



UNDERSTANDING OUR BIBLICAL HERITAGES

Learning about the books, beliefs and movements that changed the world.
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BHC News & Updates

We are happy to introduce an article by Rabbi Jeffrey Leynor in this issue. Learn about Christian *Rightness* from a Jewish point of view. Follow the idea of *Rightness* through the *Conversation of Ike and Jim* about what the *Son of God means*, and the article about the *Old Luther*.

Understanding more about the *Old Luther* provides important insights into *the flaws of protest movements*. It is one thing to point out everything that is wrong with existing institutions and tearing them down, but it requires something different to create new institutions to replace them. The big question is what happens if America's foundational social institutions are brought down without something better to replace them?



Jeffrey Leynor



Jim Myers

Are People More Concerned About *Rightness* than *Righteousness*?

By Rabbi Jeffrey Leynor

(Rabbi Jeffrey Leynor has been an important part of the BHC team for many years. He is President and co-founder of the TOV Center. Jim Myers is Vice-President and co-founder of BHC and the TOV Center.)

My friend and TOV Center Partner, Jim Myers, shared a 6 page list of Biblical quotes he received in reaction to a blog he posted about the Real Yeshua -- *Jesus the Jewish teacher*. The point of sending Jim the list was to prove that *salvation comes by grace alone* and *not by doing good works*. But, I noticed something else after reading through that huge list -- *the real point of the writer was to convince and prove his "RIGHTNESS."*

This sense of "RIGHTNESS" is something I've experienced my entire life. Many people are absolutely sure that what they "BELIEVE" is "RIGHT!" Many expend lots of energy on defending their BS (Belief System); some even go to the extreme of killing others. Most don't go that far, thank goodness. The real crime, however, is that most people, including Christians, are not even aware of the Principles, Lessons and Values that Yeshua, the Jewish Jesus, taught. *The amazing thing to me is that those things are clearly recorded in their Bible!*

(Continued p. 4)



Great Program at Allen Public Library

Rabbi Leynor participated in the program with **Imam Abdur Rahman Bashir** (top right) and **Pastor Gordon Illausky** (bottom).

Imam Bashir currently is the Imam of Islamic Association of Allen, Texas and Rev. Illausky is the pastor of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church in Allen. The three clerics were asked to represent their religion and briefly present their thoughts and feelings. They did that very well.

(Continued p. 4)

March Memorials

In Loving Memory

**DOVA
IDA
GREGORY**

b. March 14, 1907
d. March 7, 1997

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

In Loving Memory

**MINNIE
KRAUTH**

d. March 22, 1998

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

In Loving Memory

**JOHN P.
GARGIULO**

d. March 13, 2015

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

In Their Remembrance

*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.*

*As long as we live, they too will
live; for they are now a part of us,
as we remember them.**

*Please take a moment to
simply speak the names of those we
remember this month in our Memorials.*

*For those who knew them, just hearing
the name will bring back memories,
moments in life of shared experiences.*

Let us remember them together.

In Loving Memory

**ROBERT
DEAN**

d. March 22, 1996

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

In Loving Memory

**JOHN W.
"JACK"
NELSON**

b. October 25, 1932
d. March 21, 2008

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



Remembering those who came before us is a very important part of the Biblical Heritage Center's mission. It is our privilege to honor them with Memorials in this newsletter and on our website at <http://www.biblicalheritage.org>.

If you would like to remember a loved one, email us at jim@biblicalheritage.org or contact us at the address below for information.

* Inspired from prayers found in *Yitzhor Reflections* - *The New Mahzor* - The Prayer Book Press.



Ike Tennison



Jim Myers

What does the "Son of God" mean?

Jim: Today's conversation was inspired by James Tabor's Blog "Do you believe Jesus was the "Son of God"?"* I found it very interesting and informative and it raised a lot of questions. The term "Son of God" and the belief in "monotheism" (only one god exists) create a real problem.

Ike: The term "Son of God" immediately creates a conundrum because of the natural world in which we live. If one argues from the narrative of the New Testament writers, one is immediately confronted with a non-natural birth story and a story that calls "monotheism" into question.

Jim: From the time of Jesus until the **Council Chalcedon in 451** Christians argued over this question: *How could a Father God and a Son God not be two gods?* Ultimately the church council resolved the problem by creating the **Doctrine of the Trinity**.

Ike: And the difficulty with the **Doctrine of the Trinity** is this -- *one of the three (Holy Spirit) is the father of one of the three (Son) and the same being as one of the three (God).*

Jim: Now let's use my favorite word "FACT!" Tabor does a very good job of providing evidence to support ten meanings for "Son of God" in the Bible.

Ike: *Is it possible to reconcile the ten different meanings and to relate each one to Jesus? What is the major point of the expression?* God was the King of Israel and Jesus was anointed (the meaning of Christ!) as the King of Israel. He also was a descendant of David!

Jim: This is reflected in the famous **Arian Controversy** over whether God and Jesus are one being or two. The answer **Roman Emperor Constantine the Great** gave to resolve the problem at the Council of Nicea in 325 was that *God and Jesus are of the same substance*.

Ike: That conclusion may have solved the problem of "the Son of God," but didn't answer the question. Selah!

Jim: As you pointed out, "Son of God" isn't a stand-alone term. It is used with others like "Christ" and "Son of David." As Tabor pointed out, to be a "Son of David" requires a human father. However, 400 years after the time of Jesus **Augustine** formulated the **Doctrine of Original Sin**, which made it impossible for a human father to have been involved because Adam's sin would have been passed on to Jesus.

Ike: So the Holy Spirit had to function *in loco parentis* (in place of parents).

Jim: And then Paul created a new option by writing that *Jesus became the Son of God by the resurrection.* Now *one had to die and be resurrected* to be the "Son of God." If that's true, then David wouldn't have qualified to be a "Son of God."

Ike: True, and so the verbal descriptions continue!

Jim: A long time ago, I had a professor in college that used to say, "Stay in the box!" when we were translating ancient Greek. Applying his point to this discussion would mean all of Tabor's options for "Son of God" must be examined and understood in their immediate contexts. *By the way Ike, that professor was you!* **BHC**

* (<https://jamestabor.com/do-you-believe-jesus-was-the-son-of-god/>)

(RIGHTNESS continued from page 1)

Why do they think that because they "BELIEVE" something *ó that's it?* Why do people think that whatever they BELIEVE is so -- *without ever examining, questioning or testing their beliefs by looking at the facts?* For some it may be the fear that if they ever acknowledged the facts, it would disrupt their neat little BS. For others, it might be the fear of living in uncertainty without the comfort a neat little BS might bring. Anyway, I felt Jim's response to the 6 page list was priceless. He wrote:

"Thank you for the list of out of context verses. Please go back and reread them in their contexts and you will discover that 'Believing' is a not a FREE PASS to sinning and that harming or not helping your fellow humans is very important. . . . As you may or may not know, when things are taken out of context, you can make them say anything you want. I just find it amazing that your concept of god seems to lack Justice and Righteousness -- a god who doesn't care about how humans act towards one another."

As a Jew and Rabbi, I've been "evangelized" my entire life. I've been "Saved" more than most of you!!! People always seemed to feel compelled to debate with me and convince me of the "Rightness" of their beliefs. Over the years I have learned many facts, even some that made my own BS uncomfortable, so much so, that I had to change my beliefs to fit those facts. When someone comes to my door and tells me that they have a message from Jesus for me, my usual response is:

"What do you know about his culture, his traditions, his language, his history, or his daily life as a Jew? Can you read or work with Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek? Or, do you just read someone else's translations without knowing anything about the translator? Is your Bible the same Bible that Jesus read in the synagogue every Shabbat (Friday sundown until Saturday sundown)? Do you keep the Shabbat he kept? Are you sure YOU have a message for me about Jesus????? If you want to learn about the Jewish Jesus, come in and we'll talk!"

Just because we have a "RIGHT" to do something, does not necessarily mean doing it is "RIGHT" or more importantly, "RIGHTEOUSNESS"! Here in Texas, guns are big. People feel it's their "Right" to bear arms. I'm not debating that issue, except in the case of those who are mentally ill or abusers prone to violence. People may BELIEVE it is "RIGHT," but will what they do with those guns be "RIGHTEOUSNESS"? Do others have a "RIGHT" to not be around people who make them feel unsafe or in danger? The door swings both ways.

For Yeshua, being *ōRIGHT,ö* is nowhere near as important as doing *ōRIGHTEOUSNESS & JUSTICE.ö* My yardstick is the TOV Standard. If my thoughts, words and actions Protect Life, Preserve Life, Increase the Functionality of Life and Improve the Quality of Life for all people, then I'm not concerned with My "RIGHTNESS." I have no doubt that Yeshua would agree. *What do you think?*

BHC

(LIBRARY MEETING continued from page 1)

Rabbi Leynor said, *ōThe theme of the evening was 'What I Believe,' it is part of their Allen Reads program. It was very well attended for a Thursday night -- 185 people from across the religious communities. It was a delightful experience! Though it was not the ideal set up for certain types of discussion, two important points came out of that evening. The first is that the opportunities for face to face meetings are one of the best ways to interact in a relatively open and safe environment -- to ask questions, for clarification of information, to look at Beliefs, Opinions, Truths, Mythologies and Theologies as Memes (things we believe, not facts). All of the things we can never agree on. When the audience was asked if they wanted this type of program to continue, almost everyone in the audience yelled 'YES!ö People are ready to have much needed 'CONVERSATIONS' that begin like this one.ö The audience liked the new approach and options of the TOV Center very much.*

BHC



Luther nailing the 95 Theses

Lessons From the ðOldö Luther: *Why Protesting Will Not Work*

By Jim Myers

The ðyoungö Martin Luther was the ðfather of protesting.ö His was the first person to be known as a ðPROTEST + ant.ö In 1501, at the age of 19, he entered the University of Erfurt and received his master's degree in 1505 at the age of 23. 1507 at 25, he was ordained into the priesthood. The dean of the University of Wittenberg sent for him to teach theology at 26 and he earned a bachelor's degree in Biblical studies at the same age. At 27 he received another bachelor's degree in the *Sentences* by Peter Lombard. The next year, at the age of 28, he was awarded the Doctor of Theology and became a member of the theological faculty of the University of Wittenberg. At 31, he became Provincial vicar of Saxony and Thuringia, overseeing eleven monasteries. And then at age 33, on October 31, 1517, Luther nailed his *95 Theses* to the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg.

In 1516, Johann Tetzel, a Dominican friar and papal commissioner for indulgences, was sent to Germany by the Roman Catholic Church to sell indulgences to raise money to rebuild St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Luther objected to a saying attributed to Johann Tetzel that "*As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory (also attested as 'into heaven') springs.*" He insisted that, since forgiveness was God's alone to grant, those who claimed that indulgences absolved buyers from all punishments and granted them salvation were in error. Christians, he said, must not slacken in following Christ on account of such false assurances. When Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door that day, he had no intention of creating a new religion.

On October 31, 1517 he could not have in his wildest dreams envisioned how drastically his total life and reality was about to change. One year later, by the time he turned 34 his Ninety-five Theses had swept across the German nation. At 37 he would be excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church and find himself outside of its salvation and had to create a new option. At age 41 he would marry the former nun Katharine von Bora, and at 46 the *Augsburg Confession* would be read to the Imperial Diet. By November 10, 1530 when he turned forty-seven, already behind him were his ðbreakthroughö to Reformation theology, his rejection of the Roman Catholic church, the *Peasants' War*, the major battles of the *Sacramentarian* controversy, and the submission of the *Augsburg Confession*. This was the end of the period of the ðyoung Luther.ö He lived another fifteen years, dying of heart failure on February 18, 1546, at the age of sixty-two.

It is puzzling that biographers and historians neglect the period of the ðold Luther,ö in light of the vast amount of information that exist about his personal life and professional career in those later years. In his home Luther was the center of attention and surrounded by children, students, friends and guests. At meals, various students and guests assiduously copied down all Luther's utterances, preserving a vast wealth of information. The picture that emerges is that of a devoted, often tender-hearted father, a loving, teasing, and sometimes irritable husband, a man of strong friendships, and a compassionate pastor and counselor.

He continued his labors at the University of Wittenberg. In 1531 he presented a series of lectures on *Galatians*. From time to time he lectured on selected *Psalms*. Beginning in 1535, he undertook to expound the book of *Genesis*, a labor that occupied him until 1545. He participated in the reform of the theological faculty in 1533 and in the reorganization of the university curriculum in 1536. He frequently took part in disputations. In 1535 he became dean of the university, a position he held for the rest of his life. Luther spent many hours in training students for the ministry and placing them in parishes. For years Luther and his coworkers labored on a German

translation of the *Old Testament*, publishing their efforts a part at a time. In 1531 they completed a revision of the *Psalms*, in 1532 a German edition of all the *Prophets*, and in 1533 various other books. Finally, in 1534, the full German Bible appeared. After Luther's death, a revision of the translation, begun in 1539, appeared in the year 1546.

The old Luther, however, was very much concerned with affairs beyond Wittenberg. Through written opinions and published treatises he participated fully in several bitter controversies. It is this activity, and especially his published polemics, that historians find most difficult to explain, integrate and harmonize with their views of the young Luther. Some of the later polemics were so violent and vulgar that they not only offended contemporaries, they remain offensive to this day.

In 1523 the young Luther penned a tolerant and sympathetic text called *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*:

If the Jews should take offense because we confess our Jesus to be a man, and yet true God, we will deal forcefully with that from Scripture in due time. But this is too harsh for a beginning. Let them first be suckled with milk, and begin by recognizing this man Jesus as the true Messiah; after that they may drink wine, and learn also that he is true God. For they have been led astray so long and so far that one must deal gently with them, as people who have been all too strongly indoctrinated to believe that God cannot be man.

Therefore, I would request and advise that one deal gently with them and instruct them from Scripture; then some of them may come along. Instead of this we are trying only to drive them by force, slandering them, accusing them of having Christian blood if they don't stink, and I know not what other foolishness. So long as we thus treat them like dogs, how can we expect to work any good among them? Again, when we forbid them to labor and do business and have any human fellowship with us, thereby forcing them into usury, how is that supposed to do them any good?

If we really want to help them, we must be guided in our dealings with them not by papal law but by the law of Christian love. We must receive them cordially, and permit them to trade and work with us, that they may have occasion and opportunity to associate with us, hear our Christian teaching, and witness our Christian life. If some of them should prove stiff-necked, what of it? After all, we ourselves are not all good Christians either. Here I will let the matter rest for the present, until I see what I have accomplished. God grant us all his mercy. Amen. (<http://bit.ly/2ITWMid>)

Twenty years later, in 1543 the old Luther wrote *On the Jews and Their Lies* and his *On the Ineffable Name and On Christ's Lineage*. Below is his introduction:

I had decided not to write anymore, neither of the Jews, nor against the Jews. Because I have learned, however that those miserable, wicked people do not cease trying to win over to themselves us, that is, the Christians also, I have permitted this booklet to go forth that I might be found among those who have resisted such poisonous undertaking of the Jews, and have warned the Christians to be on their guard against them. I would not have thought that a Christian would permit himself to be fooled by the Jews to share their exile and misery. But the Devil is the God of the world, and where God's word is not, he has easy sailing, not only among the weak, but also among the strong. God help us. Amen.

After many accusations and charges against the Jews, Luther provides the following instructions for Christians (<http://bit.ly/2mqwO9f>):

- (1) *Avoid their synagogues and schools and warn people against them. And such should be done to the glory of God and Christendom, that God may see that we are Christians and have not knowingly tolerated such lying, cursing and blaspheming of His Son and His Christians. For what we so far have tolerated in ignorance (I myself did not know it), God will forgive us. Now that we know it, however, and in spite should before our very noses tolerate such a building for the Jew in which they blaspheme, curse, spit upon and disgrace Christ . . . If he were living today he would be the first to put fire to the Jew schools and houses.*
- (2) *Refuse to let them own houses among us. For they practice the same thing in their houses as they do in their schools. Instead, you might place them under a roof, or stable, like the Gypsies, to let them know that they are not lords in our country as they boast, but in exile as captives; like without ceasing they howl bloody murder and complain about us before God.*
- (3) *Take away from them all of their prayer books and Talmuds wherein such lying, cursing, and blaspheming is taught.*
- (4) *Prohibit their Rabbis to teach. For they have forfeited the right to such an office, because they keep the poor Jews captive with the passage of Moses 7:11,12, who there commands them to obey their teachers under threat of losing body and soul. Moses clearly adds, "What they teach you according to the law of the Lord." This the profligates pass over, and use the obedience of the poor people for their own willfulness against the law of the Lord, and pour out for them such poison and blasphemy.*
- (5) *Protection for Jews on highways be revoked. For they have no right to be in the land, because they are not lords, nor officials. They should stay at home. I am told that at this time a wealthy Jew is riding with twelve horses in our country. He wants to become a Kochab. He practices his usury on princes and lords, land and people. High officials close an eye to it. If you princes and masters do not forbid land and highways to such usurers, I would like to assemble a cavalry against you, because you will learn from this book what the Jews are and how they are to be treated and their activities not to be protected. For you should not and cannot protect them unless you want to be partners of their abominations. What good would be the result, you may well consider and perish.*
- (6) *Usury be prohibited, which was prohibited by Moses, where they are not lords in their own country over strange lands, and take away all the currency and silver and gold and put it away for safe-keeping. For this reason, everything they have they have stolen from us (as said above) and robbed through their usury, since they have no other income. Such money should be used as follows: whenever a Jew is truly converted, he be given one, two, or three hundred flo (measure of money) according to his person, that he may begin to support his poor wife and child and/or support the aged and infirm. For such property which was obtained dishonestly is cursed where it is not turned to good use with God's blessing.*

Even contemporary Protestants were shocked by these writings. Rivaling his anti-Jewish treatises for vulgarity and violence of expression is *Against Hanswurst* of 1541. Luther outdid even the violence and vulgarity of *Against Hanswurst* in his 1545 *Against the Papacy at Rome, Founded by the Devil*. On the heels of these treatises he published a series of scatological and violent woodcuts that, in most graphic terms, suggested how good Christians should treat the papacy. In these and other treatises, Luther bestialized his opponents, most frequently likening them to pigs or asses, or called them liars, murderers, and hypocrites. They were all minions of the devil. In the woodcuts by Lucas Cranach that Luther commissioned at the end of his life, he had the papal church depicted as being pooped from an enormous she-devil and suggested, once again in picture, that the pope, cardinals, and bishops should be hung from gallows with their tongues nailed alongside.



The Pope as the Whore of Babylon

Early in his career as a reformer, Luther's reading of the Bible had convinced him that practically from the beginning of the world there had been a perpetual, unchanging struggle between the true and false church. He saw this struggle involving a recurrent contest between true and false prophets and apostles. Believing that mankind did not change and that the devil never slept, he saw the struggles that went on in the days of the prophets and the apostles as being no different from the struggles going on in his own time. Their experiences established a paradigm of the dynamics of all sacred history. Within this paradigm, the papacy was the antichrist; the Turks were Gog; contemporary Jewry was the remnant of a rejected people suffering under God's wrath; and his Protestant opponents were contemporary false prophets and apostles. They were all members of the false church; behind them loomed the figure of the devil, the father of lies.

The older Luther was sorely disappointed with the course of events from the mid-1520s onward. The Peasants' War of 1525, the visitations of 1527 and 1528, the threatening recesses of the diets of 1529 and 1530, the formation of the Protestant League of Schmalkalden in 1531 — these and similar events in the late 1520s and early 1530s were both cause and effect of a transition from a revolutionary movement consisting primarily of ideologically committed individuals to a more conservative movement led by rulers of territories and city-states.

This transition was unavoidable if the Reformation was to endure. It is one thing to initiate a revolution; it is quite another to pass it on to your descendants. The former may be accomplished with belief and individual effort; the latter requires institutions and bureaucracy. But these new circumstances imposed new and difficult requirements on Luther. They called for a willingness to compromise, to accommodate belief to political necessity, to take sides publicly in disputes where no great principles were at stake and where ideological conviction found itself leagued with political self-interest. Too great a readiness to compromise or reach accommodation would have opened him to the charge of hypocrisy and insincerity, accusations fatal to his authority. Too great a rigidity and dedication to complete consistency and purity would have deprived him of influence over crucial events. Principles had to bend to necessity, but Luther could not bend. This reveals a primary flaw in protest driven movements — *they attack institutions but cannot build them.* **BHC**

Sources:

¹ A great deal of the above information came from *Luther's Last Battles* by Mark U. Edwards, Jr. published in *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, Volume 48, Numbers 1 & 3; April-July 1984; pp. 125- 140.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther

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BHC

We hope you like the new format of the newsletter.

Our goal is to provide information about the most read book in history and the movements related to it that have emerged and evolved over the centuries.

Religion has taken center stage in the political arena. It is more important than ever for people to have solid information about Christianity and Judaism – *otherwise they will be manipulated by people with very different values.* Our goal is to provide an overview and solid factual information of subjects and events needed to make all Religious Belief Systems transparent.

***Your input is appreciated,
so please let us know what specific subjects
you would like for us to address in future issues.***

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