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DISCOVERING THE BIBLE

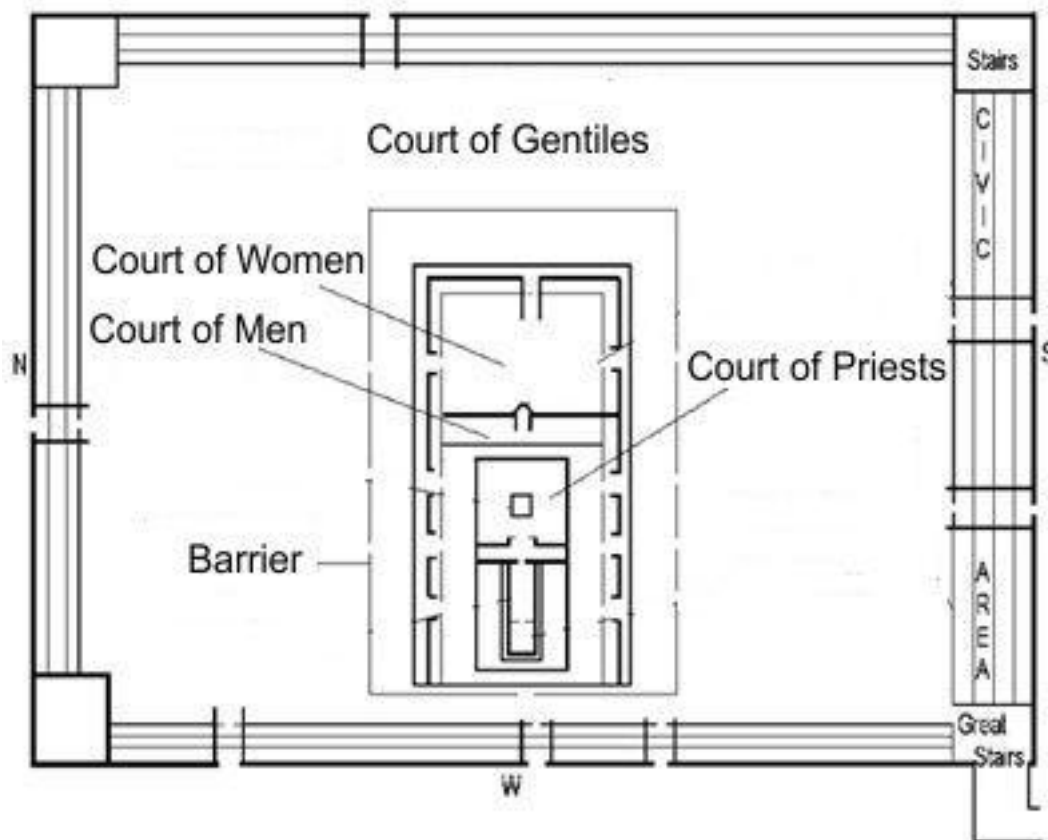
Following the journey of the memes of the Bible from their original cultural & historical origins to their influence in our world today.

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Foreigners, Eunuchs and Early Christians

By Jim Myers

Sometimes biblical research is like archaeology -- you have to dig and dig to find a clue. But sometimes, they are so big they are like giant billboards, as in this case. The clues are linked to the words "foreigner" and "eunuch." The ancient world in which Jesus lived was not an "equal rights" world. What might be called "discrimination" today was everywhere in the ancient world, including at the Temple in Jerusalem. Specific areas were reserved for priests, Jewish men, Jewish women and Gentiles. Look at the diagram below to see those specific areas -- the Courts of the Temple in Jerusalem.



As you can see, the first area that one entered was the **Court of Gentiles**. Anyone that met the requirements for ritual purification could enter this court.¹ The **Court of Gentiles** was the largest area and it went completely around the sanctuary. Gentiles walk around but could not go beyond the barrier that separated the **Court of Gentiles** from the courts that were restricted to only Jews. Multiple signs were posted that warned Gentiles of the penalty for going beyond the **Court of Gentiles**.

"No foreigner is to enter within the balustrade and embankment around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his death which follows."²

After Jews walked through the **Court of Gentiles** they would enter the **Court of Women** through the **Beautiful Gate**, which is mentioned in Acts 3. This was as far as Jewish women could go. Jewish men would continue and walk up the fifteen steps of the curved staircase, through the **Nicanor Gate** and into the **Court of Men**, which was also called the **Court of Israelites**.



Nicanor Gate³

Jesus, the apostles and many of his followers would have followed the same path on their trips to the Temple. Mary, Martha and the other Jewish women in Jesus' group, including his mother, would have stopped in the **Court of Women**, while the men continued into the **Court of Men**. Three times every day Jews came to the Temple to offer their prayers and present sacrifices. There is very little doubt that Jesus and his followers actively and regularly participated at those times. His followers would continue to do so after the Romans crucified Jesus.

One day Peter and John were going up to the Temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the Temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. (Acts 3:1-3)

Since the **Court of Women** was also the location of the **Temple Treasury** the beggar's decision to sit next to the Beautiful Gate would place him at a location where people carrying money would have passed by. It must have been a good location because he sat there every day. Something that many Christians are not aware of is that we would also have found **Paul walking through that gate to make sacrifices after he became a Christian**. The New Testament records one of his very important trips to the Temple.

The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James (really Jacob), and all the elders were present. Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul:

“You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law.

As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality.”

The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the Temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.⁴

Pay very close attention to what the leaders of the Jesus Movement said to Paul.

- (1) Thousands of Jews have believed (Jesus is the MASHIACH [Christ]).
- (2) They are still zealous for the law after becoming believers.

- (3) They have been told that Paul taught Jews to turn away from the law.
(4) They will know you (Paul) live in obedience to the law.

Many Jewish believers who were members of the Jesus Movement had been told that Paul was teaching Gentiles to “turn away from the law.” They thought Paul taught Jews they no longer needed to keep the law of Moses – they could live like Gentiles. They no longer had to circumcise their children or live according to Jewish customs. *Isn't that exactly what Jews are told today in order to convert to Christianity?*

*How could they convince those thousands of Jewish believers that what they had been told about Paul was wrong? **They wanted everyone to understand that Paul taught Jews to circumcise their children, to live according to Jewish customs and to keep the law of Moses -- just as he did.*** The plan they came up with was for Paul to take four of the men they had with them to the Temple to complete the final requirements of ending the **Nazirite vow** they had taken.

When the vow expires the Nazirite must bring three sacrifices and shave off his hair [as it says "On the day that his Nazirite vow is fulfilled . . . the Nazirite shall shave the hair of his head"⁵]; he is then no longer a Nazirite.⁶

The next day Paul took the men to the Temple, **so everyone could see that he was still an observant Jew.**

When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the Temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, shouting:

“Fellow Israelites, help us! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Hellenists into the Temple and defiled this holy place.”

They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the Temple.⁷

Paul and the four men would have walked across the **Court of Gentiles**, through the **Beautiful Gate**, across the **Court of Women**, up the curved stairway through the **Nicanor Gate** and into the **Court of Men**, where only Jewish men could go. Some Jews from Asia accused Paul of taking an **Ephesian Hellenist** into the restricted “Jewish courts.” The first conflict in the Jesus Movement was between Hebrew and Hellenist Jews.⁸ Both considered themselves to be Jews, but the Hellenist sect did not require their males to be circumcised. *The Asian Jews*

clearly belonged to the Hebrew sect and viewed uncircumcised men as Gentiles. If Paul had taken uncircumcised men past all the warning signs, he would not only have committed a serious crime, he would have defiled the Temple, which would require elaborate measures to restore it to ritual purity. The author of Acts pointed out that the Asian Jews were wrong, because Trophimus the Ephesian wasn't one of the men Paul took into the Temple.

As pointed out, this wasn't the first conflict over circumcision. Earlier the conflict about whether circumcision should be a requirement for males who wanted to join the Jesus Movement. It polarized the members of the Jesus Movement into two camps.

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: "**Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.**" This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.⁹

Jewish believers from Jerusalem said that only the circumcised could be "saved." Paul apparently taught that the "uncircumcised" would be saved. The English word "saved" is defined as "to rescue from danger or possible harm, injury, or loss."¹⁰ It is the word translators chose to translate the Greek word σωθηναι which appears in the ancient text. It comes from the root word σώζω (**SOZO**):

to save, i.e. deliver or protect (literally or figuratively); to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction; one (from injury or peril); to save a suffering one (from perishing), i.e. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health; to preserve one who is in danger of destruction, to save or rescue.

SOZO was also translated in the Bible by the words *heal, preserve, save (self), do well, be (make) whole*. What did they need to be saved from? The answer is that they needed to be saved from going to **Gehinnom** on the **Day of Judgment**. **Gihinnom is the place the wicked will be sent to be punished in everlasting fire.** According to the famous **School of Shammai**:

There will be three groups on the Day of Judgment: one of **thoroughly righteous people**, one of **thoroughly wicked people** and one of **people in between**. **The first group will be immediately inscribed for everlasting life; the second group will be doomed in Gehinnom**, as it says, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to reproaches and everlasting abhorrence," the third will go down to Gehinnom and squeal

and rise again, as it says, "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on My name and I will answer them."¹¹

The word "squeal" is translated as "struggle" in one translation and "be singed" (by the fires of Gehinnom) in another.¹² The basic idea is that people who were not thoroughly righteous or wicked would spent the amount of time in Gehinnom they needed to be purified and then after they would be "healed,"¹³ which would make it possible for them to join the righteous in everlasting life. Above we saw that the word SOZO could also be translated "healed," which would reflect the words of Shammai above. The **School of Hillel** held another position:

The School of Hillel suggested a more merciful view, in which the middle group are sent directly to Gan Eden (Heaven) instead of Gehinnom after death. Rabbi Hanina added that all who go down to Gehinnom will go up again, except adulterers, those who put their fellows to shame in public, and those who call their fellows by an obnoxious name.^{14 15}

As you can see, even among the "circumcised" Jews there was disagreement about what happens on the Day of Judgment. It was about where people who were not **thoroughly righteous** or **thoroughly wicked** would go. *It must be noted that the fate of uncircumcised Gentiles were not part of that discussion.* As far as Gentiles were concerned, some believed "**righteous Gentiles**" would have a share in the world to come, while others believed all Gentiles would go with the wicked. The Jerusalem Council was called to resolve the conflict over circumcision in the Jesus Movement. The Council heard the positions from all sides.

Then some of the **believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees** stood up and said, "The **Gentiles must be circumcised** and **required to keep the law of Moses.**"¹⁶

Did you know that some of the members of the Jesus Movement continued to be Pharisees, too? Think about it. The next position they heard was that of Peter:

"Brothers, you know that some time ago **God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe.** God, who knows the heart, **showed that He accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them,** just as He did to us. He did not discriminate between us and them, for **He purified their hearts by faith.** Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! **We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.**"¹⁷

The Council next heard from Barnabas and Paul, who told it about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.¹⁸ When they finished, James, whose real name was Jacob, addressed the Council:

“Brothers listen to me. Simon (Peter) has described to us how God first intervened **to choose a people for His name from the Gentiles**. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

‘After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that **the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name**, says the Lord, who does these things.’¹⁹

These things were known from long ago. It is my judgment, therefore, that **we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles** who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to **abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood**. For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read **in the synagogues on every Sabbath**.²⁰

Circumcision would not be a requirement for membership in the Jesus Movement community, but Gentiles would be required to do the following:

- (1) abstain from food polluted by idols
- (2) abstain from sexual immorality
- (3) abstain from the meat of strangled animals
- (4) abstain from blood
- (5) learn the law of Moses
- (6) attend a synagogue
- (7) keep the Sabbath (Friday sundown to Saturday sundown)

They were required to do things that would clearly separate them from other Gentiles to become Christians. These words are recorded in every Christian Bible in Acts 15. Check it out. **How many times have you heard any preacher, priest, minister, televangelist, missionary, deacon, elder or pope declare that the above requirements are necessary for Gentiles to become a Christian?** *If I was a betting man, my bet would be – NEVER!*

What did the Jerusalem Council base its decision on? This brings me back to the point I made at the beginning of this article – sometimes the clues left by ancient writers of the words of the Bible are so obvious we miss them. In this case, the glaring clues are the words “**foreigner**” and “**eunuch**.” I have already discussed

the status of Gentiles in Judaism at that time, which would include foreigners. There were also restrictions concerning eunuchs.

In Deuteronomy 23:1 the law forbids the community of the Lord to accept anyone who has undergone destruction or removal of their sexual organs.²¹

Now let's examine the biblical texts related to those clues.

And the angel of the Lord spoke unto Philip, saying, "Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goes down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert." And he arose and went, and, behold, **a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch** of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning. **He was sitting in his chariot reading Isaiah the prophet.**²²

What were the odds of finding anyone sitting in a chariot reading a scroll of Isaiah, much less a man who was both a foreigner and a eunuch? It took an angel to bring Philip to him. Philip explained what the man had been reading in the scroll, he and him was baptized. A man that was both a foreigner and eunuch was chosen by the Lord to become a member of the Jesus Movement.

The author of Acts next turns his attention to another foreigner, named Cornelius -- a devout man, who feared God, a generous alms giver and a man who regularly prayed to God. He was also a Roman and a soldier.²³ **Two divine visions were required to bring Cornelius and Peter together.** Clearly, it was God's will to bring them together. Peter had no intention of going to foreigners. I imagine he would have been even less inclined to go to approach a Roman centurion. **The point that stands out here is that Jesus must have never said anything to Peter about converting Gentiles for his movement.** But, after his vision and experience with Cornelius, Peter had a very different opinion:

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, "Of a truth I perceive that **God is no respecter of persons;** but in every nation he that **fears Him,** and **does righteousness** is **accepted by Him.**"²⁴

Make sure you understand what Peter said was required of Gentiles:

- (1) **fear God**
- (2) **do righteousness**

Those attending synagogues would have most likely recognized the clues left by the author of Acts – *foreigner, eunuch, fear God and do righteousness*. Every three years on the first Shabbat of the month of Shevat (January-February) the readings in the synagogues that day were Deut. 29:9-30:20; Isa. 55:6-58:8; and Micah 7:18-20. The clues in Acts would have reminded them of the words of Isaiah they read on that Shabbat:

Thus says YAHWEH, "**Guard justice**, and **do righteousness**; for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that does this, and the son of man that lays hold on it; that **keeps the Shabbat from polluting it**, and **keeps his hand from doing any evil**.

Neither let the son of the **foreigner**, that hath joined himself to YAHWEH, speak, saying, `YAHWEH has utterly separated me from His people;` neither let the **eunuch** say, `Behold, I am a dry tree.'"

For thus says YAHWEH unto **the eunuchs that keep my Shabbats**, and **choose the things that please Me**, and **take hold of My covenant**; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters. I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the **foreigner**, that **join themselves to YAHWEH**, to **serve Him**, and to **love the name of YAHWEH**, to **be His servants**, every one that **keeps the Shabbat from polluting it**, and **takes hold of My covenant**.

Even **them will I bring to My holy mountain**, and **make them joyful in My House of Prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon My altar**; for **My House shall be called a House of Prayer for all people**. The Master YAHWEH, which gathers the outcasts of Israel says, "Yet will **I gather others** to him, beside those that are gathered unto him."²⁵

Isaiah prophesied that God would gather foreigners and eunuchs to his Temple (House of Prayer) along with His people and their offerings and sacrifices would also be accepted on His altar. But those foreigners and eunuchs would have to meet certain requirements:

- (1) guard justice
- (2) do righteousness
- (3) keep the Shabbat
- (4) keep their hand from doing evil
- (5) take hold of His covenant

- (6) love the name of YAHWEH
- (7) be His servants

The key to unlocking Isaiah's message is to understand the reference to a covenant. This was also the question that the Jerusalem Council had to answer, because the Jewish Scriptures contains more than one covenant. It couldn't have been the covenant with Abraham, because that covenant required circumcision, which the Jerusalem Council didn't require. The covenant that Isaiah and the Jerusalem Council had in mind was **the covenant of Noah**.

ELOHIYM²⁶ blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moves upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. **But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat. Surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed;** because He made man in the image of ELOHIYM. Be fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein."

This is the universal covenant that ELOHIYM (God) made with all mankind. It was made long before the Israelites or Jews came into existence. It was the covenant that Noah's sons would take with them as they settled the different parts of the earth. The key points of this covenant found in Isaiah and Acts are:

- (1) Do not eat living flesh or flesh with blood in it.
- (2) Establish a justice system to punish those who take human life.

What is the source for the reference to the requirement of keeping Shabbat (Sabbath) in Isaiah and Acts? Shabbat (Friday sundown to Saturday sundown) is found in the universal blessing God gave on the seventh day in Genesis 2:

And on the seventh day ELOHIYM ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all his work which He had made. And ELOHIYM blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which ELOHIYM created and made.²⁷

The lesson is clear – ***If ELOHIYM rests on the Shabbat, then shouldn't those made in His image do the same?*** Isaiah specified that the foreigner and eunuch were to keep the Shabbat, and the Jerusalem Council required Gentiles to attend a synagogue on the Shabbat. It would be there that they would learn the text that Jesus' teachings were based on and how to ***do righteous***. The importance of knowing how to become one of the "righteous" ones was well understood. Remember the words of Shammai and Hillel? Now listen to what Jesus said about "the righteous."

When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.²⁸

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, "Come, you are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. I was a hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in. (I was) naked, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came unto me."²⁹

Notice what criteria the Son of Man used to judge mankind, and then consider how those in the group on the right responded.

Then shall **the righteous** answer him, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry, and fed you; or thirsty, and gave you a drink? When did we see you as a stranger, and take you in; or naked, and clothed you? Or when did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you? The King shall answer and say unto them, "Amen! I say unto you, because you have done it unto one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it unto me."³⁰

They are righteous because of the way they treated their fellowman, but didn't understand that how they treated other humans would be viewed as acts done to the King (God).

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, "Depart from me, you are cursed, (you will go) into an everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. I was hungry, and you gave me no food. I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink. I was a stranger, and you did not take me in. (I was) naked, and you did not clothe me. (I was) sick, and in prison, and you did not visit me." Then they shall answer him,

saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not help you?"³¹

The same criteria were used to judge those in the group on the left. Their response was the same as that of those on the right. They didn't see their fellow humans as "God." The cost of that mistake would be very high.

Then shall he answer them, saying, "Amen! I say unto you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me. **These shall go away into everlasting punishment;** but **the righteous into life eternal.**"³²

The key to understanding this teaching of Jesus is that he viewed every human as being the "image of God." **He wanted his followers to understand that they were the image of God, so when they encounter hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and imprisoned people, their actions could reveal the image of God on the earth when they did what God would do if He they had encountered Him.** *Do you believe God would have helped or ignored them? What would you want God to do for you?* The essence of Jesus' message wasn't uniquely his; other Jewish teachers also taught it, too.

When a beggar stands at your door, **the Holy One**, Blessed be He, **stands at his right hand.**³³

He that feeds the hungry **feeds God also.**³⁴

Jesus saw his movement as being the "Kingdom of God" and that kingdom was made of the righteous ones who understood they were the living image on God on the earth. *They knew that their love of God could only be demonstrated through acts of righteousness to their fellowman.* **This is without question the foundation upon which the Jesus Movement was built.**

The above verses from Matthew are known by many Christians and they have inspired generations of Christians to do outstanding work to help the needy and the sick. But, helping the needy wasn't a secondary ministry of the Jesus Movement – doing righteousness as its primary mission. Helping others was not something that was done as simply optional charitable acts – it was what would determine one's eternal destiny on the Day of Judgment!

People today are told they must say a prayer, have a personal emotional experience with Jesus, believe the right things, or join the right church – or some combination thereof, in order to go to heaven instead of hell. But as you read above – **Jesus didn't teach that message of salvation.**

Americans are hurting today. More people are hungry, homeless, ill, hurting, etc., than ever before. There are also more Christians and churches in the world than ever before. **What would happen if every church became a gathering place of people who understood the above message of Jesus and made it their highest priority?** What if they used the same amounts of zeal and money they invest in their missionary activities to do acts of righteousness?

What is your God's highest priority? Is it making sure people know the right doctrines? Or, is your God's highest priority the protection of life, the preservation of life and the enhancement of the quality of life? The answer to this question is clearly reflected by how a church's leaders and members relate to themselves and those outside their church. **Make sure you understand that Jesus didn't say that the Son of Man's first questions will be – Do you believe in Jesus? Who do you believe Jesus is? Or, what church do you belong to?** *Please don't keep this a secret!* **BHC**

¹ <http://www.abu.nb.ca/courses/NTIntro/JerusalTempl4.htm>

² Josephus, War6.124-26; Ant. 15. 417; Philo Leg. ad Gaium 212

³ "Image(s) courtesy of www.HolyLandPhotos.org"

⁴ Acts 21:15-26

⁵ Numbers 6:13-20

⁶ <http://www.torah.org/learning/halacha-overview/chapter32.html>

⁷ Acts 21:27-29

⁸ Acts 6:1

⁹ Acts 15:1-2

¹⁰ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/saved>

¹¹ Babylonian Talmud, tractate Rosh Hashanah 16b-17a

¹² http://halakhah.com/pdf/moed/Rosh_HaShanah.pdf

¹³ V. Moore S.F. Judaism III, p. 198

¹⁴ Babylonian Talmud, tractate Baba Metzia 58b

¹⁵ <http://www.religionfacts.com/judaism/beliefs/afterlife.htm>

¹⁶ Acts 15:5

¹⁷ Acts 15:7b-11

¹⁸ Acts 15:12

¹⁹ Amos 9:11-12 LXX

²⁰ Acts 15:13-21

²¹ <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/actat/article/viewFile/52578/41183>.

²² Acts 8:26-31

²³ Acts 10:1-2

²⁴ Acts 10:34-35

²⁵ Isaiah 56:1-8

²⁶ ELOHIYM is the translation of the Hebrew word that is in the biblical text. It is usually translated öGod.ö

²⁷ Genesis 2:2-3

²⁸ Matthew 25:31-33

²⁹ Matthew 25:34-36

³⁰ Matthew 25:37-40

³¹ Matthew 25:41-44

³² Matthew 25:45-46

³³ Wayyikra Rabbah 34:9

³⁴ Agadat Shir ha-Shirim

November Memorials

In Their Remembrance

In Loving Memory

**PAMELA
STRYKER**

**December 11, 1941
November 21, 2000**

*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*

May their memories inspire us to seek those qualities of mind and heart which they shared when we walked life's journey together. May we help to bring closer to fulfillment their highest ideals and noblest strivings.

May their memories deepen our loyalty to those things which we valued and shared --

faith, love, peace and devotion and our biblical heritage. As long as we live, they too will live; for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.


In Loving Memory

**JOHNNIE
VERA BOND**

**February 21, 1893
November 30, 1985**

*May you dwell under His
wings in complete
SHALOM forever!*

(Inspired from prayers found in Yitzhor Reflections - The New Mahzor - The Prayer Book Press)



If you understand the importance of the information in this newsletter please do two things: (1) share it with as many other people as possible; and, (2) become a contributor and help us do this work.

We are now facing the most difficult financial challenges in our history. Many of our long time contributors have been affected by the current economic crisis.

If you understand the potential impact that this message could have on people who are committed to the teachings of Jesus – help us provide this and other information about our biblical heritage.

If you are able to help and recognize the value of our work – please help us overcome this pressing financial challenge. Please don't assume someone else will do it. Please prayerfully consider this opportunity to make a difference today.

This is one of the most important studies we have published in *Discovering the Bible*. After you read it, I feel that you will understand exactly it could affect our world today. The final paragraph in the enclosed newsletter sums up its importance, especially for Christians:

What is your God's highest priority? Is it making sure people know the right doctrines? Or, is your God's highest priority the protection of life, the preservation of life and the enhancement of the quality of life? The answer to this question is clearly reflected by how a church's leaders and members relate to themselves and those outside their church. **Make sure you understand that Jesus didn't say that the Son of Man's first questions will be – Do you believe in Jesus? Who do you believe Jesus is? Or, what church do you belong to?** *Please don't keep this a secret!*

For many years BHC has been working to educate people about the importance of viewing the words of their Bible through the eyes of those who wrote them instead of the eyes of those who created multiple religious belief systems through their interpretations. BHC has done a good job of achieving this goal.

Many people have benefited from our meetings, publications and website – but very few help by sending contributions. If you are a contributor, it is your gifts that make everything available for others. When was the last time you help BHC? If it has been a while -- or never – please join with those, who care about and understand the importance of BHC's work, and help by contributing now.

The fact that Jesus is very important to over 2 billion people makes the accurate understanding of his teaching one of the most important goals in history. BHC is committed to being a source of solid factual information that will make achieving that goal possible for many people. Your commitment to regularly support our work will go a long ways in helping us accomplish it. You may donate online at <http://www.biblicalheritage.org> or by mail.

The economic crisis has affected many lives, including some of our faithful supporters. Some have been forced to cut back on their support, while others are in need of support themselves, just to survive. After reading the enclosed newsletter, please prayerfully consider our request for help. If you understand the importance of our work – and are able to help -- will you send as generous of gift as possible? ***What is your God's highest priority?***

Shalom & Thank You,
Jim Myers