

UNDERSTANDING OUR BIBLICAL HERITAGES

Learning about the books, beliefs and movements that changed the world.
2017 • NUMBER 1 • FEBRUARY

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BHC News & Updates

As you probably noticed we changed the name of our newsletter to better reflect our goals and mission. We believe this will provide a much better way for delivering more information to you. Let us know what you think.

The past few months have been focused on creating a new section on the website called "The Real Yeshua Project." It is about rediscovering the Jewish Jesus and viewing his life, teachings and values through his Jewish culture.

Another new feature we hope to be able to continue is called "Conversations of Ike & Jim." We picture having our readers at the table as we discuss topics we hope you will find interesting and informative.



Ike Tennison



Jim Myers

Conversations With Ike & Jim **Early Christians and the Problem of the Jewish People and their Scriptures**

*(This is a new format for presenting topics about information we consider important about our Biblical Heritages. If you have topics you would like for us to discuss, send them to us. **Ike Tennison** is the President and co-founder of BHC and a former university professor. **Jim Myers** is Vice-President and co-founder of BHC and the TOV Center.)*

The following conversation between **Ike Tennison** and **Jim Myers** was inspired by a passage from **Dr. Bart D. Ehrman's** book, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*.

Jim: On page 187 Ehrman wrote: "One of the ironies of early Christianity is that Jesus himself was a Jew who worshiped the Jewish God, kept Jewish customs, interpreted the Jewish law, and acquired Jewish disciples, who accepted him as the Jewish messiah. Yet, within just a few decades of his death, Jesus's followers had formed a religion that stood over-against Judaism. How did Christianity move so quickly from being a Jewish sect to being an anti-Jewish religion?"

Ike: This is clearly true. It is an irony. I question the idea of "early Christianity" when describing the historical Jesus.

Jim: That question never comes up in many churches. But, based on what Ehrman said about Jesus, wasn't he simply a Jew? (Continued p. 3)



John Wycliffe
(c. 1329-1384)

The First English Bible

John Wycliffe was born in Hipswell, Yorkshire, and attended Balliol College, Oxford. He was educated at Queen's and Merton colleges of Oxford and became a teaching fellow of Merton College about 1356. Wycliffe was a brilliant scholar and a superb debater whose lectures

were crowded with students. As time passed, he became concerned about the corruption in the church and the papacy. The church had become so wealthy and powerful that even the king of England had to bow to it. (Continued p. 4)

February Memorials

In Loving Memory

**PHYLLIS
WYRE**

d. February 8, 1998

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

In Loving Memory

**ALBERTA
HARLESS
MYERS**

b. August 18, 1887
d. February 5, 1979

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

In Loving Memory

**GLORY ANN
HODGES
ROSS**

b. January 25, 1978
d. February 19, 2008

*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
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.**

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 by the BHC Memorial Garden and Memorials. The Memorial Garden is on the website at <http://www.biblicalheritage.org>. Please visit it the next time you are on the Internet.

If you would like to add your loved one to this section, send their information to us. There is no charge, but donations are accepted. Remember those who have meant so much to you in the BHC Memorial Garden.

In Loving Memory

**MARIA
ESTELLA
RUIZ**

February 22, 1996

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

In Loving Memory

**JAMES
HENRY
MYERS**

b. September 6, 1881
d. February 13, 1953

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

In Loving Memory

**REED
DUNCAN
HAMILTON**

b. October 13, 1945
d. February 5, 2016

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

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

(CONVERSATION continued from page 1)

Ike: Yes, Jesus was an *observant Jew* within his own culture!

Jim: Of course being a Jew in his culture didn't mean that all Jews agreed about what Judaism was. There were many different sects ó *Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and others*; as well as the *Temple cult*.

Ike: True, but Jesus made his purposes clear in his recorded sayings.

Jim: Interestingly, as *early Christianity* evolved, his purposes took a back seat (an idiom) to disagreements about who he was. Ehrman made another interesting point on page 187 ó *At some point — probably before his death, but certainly afterward — Jesus's followers came to think of him as the Jewish messiah. This term messiah was understood in different ways by different Jews in the first century. . .*

Ike: Yes, the disagreements about who Jesus was radically affected how the Jews perceived him and how *believers* understood him.

Jim: Based on what we read in the *Synoptic Gospels*, Jesus spoke directly to Jew about Jewish things, and his followers were Jews. So, I guess what the disagreements we read about in the Gospels were Jews disagreeing about Jewish things, like *the Messiah*.

Ike: The audience of Jesus consisted of Jews ó *and the messages of Jesus were linked to the Torah*. The identification of Jesus as the Messiah was clearly misunderstood by most Jews.

Jim: You hit the nail on the head (another idiom). *The Sermon on the Mount* clearly shows Jesus in the role of a *teacher of the Torah*. His teachings are almost all linked to the Jewish Scriptures, which were the only Scriptures of his Jewish followers.

Ike: The *Christians* looked to the Jewish Scriptures as the foundation for their beliefs in lieu of any other written support ó *until the books of the New Testament began to be written* ó especially by Paul!

Jim: I think we need to stress that this was a big problem for Gentile Christians. Gentiles weren't listed as *God's chosen people* in the same Scriptures they used to prove their beliefs about Jesus. They needed the Scriptures of the Jews, but without the religion of the Jews. I think this conflict over the Scriptures played a key role in their attempts to separate themselves from the Jewish people. We see the views of some very important *early Gentile Christians* in their writings (Ehrman quoted the following on pages 188-189):

- (1) “. . . we find Christian writings such as the so-called **Letter of Barnabas**, a book that some early Christians considered to be part of the New Testament canon, which asserts that Judaism is and always has been a false religion, that Jews were misled by an evil angel . . .”
- (2) “. . . the second-century **Justin Martyr** claimed that the reason God commanded the Jews to be circumcised was to mark them off as a special people who deserved to be persecuted.”
- (3) “We also find authors such as **Tertullian** and **Origen** claiming that Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies in 70 C.E. as a punishment for the Jews who killed their messiah . . .”
- (4) “. . . and authors such as **Melito of Sardis** argued that in killing Christ, the Jews were actually guilty of killing God.”

Ike: Yes, I can easily see that *Gentile Christians* would desire to separate themselves from the Jews, especially with the advent of the books of the *New Testament* and the doctrines contained therein.

Jim: Well, we began this discussion with a quote from Ehrman, now let's end it with another important quote:
öClearly we have come a long way from Jesus, a Palestinian Jew who kept Jewish customs, preached to his Jewish compatriots, and taught his Jewish disciples the true meaning of the Jewish law. By the second century, though, when Christian scribes were reproducing the texts that eventually became part of the New Testament, most Christians were former pagans, non-Jews who had converted to the faith and who understood that even though this religion was based, ultimately, on faith in the Jewish God as described in the Jewish Bible, it was nonetheless completely anti-Jewish in its orientation.ö **BHC**

(WYCLIFFE continued from page 1)

Wycliffe responded by devoting more time to speaking and writing against this corruption. Needless to say, the pope and the established church bitterly resented the attention he was bringing on them. *Ultimately, the power of the Roman Catholic Church ruled, and university officials let Wycliffe go.*

Wycliffe's message was for people to come back to the more biblical Christianity that the Church practiced earlier. Soon his views were accepted and spread by traveling preachers, of whom many were his own students from Oxford. Some became known as **Lollards** (meaning öhereticsö). *A key appeal of Wycliffe's message was that the people needed the Bible in their own language for a real revival to take place.* He steadfastly preached this -- öit helpeth Christian men to study the Gospel in that tongue in which they know best Christ's sentence.ö



Beginning of the Gospel of John

Even though Wycliffe is generally associated with the first translation of the entire Bible into English, it is uncertain whether Wycliffe made the translation himself or whether several of his students helped with the translation project while he oversaw the work. Wycliffe's first version of the *New Testament* in Middle English was published **1380**, and a second edition appeared in **1388** after his death. *The first edition was a word-for-word translation of the New Testament from the Latin Vulgate.* A problem with the translation is that in some places translators followed the Latin so closely that their translation makes no sense in English.

The Wycliffe translation of the *Old Testament* was completed about **1382**. **Nicholas of Hereford**, Wycliffe's friend, is believed to have been the primary translator before trouble broke out in Oxford in 1382 and forced him to leave. Nicholas did not do all the work himself. There is evidence of five different translators. In a version copied directly from Nicholas's original (Douce 309) a note in red ink after *Baruch 3:20* states in Latin: öHere ends the translation of Nicholas of Hereford.ö Realizing the shortcomings of the first edition, **John Purvey**, a follower of Wycliffe, is credited with producing a second edition in **1388** -- *four years after Wycliffe's death in 1384.*

Leaders of the Catholic Church condemned the Wycliffe Bible and both Purvey and Hereford were thrown into prison, while some of their friends were burned at the stake with Bibles tied around their necks. A synod held at Oxford in **July 1408** declared it forbidden to even read the Wycliffe's Bible. Anyone caught reading it would *suffer the forfeiture of their "land, cattle, life, and goods."* It is recorded that the price for borrowing a Wycliffe

Bible for an hour was a load of hay. Interestingly, the unintended consequences of the threats of severe penalties for reading it produced the opposite effect. First, *they aroused curiosity in people to discover what the*



forbidden Bible said. Second, it made people want to learn how to read. So ultimately Wycliffe not only accomplished his goal of giving the English a Bible written in their language, he ignited the desire for literacy among the common people.

In 1415 the **Council of Constance** condemned Wycliffe's writings and ordered his bones to be dug up and burned, and his ashes were scattered in the River Swift. It is said that Wycliffe's ashes were carried out to the sea and his teachings spread to other lands, which is why Wycliffe is sometimes called *the morning star of the Reformation.** **BHC**

* **SOURCE:** *The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible* by Paul D. Wegner © 1999; Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, Michigan; pp. 281-284.

Our Biblical Heritages The Great Schism of 1054

Almost from the moment **Roman Emperor Constantine the Great** began his campaign to bring Christianity under his umbrella and control, *tensions between Christians in the Eastern and Western regions of the Empire were present*. Before Christianity became a factor, conflicts already existed. A major event was the breakup of the Roman Empire in 285 by **Roman Emperor Diocletian**. The Empire had become so large it was difficult to govern as a whole, so he divided it into two parts: the **Western Roman Empire** and the **Eastern Roman Empire** (the *Byzantine Empire*). Differences in cultures and languages were also important factors that caused the two halves to slowly drift apart. The language in the **West** was **Latin**, while in the East it was Greek.

As the gap widened, the Western and Eastern Churches developed different views, doctrines and rites. Some of the major disagreements that ultimately led to the **Great Schism** are these:

- (1) The Western Church inserted three words into the revised version of the *Nicene Creed* at the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus (431): "*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.*" The Eastern Church disagreed with this addition and called it non-canonical.
- (2) The Eastern Church and Western Church disagreed about which one had *jurisdiction over the territory of the Balkans*.
- (3) Another dispute was over the **Patriarch of Constantinople** being named *the Ecumenical Patriarch*. The Western Church argued that the title meant *the Universal Patriarch*. Their position was related to another dispute over how much power the **Patriarch of Rome** (the **Pope**) had over the other patriarchs. The other patriarchs agreed that *the Pope should have higher honor than the others*, but they did not agree that this meant *the Pope should have authority over the other patriarchs*.
- (4) Another point of contention related to the **Eucharist** (*the rite where bread and wine are used to symbolize Christ's body*). The Western Church changed their ritual by replacing the traditional bread

with unleavened bread, which the Eastern Church condemned. The Eastern Church began dipping the bread in the wine and that was condemned by the Western Church.



**Ecumenical Patriarch
Michael Cerularius**

Vs.



Roman Pope Leo IX

The final break began in **1053** when **Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople**, circulated a treatise criticizing in strong terms the practices of the **Western Church**. *Cerularius excommunicated all bishops of Constantinople who used the Western Church's rituals and closed down their churches*. A very angry **Pope Leo IX** demanded that Cerularius submit to the office of the Pope, and declared that any church which refused to recognize the pontiff as supreme was *an assembly of heretics -- a synagogue of Satan*.

In **January 1054**, **Pope Leo IX** sent letters with a delegation headed by **Humbert of Silva Candida** to **Cerularius**. Before they could complete their mission, **Leo died in April**. Humbert apparently lacked diplomatic skills and was very arrogant and rude to his counterparts in the East. *Cerularius refused to speak with him*. Aggravated by this treatment, Humbert and the other delegates marched into the St. Sophia Church in Constantinople, *the seat of Patriarch of Constantinople*, on **July 16, 1054**, three months after Pope Leo's death in April and nine months before the next pope took office. Humbert placed a decree of the excommunication of Cerularius on the altar of the church. He then turned and made a grand exit, stopping at the door to shake the dust off his feet and calling out to God to judge the actions of the leader of the Eastern Church.

How did Cerularius respond? He convoked a Church Council and *once more condemned the practices of the Western Church*. *Humbert was anathematized*, which meant they were considered completely torn from the Church until they repent. Anathema was not final damnation, because they believed that God alone is the judge of the living and the dead, and up until the moment of death repentance is always possible. The purpose of public anathema was twofold: *to warn the one condemned and bring about his repentance, and to warn others away from his error*. The Council also *condemned all of those involved in drawing up the decree of excommunication*. From that point until 2016, the **Eastern Orthodox Church** and the **Western Roman Catholic Church** have existed as completely separate entities.

On February 12, 2016, the headline in USA Today announced a truly historical event -- *Pope, patriarch meet in Cuba nearly 1,000 years after split*. The article began with this: *Despite famine, religious wars, worldwide conflict and the spread of civilization, the heads of the Roman Catholic and the Russian Orthodox churches haven't spoken since the Great Schism of 1054 shattered Christendom.* **BHC**

Sources & Resources for more information:

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2016/02/12/pope-francis-patriarch-kirill-roman-catholic-church-russian-orthodox-church-meet/80278172/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East%E2%80%93West_Schism

<http://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/901-1200/schism-between-east-and-west-began-11629784.html>

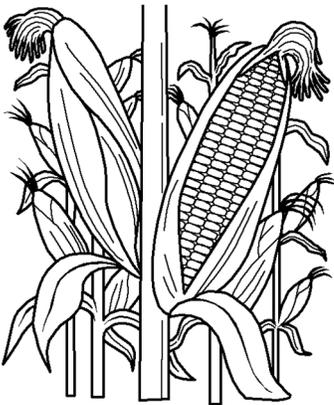


The Real Yeshua Project
Rediscovering the Jewish Jesus
Viewing his life, teachings & values through his Jewish culture.

Are You Seeing What Yeshua Said?

We are very excited about **The Real Yeshua Project** because it allows us to bring years of our research about the Jewish Jesus into one place. Since he is a central character in the Belief Systems of over two billion people scattered around the world, *ōseeing correctly what he saidö* is very important. Often, the most simple and familiar words contain big surprises for modern readers, for example the underlined words in the verse below:

At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. (KJV Matthew 12:1)



That is what I *ōsawö* in my mind when I read *ōears of corn.ö* To even think that those words could mean anything else wasn't even an option for my mind. Later I created a guideline, after experiencing what I describe below, to make sure I was *ōseeingö* what the authors of the words of my Bible saw when they wrote them.

A word is a symbol or group of symbols with an attached bundle of associations (memes) which are a product of the Source's culture, historical time period, geographical location and personal experiences.

The **Source** is the person writing or speaking the words; we are called **Receptors**.

Applying this guideline to the verse above was an eye-opening experience. Take another look at the verse again and ask this question *ó Who is the Source of those words?* The answer is *ōthe King James translators.ö* We apply the guideline by answering the following questions about the King James translators:

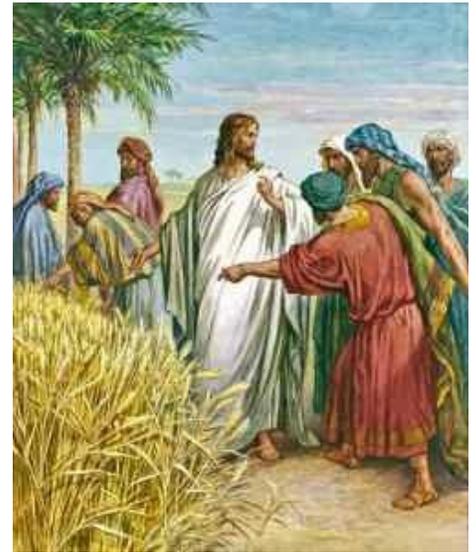
- (1) **What was their culture?** *They were British and spoke English.*
- (2) **What was their historical time period?** *Their translation was published in 1611 CE.*
- (3) **What was their geographical location?** *Their work was done in England.*
- (4) **What were personal experiences?** *The **Second Oxford Company** (committee) translated the KJV Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, and the Book of Revelation. Members of that committee were Thomas Ravis, George Abbot, Richard Eedes, Giles Tomson, Sir Henry Savile, John Peryn, Ralph Ravens, John Harmar, John Aglionby and Leonard Hutten. They were all members of the Church of England.*

It is very important for readers of the King James Version to understand the following things. *First, Yeshua's culture was Late Second Temple Judaism and he spoke at least Hebrew and Aramaic; he lived over 1500 years before the translators; his geographical locations were Galilee, Samaria and Judea; and, he was Jewish and not a member of the Church of England.* Therefore, I needed to find out what *ōears of cornö* meant to the translators first. In searching for an answer to that question, I came across an interesting and relevant example from World War II:



During World War II, an **American** government agency received a request for "**corn**" from the **British** government. The Americans did not know that what the British called **corn** was what they called **wheat**. The British did not know that what the Americans called **corn** was what they called **maize**. Needless to say, the British were surprised and not happy with what they received **maize** from the Americans. This little bit of linguistic ignorance cost tax-payers a few million dollars to repair. The pictures on the left and right are what the King James translators pictured as **corn**.

*The point to remember is that even though the British and Americans saw the same symbols – **c-o-r-n** – the word had two completely different bundles of associations attached to those symbols.*



It wasn't until the discovery of America that what I pictured as corn was introduced to the English by Native Americans. The first British settlement in America was founded during the same time period the translators were translating the King James Version. When we turn to Yeshua's culture, time period and geographical location to see what he saw, we discover that he saw the same thing as the British -- **grain**. Now let's update the translation of the verse to this (with some additional important cultural factors underlined for you to consider):

At that time Yeshua went through the grain fields on the Shabbat. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them.

Now we know that *we see what Yeshua said* and for many readers, it wasn't what they saw before. **BHC**

BHC Information Resources Bible Study Tools

The following are on the **BHC website** and waiting to help you when you study your Bible -- *and they are free!*

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p><u>Hebrew Bible Study Tools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>BHC Hebrew Transliterator</i> ● <i>Parallel Hebrew-English Bible</i> ● <i>Interlinear Hebrew Bible</i> ● <i>Tanakh Hebrew-English Bible</i> ● <i>JPS 1917 Edition Tanakh Hebrew-English Bible</i> ● <i>Encyclopedia Judaica</i> ● <i>Jewish Encyclopedia</i> <p><u>Greek Bible Study Tools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>BHC Greek Transliterator</i> ● <i>Parallel Greek-English Bible</i> ● <i>Interlinear Greek Bible</i> ● <i>Septuagint Greek English Old Testament</i> | <p><u>Latin Bible Study Tools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Latin Vulgate (with English)</i> ● <i>Latin-English Dictionary</i> <p><u>English Bible Translations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>American Standard Version 1901</i> ● <i>Amplified Bible 1987</i> ● <i>Common English Bible 2011</i> ● <i>Douay-Rheims 1899 American Edition</i> ● <i>Geneva Bible 1599 Ed.</i> ● <i>King James Version 1789</i> ● <i>Names of God Bible 2011</i> ● <i>New International Version 1978</i> ● <i>New King James Version 1979</i> ● <i>Young's Literal Translation 1898</i> | <p><u>Dictionaries</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Dictionary.com</i> ● <i>Funk & Wagnalls</i> ● <i>Merriam-Webster</i> ● <i>Webster's 1913 & 1828 Dictionaries</i> ● <i>Wordsmyth</i> ● <i>English Roots, Prefixes & Suffixes</i> <p><u>Torah Commentaries</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>JTS Torah Online</i> ● <i>Reform Judaism Torah Study</i> <p>Go to the <i>Bibles Menu</i> at http://biblicalheritage.org and choose <i>Bible Study Tools</i>.</p> |
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BHC

Reply online or print out this page and mail it to us.

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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and all of our other information sources possible –
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