769), p. 163. See also T. Hogg, *Manual of Mineralogy* (1828), p. 74, and *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall* , IV (1871), 227) . . .

"Jews may have had at least one well established trading centre in Cornwall in the pre-Roman period, as the town Marazion (this name is itself suggestive of Hebraic origin, meaning either 'sight of Zion' or 'bitterness of Zion') was anciently known as Market-Jew, and the main street of Penzance which leads to it is even today called Market-Jew Street. Nor is this the only town in Cornwall whose name is said to be Hebraic in its origin.

There is also the village of Menheniot, which name, a correspondent to the Jewish Chronicle suggested, is derived from the two Hebrew words, min oniyot , which mean 'from ships' (JC [ Jewish Chronicle ], 1 June 1860) . . . It is worth noting that much of the evidence which points to Jewish settlement or influence in Britain during the pre-Roman period, relates in the main to Devon and Cornwall" (preface and chap. 1).

## **Jews in Roman Britain**

The Roman period began when Julius Caesar invaded in 55 B.C., defeating native forces the following year—although Britain wasn't truly "Romanized" for some time. "The inhabitants, referred to collectively as Britons, maintained political freedom and paid tribute to Rome for almost a century before the Roman emperor Claudius I initiated the systematic conquest of Britain in AD 43. By 47, Roman legions had occupied all the island south of the Humber River and east of the Severn River. The tribes, notably the Silures [whom we'll see further mention of shortly], inhabitants of what are now the Wales and Yorkshire regions, resisted stubbornly for more than 30 years, a period that was marked by the abortive and bloody rebellion in 61 led by the native queen Boudicca. At this time Britain became an imperial province of Rome, called Britannia, administered by Roman governors. About 79, Roman legions subdued the tribes in Wales and established partial control over those in Yorkshire" ("Britain, Ancient," Microsoft Encarta 2001 ).

Dr. Susser discusses this period: "Were there Jews in Roman Britain? This question has been considered by Dr. [S.] Applebaum [in his article "Were There Jews in Roman Britain?" ( Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England , XVII, 1950 p. 205), even the possibility] . . . that there were some Jewish traders who were connected with the import of pottery, glass and oriental [i.e., Eastern Mediterranean] wares. They may even have formed small communities at Colchester, York, Corbridge and London . . .

"The archaeological evidence relates to finds of coins and pottery. According to Dr. Applebaum, Near Eastern coins of the Roman period found in Dorset and Devon show an early connection between those areas. A close analysis of these coins indicates that Exeter was one of the first ports of call for sea-traffic coming from the Mediterranean up the Channel. Analysis of the coins also shows that they mainly originate from Antioch, Chalcis, Cyrrhus, Hierapolis, Edessa, Samosata, Zengma and Singara, all of them towns with a high percentage of Jews in their population (Applebaum, "Roman Britain," p. 190). The particularly strong link between Exeter and the Near East makes it likely that there were some early Jewish associations with that city" (chap. 1).

Dr. Susser further says: "A persistent legend also refers to the presence of at least one Jew in England at the beginning of the Christian era. He was Joseph of Arimathaea, a wealthy Essene Jew who, it is said, out of sympathy with Jesus gave him burial in a rock tomb near Jerusalem . . . ( Jewish Encyclopaedia (New York, 1901) . . . ). A variant of the



legend makes Joseph travel through Cornwall accompanied by Jesus . . . This legend may be the folk memory of some ancient time when one or more notable Jews visited England" (chap. 1).

Thus, we return once again to Joseph of Arimathea. Perhaps, besides being a Davidic lord and a noble council member, he was also a merchant prince—made rich through the trade of metal from Britain and, in turn, pottery and glass from the Middle East. Among his distinctions, this one would have given him the greatest standing with the Romans and may well have put him in regular contact with Pontius Pilate.

Furthermore, if all of this is true, it provides a good reason for Joseph's being in Britain after the death and resurrection of Christ. He could have been continuing in his former trade, all the while spreading word of what had happened in Judea. Or perhaps he was strictly an evangelist at this time—yet went to this place familiar to him, where he had important contacts.

### **Apostolic journeys**

And there are other good reasons why Joseph and even others of Christ's original followers may have gone to Britain. When Jesus first commissioned His apostles, He told them: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel " ([Matthew 10:5-6](#); compare 15:24). Now this likely applied in part to the spiritually lost Jews in the Holy Land. But it would seem to primarily identify the 10 "lost tribes" of Israel. Of course, Jesus later told His apostles to take His message to all nations ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)), and salvation was opened to the gentiles ([Acts 10](#)—11). But still the gospel message was to be "for the Jew [Israelite] first and also for the Greek [gentile]" ([Romans 1:16](#)). All of this seems to indicate that the primary target for evangelism was to be the Israelites. Even Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, was also commissioned to preach to "the children of Israel" ([Acts 9:15](#)).

In any case, to the people of Christ's day, "all nations" would certainly have applied to the breadth of the Roman Empire and beyond. And the lost tribes of Israel were at that time located along the entire length of the northern border of the Empire, stretching from Parthia and Scythia in the east all the way to Spain, France and Britain in the west.

In the early 300s, the renowned church historian Eusebius wrote in his well-known History of the Church : "The holy apostles and disciples of our Saviour were scattered over the whole world. Thomas, tradition tells us, was chosen for Parthia, Andrew for Scythia, John for Asia [Minor], where he remained till his death at Ephesus. Peter seems to have preached in Pontus, Galatia and Bithynia, Cappadocia and Asia [Minor], to the Jews [or, rather, Israelites] of the Dispersion" (Book 3, chap. 1). Paul specifically mentioned his intention to go to Spain ([Romans 15:24, 28](#)). Might he have gone?

In another of his works Eusebius wrote, "The apostles passed beyond the ocean to the isles called the Britannic Isles" ( *Demonstratio Evangelica* or *Proof of the Gospel* , book 3, chap. 7). He didn't mention which apostles, but is it so fantastical to imagine that some did? After all, going from Judea to Britain was nothing more than traversing the Empire. Consider that myriads of people moved from the eastern United States to the western territories in pioneer days by wagon. And travel was accomplished by stagecoach. Yet travel from the Holy Land to Britain would have been far easier and faster—because the distance could be covered over water by sailing ship and over land by Roman roads, which were well maintained.

The earliest generally acknowledged historian of Britain, Gildas the Wise, already mentioned, writing around 550, stated, "We certainly know that Christ, the true Son, afforded His light, the knowledge of His precepts, to our Island in the last year of Tiberius Caesar" ( *De Excidio Britanniae* or *On the Ruin of Britain* ). Tiberius died in March of A.D. 37. So Gildas says that within six years of Jesus' death and resurrection, the gospel was already planted in Britain. This was well before the apostles dispersed throughout the known world and established congregations outside the Holy Land. But it does correspond to the terrible persecution brought on the church by Paul prior to his conversion around A.D. 35.

But was Joseph of Arimathea among those who arrived? In four Catholic councils of the early 1400s, it was determined that France and Spain had to yield in points of antiquity and precedence to Britain, as its church was founded by Joseph of Arimathea immediately after the death and resurrection of Christ.

### **Legends in perspective**

Catholic Cardinal Cesare Baronius, who was appointed curator of the Vatican Library in 1597, mentions Joseph in an interesting context. In his monumental *Annales Ecclesiastici* (Annals of the Church) , under the year A.D. 35, he describes a sea voyage in a boat "without oars" by the disciples Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, Martha, their servant Marcella and another disciple name Maximinus—who eventually put ashore at Marseilles in southern France (Vol. 1, year 35, sec. 5). For this information Baronius footnotes "Acts of Magdalen and associated works."

Indeed, as David Mycoff states in his introduction to *The Life of Saint Mary Magdalene and of Her Sister Martha: A Medieval Biography* (1989), this basic story was evidently contained in a number of documents going back to at least the ninth century (pp. 5-6)—many of which have Lazarus and Mary Magdalene then spreading the gospel in southern France.

These and other traditions came together to form the document he translates in his above book—attributed in a manuscript from around 1408 to the ninth-century abbot Rabanus

Maurus (p. 7), but believed by scholars, including Mycoff, to date from the late 12th century (p. 10). This document lists the passengers of the boat as "Maximinus the archbishop, along with the glorious friend of God, Mary Magdalene, her sister the blessed Martha, and the blessed archdeacon Parmenas, and the bishops Trophimus and Eutropius, together with the rest of the leaders of the army of Christ" (chap. 37, lines 2141-2145).

Baronius goes a step further. Citing in a footnote what he refers to as a "historical English manuscript that is held in the Vatican library," he says that this party separated, some then accompanying "Joseph of Arimathea the noble decurio" to Britain. While the cardinal had not originally mentioned him with the others, it is interesting that Joseph shows up in the narrative (sec. 5).

But did this really happen? There's no way to know for sure of course. It does fit the time frame of Gildas regarding the gospel coming to Britain at the end of Tiberius' reign. Yet there are problems with the scenario. For one, the traditions connecting Lazarus to southern France are rather questionable—likely to have actually derived from a fifth-century bishop of the area named Lazarus who spent time in the Holy Land before returning to live out his days in Marseilles (see "St. Lazarus of Bethany," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1910, Vol. 9, Online Edition, 1999, [www.newadvent.org/cathen](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen)). However, it is possible that this person was intentionally following in the footsteps of his namesake, so to speak.

Furthermore, one might wonder why the Catholic councils of the early 1400s considered the British church to be older than that of France if evangelizing began first in southern France? This reason alone makes it appear that Joseph was not associated with the "boat without oars" at the time of these councils. What seems more likely is that Baronius conflated two traditions into one—or took his information from an earlier conflation. This does not take away from Joseph's early arrival in Britain. Indeed, it is remarkable that, even considering these traditions regarding Lazarus and Mary Magdalene in southern France at an early date, the church councils still decided that Joseph's early presence in England gave Britain the honor of oldest congregation outside the Holy Land.

Certain of the apostles are also reported by tradition to have visited Britain over the course of the next few decades following Tiberius' death—among them Simon the Zealot, Peter and Paul. Yet of all the traditions, Joseph's are the most prominent, mainly because of their involvement with the "holy grail" of the Arthurian romances.

What was the grail? There are several interpretations. It is likely that the grail legends sprang from a number of sources that became interwoven, some of them pagan. Yet the most popular form of the grail in legend is that of the sacred cup of the "last supper," with which Joseph is said to have caught drops of Christ's blood from the cross—and that drinking from this cup brought healing and perpetual life. Perhaps we can recognize in all this a rather obvious corruption of something scriptural.

On the night before His death, at His final Passover with His disciples, Jesus presented a cup of wine as representative of His "shed blood" for sin to initiate the New Covenant. He elsewhere said that whoever drank His "blood" would have eternal life. Consider that if Joseph conducted a Passover in the midst of a pagan land, word could easily have gotten around to this effect: "Joseph has a cup that has Jesus' shed blood in it. If you drink from it, you'll live forever." Possibly in Joseph's repeating of Christ's words, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" ([1 Corinthians 11:25](#)), some mistakenly thought He was using the very same cup. And thus was perhaps born the grail legend—or at least the most well known version of it. Of course, we must be very cautious about accepting anything from legend as having any real substance—though legends do often contain a kernel of truth.

### **Reconciling dates**

Returning to events, in what has already been referred to as the 13th-century interpolation in William of Malmesbury's text we are told that Joseph crossed from France to Britain in the year 63 at the behest of the apostle Philip. While this could be entirely fictional, it could also indicate a genuine tradition, even if it were inserted into William's text by the monks of Glastonbury, as scholars argue. It would not necessarily mean that Joseph had not earlier been in Britain.

Indeed, perhaps he did arrive in Britain around 37 but later went back to the European continent and perhaps even all the way back to the Holy Land before later being sent out to Britain again. It could be that he even went more than once. This would not be too surprising considering that Joseph, if the traditions be true, had made such journeys numerous times before. It is also possible that Joseph didn't come with a larger company until 63. Joseph could even have been a traveler on the "boat without oars" after all—albeit at a later time than he originally came to Britain.

E. Raymond Capt, favoring the early arrival of Joseph's company in Britain and basing his comments on other recorded traditions, says: "Joseph and his companions were met by King Arviragus of the Silurian dynasty of Britain. He was the son of King Cunobelinus (the Cymbeline of Shakespeare) and cousin to the renowned British warrior, Caradoc, whom the Romans renamed 'Caratacus'" (p. 39). Capt infers: "Undoubtedly, Arviragus and Joseph were well known to each other; Joseph's business as a metal merchant for the Romans would have brought him in contact with the king on more than one occasion. Later, King Arviragus was to play an important role in the struggle against Roman dominance of Britain" (p. 39).

According to the timeline laid out in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, Arviragus would have been king at this time. However, Arviragus, who is mentioned by the later Roman satirist Juvenal, seems to be a later king reigning in the time of the Emperor Domitian—around 50 years after Joseph's supposed arrival (to better

see the difficulty of sorting out the period, see Luke Stevens, *Speculations on British Genealogy and History in Antiquity and the Literary Transmission Thereof*, chap. 3: "The Heirs of Caratacus," on-line at [www.geocities.com/Athens/Aegean/2444/specs](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Aegean/2444/specs) ).

Yet some have proposed Arviragus as a title —similar to *ard righ*, the Irish Gaelic term meaning "high king"—and see it as applicable to all the early British high kings, including Caradoc. Others have made Arviragus and Caradoc cousins—even co-rulers. Of course, the various British tribes had their own lesser kings at this time. Exactly who was reigning when and where during this murky period of Britain's past is uncertain, records then being a matter of bardic oral traditions.

Joseph is said to have converted "Arviragus" to Christianity, whichever ruler he was. Of course it could be that nothing of the sort actually happened—or perhaps he converted some important person and this was later reported to be the king. Amazingly, there is actually scriptural evidence, in light of known history, that seems to verify that some members of the British royal family of this period actually were converted—but whether this happened in Britain or not is uncertain.

### **Royal converts**

When Paul later lived as a prisoner in Rome around the early 60s A.D., he mentions those of "Caesar's household" who were members of the Church in Rome ([Philippians 4:22](#)). He also mentions Pudens, Linus and Claudia as prominent members there ([2 Timothy 4:21](#)). From Roman history it appears these verses are referring to the same people. Claudia, the adopted daughter of former emperor Claudius (who died in 54), had been converted—along with her husband Pudens and brother Linus.

Claudia, whose birth name was Gladys, was the daughter of the British high king Caradoc, who was captured in the Romano-British war. Her extraordinary beauty (celebrated later by the Roman poet Martial) and her keen intellect so affected Claudius that he adopted her as his own daughter. Her husband, Rufus Pudens Pudentius, commonly called Pudens, was a Roman senator and former aide-de-camp of Aulus Plautius, one of the most famous and brilliant military commanders of his day, and the commander Claudius sent to Britain in A.D. 43 to reduce the island to submission.

When did these people become Christians? Some say it was due to Paul's preaching in Rome, but a good case is made that they were already Christians in Rome when Paul first arrived there (see Morgan, *St. Paul in Britain* ). Thus, it is possible that they were converted previously while still in Britain—where Joseph of Arimathea is said to have interacted with the British high king.

In fact, Joseph is associated in the medieval romances with another British ruler called Brons, who is often identified as Bran the Blessed, believed by some to also have been a

Christian convert. It should be mentioned that many scholars consider Bran to be mythical because of outlandish legends surrounding him—and they identify him as a Celtic god. Yet this is often the fallback of modern academia when it comes to sorting out ancient Celtic rulers—usually a reasonable position but one that often proves incorrect since there certainly were important people throughout those times, and traditions did accumulate around many of them. Bran appears in genealogies that many consider generally legitimate.

Morgan explains: "In the clan times . . . the preservation of a pedigree meant the preservation of all that was valuable in blood, station, and property. Without it a man was an outlaw; he had no clan, consequently no legal rights or status. Genealogies were guarded, therefore, with extreme jealousy, and recorded with painful exactitude by the herald-bards of each clan. On the public reception, at the age of fifteen, of a child into the clan, his family genealogy was proclaimed, and all challengers to it commanded to come forward. Pedigree and inheritance, indeed, were so identified in the ancient British code, that an heir even in the ninth descent could redeem at a jury valuation any portion of an hereditary estate from which necessity had compelled his forefathers to part" (pp. 42-43).

Morgan then gives Caradoc's genealogy from the Welsh Pantliwydd Manuscripts of Llansannor: "Caradoc ab [of] Bran Fendigaid [i.e., "the Blessed"] ab Llyr Llediath [Shakespeare's King Lear], ab Baran [etc.] . . ." (p. 43). He also quotes the medieval Welsh Triads of the isle of Britain: "Bran, son of Llyr Llediath, who first brought the faith of Christ to the Cymry [the Welsh] from Rome, where he had been seven years a hostage for his son Caradoc, whom the Romans put in prison . . ." (p. 84). Further, Morgan quotes from an ancient Welsh proverb: "Hast thou heard the saying of Caradoc, the exalted son of the noble Bran? 'Oppression persisted in brings on death'" (quoted on p. 85). Bran, then, was very likely the father of Caradoc and grandfather of Claudia and Linus—and, as mentioned, he appears to have interacted with Joseph of Arimathea.

## **Twelve hides of land**

We may also notice that Joseph's religious commission appears to have obtained substantial favor with the British authorities: "King Arviragus [whichever king he actually was] is recorded as having granted to Joseph and his followers, 'twelve hides' of land (about 1900 acres), tax free, in 'Ynis-witrin' ["Isle of Glass"—i.e., Glastonbury] . . .' Confirmation of this Royal Charter is found in the official Domesday Book of Britain [the national survey commissioned by William the Conqueror] (A.D. 1086 which states: '. . . This Glastonbury Church possesses, in its own villa XII hides of land which have never paid tax" (Domesday Survey folio p. 249b)" (Capt, p. 41).

It could well be that this granting of territory is when the "interpolated" date of A.D. 63 actually applied to. Perhaps Joseph and his company had settled in the Glastonbury area upon their arrival in 37 but weren't actually given the land there until this later time. Or

perhaps Joseph had come on his own or with just a few people in 37, went back to the Holy Land, and came back with others at this later time of 63. In the intervening years, Rome would have invaded the island again starting in 43, as we've already seen. This would frankly have been a good reason to leave Britain. But amazingly, the Romans were stopped from conquering the western extremes of Britain by Boudicca's rebellion of 61. The rebellion also freed the part of the island where Glastonbury was from Roman dominion—and the area continued under British sovereignty, then, for almost two decades. It is interesting to note that the year 63, when the land grant to Joseph is supposed to have occurred, came just two years after the rebellion.

Historian Geoffrey Ashe, who is rather skeptical of the Joseph legends, admits regarding the story of Joseph and his company settling at Glastonbury in Somerset: "What is so piquant is that whoever started the tale should have hit so neatly on a time when a British chief may actually have been holding central Somerset, and able to give the wanderers a haven. Until the Cadbury hillfort [nearby, thought by some to later be the Camelot of Arthur] was excavated, there was no evidence for unconquered Britons in that area so long after the [Roman] invasion. A linkage of legends may be hinted at in the fact that Bran appears, as Bron or Brons, accompanying Joseph in romances of the Holy Grail. These stories, and the passage in Gildas, all seem to be hovering round a notion that there were Christians in Britain—very few, with no serious impact—in the immediate post-Boudicca phase" ( *Kings and Queens of Early Britain* , 1982, 1990, p. 45).

Yet they might have had quite an impact. Though disputed, the nation may have been heavily Christianized within a few decades by what was likely the same royal family in the person of King Lucius—and, if that's so, likely due in part to groundwork laid at Glastonbury. Of course, we don't know how faithful to the truth the later converts would have been. In that regard, it is interesting to note what happened 500 years later when the Roman Catholic priest Augustine came to "convert" the British, who still held to their own form of Christianity.

The Anglo-Saxon historian Bede, himself a Catholic, wrote regarding the year 603: "Now the Britons did not keep Easter [Latin Pascha , i.e., Passover] at the correct time but between the fourteenth and twentieth days of the moon . . . Furthermore, certain other of their customs were at variance with the universal practice of the Church. But despite protracted discussions, neither the prayers, advice, or censures of Augustine and his companions could obtain the compliance of the Britons, who stubbornly preferred their own customs to those in universal use among Christian [i.e., Catholic] Churches" ( *A History of the English Church and People* , 731, Book 2, chap. 1; compare chap. 19; Book 3, chap. 25 translated by Leo Sherley-Price, 1955).

Bede then describes how the British started to make an about-face after Augustine supposedly performed a miracle of healing—yet kept holding to their old ways. In any case, the practice described above appears to have been derived, at least in part, from the

original apostles, who observed the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread from the 14th to the 21st day of the first month of the Hebrew calendar (see [Leviticus 23:4-8](#); [1 Corinthians 5:7-8](#); and our free booklet [God's Holy Day Plan](#) ). Considering the apostasy that enveloped most of the Christian world by the second century, Britain's isolated continuance in such early Church practices adds to the strong likelihood that the gospel was preached in the island by some of Christ's early followers.

### **Other references**

Thus, with such prevalent traditions surrounding Joseph of Arimathea's presence in southern England in the first century A.D., and numerous corroborating factors, it seems quite probable—though we may not be able to know the specifics of what happened—that he really was there.

There are numerous sources available that provide even further corroborative evidence to that effect. A few are given here, some that have already been cited. Please bear in mind that a recommendation of outside sources for further study is not an endorsement of all that is contained within these sources. Indeed there are statements in the referenced material with which we would strongly disagree. Nevertheless, the following items do contain valuable and pertinent information on the subject at hand and also refer to other sources:

- \* Richard W. Morgan, *St. Paul in Britain* , 1860, 1984 (available to order from [www.artisanpublishers.com](http://www.artisanpublishers.com) or [www.britishisrael.co.uk/booklist.htm](http://www.britishisrael.co.uk/booklist.htm) )
- \* E. Raymond Capt, *Traditions of Glastonbury* , 1987 (available to order from [www.artisanpublishers.com](http://www.artisanpublishers.com) or [www.britishisrael.co.uk/booklist.htm](http://www.britishisrael.co.uk/booklist.htm) )
- \* Herman L. Hoeh, "Where Did the Twelve Apostles Go?" (on-line at [www.britishisrael.ca/Where.htm](http://www.britishisrael.ca/Where.htm)).
- \* Robert Jones, *Joseph of Arimathea: Biblical and Legendary Accounts* , 1997 (on-line at [www.sundayschoolcourses.com/joseph/joscont.htm](http://www.sundayschoolcourses.com/joseph/joscont.htm) )
- \* Arthur Eedle, "Amazing Historical Evidence," *The Prophetic Telegraph* , No. 76 (on-line at [www.oxleigh.freerve.co.uk/pt76.htm](http://www.oxleigh.freerve.co.uk/pt76.htm) )
- \* Arthur Eedle, "The Tin Islands," *The Prophetic Telegraph* , No. 77 (on-line at [www.oxleigh.freerve.co.uk/pt77.htm](http://www.oxleigh.freerve.co.uk/pt77.htm) )
- \* John Keyser, "Joseph of Arimathea and David's Throne in Britain," *Hope of Israel Ministries* (on-line at [hope-of-israel.org/i000111a.htm](http://hope-of-israel.org/i000111a.htm)).



\* W.M.H. Milner, *The Royal House of Britain: An Enduring Dynasty* , 1902, 1964  
(available to order from [www.britishisrael.co.uk/booklist.htm](http://www.britishisrael.co.uk/booklist.htm) )

### **Joseph founds dynasties?**

What, then, does all of this have to do with the throne of David? How does it actually relate to the British monarchy? Consider that Joseph's proclamation of the gospel would have included the fact that Jesus was of the royal line of David—and, if Joseph were Jesus' great uncle, the British would have understood him to be royalty as well. Indeed, from their prior dealings with this merchant prince, it is possible that the British kings already knew as much. They at least surely recognized him as a noble of great importance. In their eyes, this would have made him and his family candidates for intermarriage with British royalty.

In that light, it is remarkable to find in the grail stories that Joseph founded a line of kings. Most of the information in these stories is certainly fictitious—but there are probably some kernels of truth imbedded within them, as again is often the case with legends. Around 1212, Robert de Borron wrote in his work *Joseph of Arimathea* that Jesus appeared to Joseph and gave him the "secrets of the Savior," which were only to be shared with the "family" of the grail. This is obviously fictional, but this "family" is prevalent in the stories. "Later, as Joseph is dying, the voice of the Holy Spirit speaks to him, telling him that he has established a lineage which will continue until, in a far-off time, one will come who shall achieve the Grail. This is [the Arthurian knight] Perceval" (John Matthews, *King Arthur and the Grail Quest: Myth and Vision from Celtic Times to the Present* , 1994, p. 127).

"In this same text we find reference to Joseph's brother , Brons, who receives the name of 'The Rich Fisherman' after he feeds the company of the Grail from a single fish—a clearly enough reference to the miracle of the loaves and fishes from biblical tradition. Interestingly, of course, Brons is a name which derives from Bran" (p. 89, emphasis added). Joseph is seen to be brother—at least related—to the British king Bran.

A slightly earlier work about Perceval, called *Parzival* , "was composed by a Bavarian knight named Wolfram von Eschenbach c. 1207 . . . [It] is vastly elaborated and threaded through with a huge and mysterious symbolic structure involving numerology and a precise organization of the chapters so that the story spirals inward to the centre . . . and outward again to the end. Much ink has been spilled in attempts to crack Wolfram's 'code' and arrive at a deeper, more esoteric meaning within" (p. 114).

In Wolfram's story, the "grail" is not a cup but a mysterious stone , which sustains its guardians—the lineage of the mystical grail family (pp. 128-130). Commenting on

Parzifal , John Matthews, an acknowledged expert on Arthurian traditions, states: "Wolfram here [in a particular passage] seems to be speaking of a physical succession, perhaps even of an elite body of people who are bred to serve the Grail in a wholly calculated way. He also indicates that the disposition of the Grail lineage is a secret known only to the angels" (p. 130).

A little later, the collection of Arthurian stories referred to as the Vulgate Cycle was published. In an introduction to its first book, *History of the Holy Grail* , "the focus of attention shifts rapidly from Joseph of Arimathea to his son Josephus and thence to a converted pagan prince named Nasciens. In a lengthy adventure, the latter finds himself on an island. A ship appears on which are a rich bed, a golden crown and sword of magnificent workmanship. Documents explain that these had once belonged to the biblical King David . . . The ship had been constructed by Solomon" (Matthews, p. 99). Again, this is clearly fictional—but the references to David and Solomon should pique our interest.

### **Secrets and corruptions**

In Wolfram's *Parzifal* , the grail guardians are referred to as the "Templiesen," which many have seen as a reference to the medieval Knights Templar, who ruled Jerusalem during the Crusades and established a network of castles throughout Europe. Though there is no actual proof, it is widely believed that Wolfram himself was a Templar and that he was hiding secret Templar knowledge in his work. Further, many identify the Templars as the source of Scottish Freemasonry. In that regard it is perhaps significant that most kings of Scotland and England have apparently been Masons and that one of the traditional Masonic beliefs is that the house of David was transferred to northwest Europe from the Holy Land, as noted in Algernon Herbert's *Britannia After the Romans* (1849).

Some actually accuse the Masons of deceptively originating the idea of supposed connections between the house of David and the British monarchy. But although they may have recognized it early, they clearly did not manufacture all the evidence in this regard, which stands on its own merit. We certainly do not look to the Masons as the source of our beliefs on this matter. Rather, we look first and foremost to Scripture and then to secular history and widespread tradition, which support the link.

Anyway, with Wolfram's story as background, some have concluded that the "holy grail" of Christ's blood, represented by a stone, is actually the bloodline of David through the family of Jesus—from which the lineage of British kings has sprung. In fact, some have even argued that this royal bloodline came through Jesus Himself, whom they claim did not die on the cross but married Mary Magdalene and fathered children by her (the premise for the popular 1982 book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* by Michael Baigent, Henry

Lincoln and Richard Leigh). This teaching is, of course, contrary to Scripture and utterly nefarious—flying in the face of the whole purpose and plan of God.

Yet it could be a terrible corruption of something true and factual—as false doctrine often is. Perhaps the bloodline of David was transferred to Europe through Jesus' extended family and not Jesus Himself. Certainly we have seen evidence that the Solomonic line was transferred to Ireland at the time of Jeremiah. But this other transfer would involve the line of David's son Nathan. It should be noted that the royal transfer could not have come through Christ's brothers for, while they were of the line of both Solomon and Nathan, their lineage from Jeconiah through their father Joseph—which Jesus did not share—prevented them or their descendants from ruling (compare [Matthew 1:6-16](#); [Jeremiah 22:24-30](#)). But other family on their mother's side would have sufficed—including Joseph of Arimathea.

To examine this possibility, we turn to the last source in our list above, *The Royal House of Britain: An Enduring Dynasty* by Milner. He mentions that King Arthur was descended from Arviragus (p. 28). It should be pointed out that Arthur has not been clearly identified historically. However, it is well accepted in scholarship that he actually existed as a British ruler of the fifth or sixth century—following the end of Roman rule. Since tribal leadership was maintained even during the period of the Romans, it is quite likely that Arthur was descended from the dynasties of the early Roman period.

Citing another source, Milner also notes: "'We find in John of Glastonbury [mentioned earlier],' writes . . . W[alter] W. Skeat, in his *Joseph of Arimathea, or, The Romance of the Holy Grail* [1871], 'some verses and a couple of genealogies shewing King Arthur's descent [on his mother's side] from Joseph, which I here subjoin. "Helaius, nepos [nephew or grandson of] Joseph, genuit [begot] Josue. Josue genuit Aminadab . . . [and so on to Arthur]."' The second genealogy derives the husband of Arthur's sister from a 'Petrus' who was 'consanguineus [blood-related to] Joseph ab Armathia.' These independent lists prove [or at least help to substantiate] that Joseph did start dynasties in Britain. And here it may be noted that the original meaning of the Latin 'nepos' is not nephew but 'grandson'—see White and Riddle's *Latin Dictionary*, 1880 [as well as *The Classical Latin Dictionary*, 1941]" (pp. 28-29, footnote).

Notice Joseph's supposed grandson Helaius in the genealogy. He seems to be synonymous with the Helias le Grose (Heli the Great) of the medieval romances. Geoffrey of Monmouth, in his *History of the Kings of Britain*, gave the name Heli to the father of Cassivelaunos, the British king at the time of Julius Caesar (Book 3, chap. 20). Yet this person was too early to have been a grandson of Joseph of Arimathea. Old Welsh tales mention a Beli the Great—whom many consider synonymous with Geoffrey's Heli.

### **British relations to Mary?**

Notice what historian Geoffrey Ashe says: "Medieval texts . . . such as the collection of Welsh tales called the Mabinogion, have preserved a fair amount [of Celtic mythical tradition] . . . Welsh legend, for instance, introduces Beli son of Manogan, a reputed ancestor of several royal families. Beli has no real relationship to chronology [in Ashe's estimation]. He appears as king of Britain in the fourth century A.D., as a brother-in-law of the Virgin Mary, as the grandfather of another hero—Bran—who [it is supposed] must be earlier than that. But his name recalls Geoffrey's Belinus [an earlier ruler], and there is solid evidence for a Celtic god called Belenus who is the common original" (p. 23). However, it should be noted that the Celtic root Bel just means "Lord"—as with the Hebrew Baal . Therefore, this could easily be a title for a ruler.

The relationship to Mary should certainly grab our attention. As should the mention of Bran—whom we have seen repeatedly associated with Joseph of Arimathea. Milner refers to an exhaustive work from 1900 called *The Welsh People* , by Oxford University professor John Rhys and David Brynmor Jones (still published).

He states: "To return now to Bran. The authors of *The Welsh People* above referred to cite the Mabinogion (a collection of old Welsh tales), as calling Bran 'the son of Llyr (Lear) and Penardim, daughter of Beli, son of Mynogan.' Penardim, however, they show to have been Beli's sister and Beli the son of— not 'Mynogan,' but 'The words translated 'son of Mynogan' were not to be found in the original of the Mabinogi,' having been introduced by a subsequent hand, the actual words having been Beli maur, map Aun, An, or Anau , which occurs as Beli mabr m. Anna in one of the Pedigrees in Jesus College, MS. 20, supposed to be of the thirteenth century'—that is— 'Beli the great, Son of Anna' " (p. 27).

Rhys and Brynmor Jones translated another Welsh statement from the records as follows: "That Anna used to be said by the men of Egypt to be cousin to the Virgin Mary" (p. 27). This statement, they remark, is also made in the pedigree of Owen, son of Howel the Good: "Amalech, who was the son of Beli the Great, and Anna his [Beli's] mother who was said to be cousin of the virgin Mary, mother of our Lord Jesus Christ" (translated from p. 27).

Owen son of Howel is a reference to the Welsh king Owain (died 988), son of Hywel (916-950). From Owain descended the Tudor kings of England and, by multiple lineages, the present Queen Elizabeth (Patrick Montague-Smith, *The Royal Line of Succession with Genealogical Tables* , Pitkin, 1968, p. 23).

"This genealogy of Owen up to Anna is incorporated in the *Annales Cambriae* [ *The Annals of Cambria* , i.e., of Wales] . . . published by the authority of the Lords Commissioners of H.M. Treasury (Longmans, 1860), under the direction of the Master of the Rolls. In the same place is recorded the pedigree of Owen's mother, Elen, up to Constantine the Great and his Royal British mother, the Empress Helena, who on further

research proves to have been eighth in descent from Bran the Blessed, son of Lear—and Penardim, sister of Beli, whose mother was Anna, 'cousin of the Virgin Mary'" (Milner, pp. 27-28).

### **Sorting out lineages**

Now how could this Anna have been cousin to Mary? One answer is: If she were the daughter of Joseph of Arimathea. This would have made Beli the grandson of Joseph. The grandson of Joseph is referred to in the other genealogies as Heli—truly fascinating considering that the name of Joseph's brother, Mary's father, was Heli. Milner suggests that it may have been a family name.

This Beli would have been too late to be the one who fathered Cassivelaunos. In fact he even seems too late to be the uncle of Bran, as Milner and his sources suggest. This seems rather difficult to work into the little chronological understanding of the period we have—as it requires Joseph to have been unreasonably old even at the time of Christ's death.

Perhaps the truth is that Anna was not the mother but the wife of Beli. The pedigree of Owen above could even be read that way: "Amalech, who was the son of Beli the Great, and Anna his [that is, Amalech's ] mother, who was said to be cousin of the virgin Mary." Beli's daughter Penardim may not have been the same one that married Lear—as the name Penardim means "Head Highest" and could have been a generic title for high queen. There are many possibilities.

Yet if there is any truth to this, it would seem to require that Joseph's daughter married into the British royal family long prior to Christ's death—perhaps closer to the time of Christ's birth, in the early days of Joseph's travels to Britain. It could even be that his daughter being royalty in Britain is what brought Joseph back to Britain seeking refuge in time of persecution. And perhaps this is what gained him such favor with the British rulers as we have seen.

We should also consider Joseph's previously mentioned son, also named Joseph or Josephus. He too, if genuinely historical, seems to have been involved in founding dynasties. In any case, it is certainly possible that the Davidic bloodline of Nathan passed into the British royal lineage at this point—especially when we consider that the Romans conducted a purge of David's house late in the first century, which no doubt prompted many Davidic descendants to flee to outlying areas of the Empire (see [Appendix 12: "The Attempt to Destroy David's Lineage"](#) ).

### **The Cerdic connection**

Around 500 years later, the Angles and Saxons invaded the island and pushed the original Celtic British into its western recesses. People often see no dynastic continuity from the British to the Saxons. But there may have been. The question centers on a person named Cerdic (died 534). "Cerdic, the Saxon Chieftain who founded the Kingdom of Wessex, was also the virtual founder of the British Monarchy [or at least the English monarchy]" (Montague-Smith, p. 6).

Geoffrey Ashe explains: "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland grew around England, which grew around Wessex, and the House of Windsor is still descended from the West Saxon kings, through all interminglings of Scandinavians, Normans, Welsh, Scots, and Germans. Elizabeth II's first Wessex ancestor is Cerdic, who landed on the shore of Southampton Water with a grown-up son and five shiploads of followers. So says the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, putting the event in 495. In other words, the Queen's pedigree goes back to someone whose life overlapped Arthur's.

"As history the Chronicle's early West Saxon entries carry even less weight than most, and the early line of West Saxon kings is dubious. But the founder, Cerdic, is certainly real, because no Saxon court genealogist would have invented him. His name is not Saxon at all but British [Celtic]. It appears in various forms, one of them being Ceredig [whence derives Cardigan], the name borne by the Clyde rulers, so that it was definitely a royal name among fifth-century Britons. Cerdic of Wessex may have had Saxon blood, seeing that Saxons accepted him as a leader; but he seems to have reckoned himself a Briton, because he gave his son a Celtic name too, Cynric" (The Discovery of King Arthur, 1985, pp. 196-197).

Ashe rejects Cerdic's Saxon pedigree, which names his father as Elesa (p. 198). However, he does offer the possibility of British-Saxon intermarriage. Perhaps Cerdic, the son of British nobility, married the daughter of the Saxon Elesa. Another source states concerning Cerdic's son:

"Cynric is a hybrid name; half British, half Saxon, suggesting he was of mixed blood . . . [Here] we see the distinguishing name affix 'Cyn,' as in Cynglas (Cuneglasus [whom some have reckoned as Arthur or closely related to Arthur]) and Cynfawr (Cunomor's [ruler of southwest Britain at the time]). Since 'Cyn' is the Welsh version of the Latin 'Cun,' this is further indication that Cynric was a member of the Cunedda family [ruling Wales and southwest Britain during that period], very possibly a relative of Cunomor's . . . It appears to have been common practice at the time to seal an alliance between Saxon and Briton families by marriage" (Graham Phillips and Martin Keatman, King Arthur: The True Story, 1992, pp. 148-149).

Thus, like the various rulers of Wales, the pedigree of the first West Saxon rulers, from which all English monarchs have sprung, may also go back to Anna the cousin of Mary and possibly other members of Christ's immediate family.

## David's house in Europe

Indeed, there is another means of descent that could perhaps have made this possible. It is the fact that the lineage of Elesa, mentioned above, is traced back just eight generations to Woden or Odin (Montague-Smith, p. 5)—a genealogy often considered legendary but likely true. Though reckoned as a god, Odin was evidently an actual person of the second or third century descended from the Trojan line of Zerah-Judah—and from him descended many of the royal houses of Europe, including all those that have combined to produce the modern British royal family (see [Appendix 10: "The Family of Odin"](#) ).

Milner mentions an ancient manuscript he and others inspected when it lay in the possession of the Herald's College of London—now called the College of Arms. "It is called on the back of the binding 'Pedigree of the Saxon Kings'" (p. 25). Milner explains that in this manuscript, "Frea, the wife of Odin, figures apparently as the daughter of Cadwallader, son of [early British] King Lucius, himself descended from Anna. Should this mean that she—Frea—was a daughter of that house, it follows that, through their mother, all the lines of Odin come from David. It is a fact, recorded by several early church historians, that Lucius left his kingly throne in Britain and became the evangelist of Switzerland and Bavaria. Frea might well have been his daughter or grand-daughter, settled in Central Europe, at the epoch of Odin's historic march into the West" (p. 35).

We should also consider the possibility that the line of David became intertwined with the Zerah line at an even earlier point, as ancient Armenia's rulers claimed descent from David and Solomon (see [Appendix 4: "The Colchis Connection"](#) ).

In any event, it is entirely possible that not only from Zerah but even from David have the various royal families of Europe descended. Indeed, it would seem to be true anyway due to the intermarriage that we know took place in later ages between the British royal family and the royalty of other European nations. This is quite remarkable. It would even seem to give new insight to God's punishment upon David for his great sin against God—wherein he committed adultery and murder ([2 Samuel 11](#)). God told him: "Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house" (12:10). Certainly this was true in David's own lifetime. But it has also been true in the ages since. Europe has been wracked by war for centuries, its kings battling against each other over every reason imaginable—and these kings, we now learn, are all of the house of David. What a sad footnote to include in our picture of the glorious legacy of David's throne. It should serve as a warning of the devastating and often long-lasting consequences of sin.

Finally, then, we have seen elsewhere how the Davidic line of Solomon (of Perez) was, in the days of Jeremiah, fused with Milesian royal line of Calcol (of Zerah). Now we see that the Davidic line of Nathan (of Perez) was, in the days of Joseph of Arimathea, very possibly fused with the line of the early British kings descended from Brutus, himself of the Trojan royal house of Darda (of Zerah). The Davidic lineage of Nathan was, it seems,

doubly fused with the line of Zerah at the time of Odin. Finally, all these strands later became intertwined through a vast sea of intermarriages. Indeed, the lines had fused long before the dominant throne of David's line was transferred from Scotland to Ireland.

Thus, it would appear that Queen Elizabeth and her family are many times over the descendants of Solomon and Nathan. But in the end, at the return of Jesus Christ, the Solomonic element in the throne will terminate. Solomon's line will no longer be perpetuated. Rather, Jesus Christ, born of the line of Nathan and not of Solomon, will sit on the throne thereafter—to reign in glory forever and ever. The human corruption and infighting that has plagued David's house will at long last be over. For Jesus Christ will enforce peace throughout all nations. What a wonderful world awaits.