



UNDERSTANDING OUR BIBLICAL HERITAGES

Learning about the books, beliefs and movements that changed the world.
2017 • NUMBER 3 • MAY

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Shavu'ot

(Pentecost)

Sundown May 30 to
sundown June 1, 2017

Yeshua Torah Reading Schedule

04/29/17

Exodus 16:25-17:16
Isaiah 58:13

05/06/17

Exodus 18:1-20:22
Isaiah 6; 61:6-10

05/13/17

Exodus 21:1-22:25
Jeremiah 34:1

05/20/17

Exodus 22:26-23:33
Isaiah 49:3

05/27/17

Exodus 24:1-18
Isaiah 60:17-61:9



Ike Tennison



Jim Myers

A Conversation about ōthe Bibleö

By Dr. Ike Tennison & Jim Myers

Jim: The Bible is obviously important for us at the Biblical Heritage Center ó and many other people too. Why do you think it plays such an important role in so many lives?

Ike: I think the most common concern of human beings is the effect of death. Is that simply the end? Is it a passage to something else? What else is there?

Jim: We know that when people face situations related to death or other uncertainties in life they often turn to their Bibles for answers. However, in reality, the answers they usually come up with are actually from their öbiblical heritages,ö their *belief systems*, and not literally from the Bible.

Ike: Even if they do cite some Scripture from the Bible, their interpretation of that is based on their öbiblical heritages.ö
(BIBLE continued on p. 6)

When Nothing Will Ever Be the Same

By Rabbi Jeffery Leynor



In my professional and personal experience with Grief, Loss and Returning to Life, one of the toughest issues is realizing that everything you knew, everything you planned and hoped for, everything you trusted in will never happen. We feel lost, rudderless, unsure and afraid of what will be. We ask, will life ever be ònormalö again? Will we ever laugh again, have joy again and celebrate again? How can we respond when, òNothing will ever be the same again?ö

I always encourage my clients to exercise the only control we have, which is choosing our response to what life gives us by making decisions that empower us, help us grieve, move us forward and help us find SOME comfort, healing, peace and strength.
(LIFE continued p. 7)

April Memorials

In Loving Memory

**SIDNEY
PERRY
DOSCH, JR.**

Born: October 18, 1938

Died: May 17, 2006

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

In Loving Memory

**SIDNEY
BERRY
WARD, SR.**

October 3, 1891

May 27, 1976

*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.**

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

Remembering those who are no longer with 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. If you would like to remember a loved one, email us ó jim@biblicalheritage.org ó or contact us at the address below.

Shavuot

By Jim Myers

In the Torah, this festival is called by three names ó the Hag HaKatzir (harvest festival), *Hag HaShavu'ot* (festival of weeks) and *Hag Habikkurim* (festival of first fruits). *Shavu'ot* is one of the three pilgrimages or *Shloshet Haregalim* in the *Book of Exodus* (23:14-17; 34:18-23) in which *every male among you must appear before the Lord God.* It is not a holiday in its own right because it is connected to **Pesach** (*Passover*). It comes 50 days after *Pesach* and is also called **Pentecost** () in ancient Greek, which means *[the] fiftieth [day]*. The 50-day period called the Omer, the period between the harvest of barley at *Pesach* and the harvest of wheat at *Shavu'ot*. **This year Shavu'ot begins at sundown May 30 and ends at sundown June 1.**

(continued on next page)

Pesach and *Shavu'ot* share many customs. For example, *matza*, unleavened bread made out of the first crop of barley, plays a major part in *Pesach*, while leavened bread made out of the first crop of wheat, *ōwave loaves*, are a major part of *Shavuot*. Two of these specially prepared loaves were the first fruits brought to the Jerusalem Temple by each Israelite farmer. The farmers would present the loaves to the priests while chanting a Hebrew text reaffirming the fealty to God and the common history of the tribes. The priests then offered them to God, together with wine and a complicated array of animal sacrifices, much like those sacrificed on *Pesach* - seven lambs, two rams and two goats.

Josephus (first century C.E. historian) describes large attendances in Jerusalem for *Shavuot*, and the *Mishnah* depicts the bringing of first fruits to the Temple in Jerusalem as a gala affair. The *Book of Jubilees* adds an additional reason for celebrating *Shavuot*: *to commemorate and renew the pact between God and Noah when God promised never to flood the earth again.*

This form of the holiday could not last, and like so much of the Jewish religion it had to be adapted to the new realities that faced the Jewish people after the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. The rabbis of the first decades after the destruction of the Temple gave *Shavuot* a different meaning from that of the agricultural festivals specified in the Torah. Today, *Shavu'ot* is a celebration of the giving of the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai. **BHC**

SOURCES:

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.596763>
<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/shavuot-history/>
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shavuot>

Some Tips for Better Understanding Yeshua's Life & Teachings

By Jim Myers

Two very important things you can do to better understand Yeshua's life and teachings are reading the weekly portions of the **Yeshua Torah Reading Schedule** and becoming familiar with the **Jewish calendar** (names of the months & dates of festivals). In the *Book of Acts*, the apostles wrestled with question of whether or not Gentiles should be required to convert to Judaism in order to be members of Yeshua's movement. Their decision was *ōno*, but they agreed on specific requirements, which included this statement:

For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Shabbat.
(Acts 15:21)

It means new Gentile members were expected to attend synagogues every Shabbat so they would hear the words of Moses (Torah) being read and discussed. Since Yeshua said that an important part of his mission was *ōto correctly interpret the Torah* (Matthew 5:17), it was important for Gentiles to understand what Yeshua was interpreting.

What were the synagogues like at that time? An account of a visit by Yeshua to his hometown synagogue is recorded in the *Gospel of Luke*:

So Yeshua came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Shabbat day, and stood up to read. And he was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the scroll, he found the place where it was written:

(TIPS continued on p. 4)

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(TIPS continued from p. 3)

“The Spirit of Yahweh is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of Yahweh.”

Then he closed the scroll, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. (Luke 4:16-20)

This provides one of the earliest accounts of a Shabbat synagogue service. Let’s review what happened:

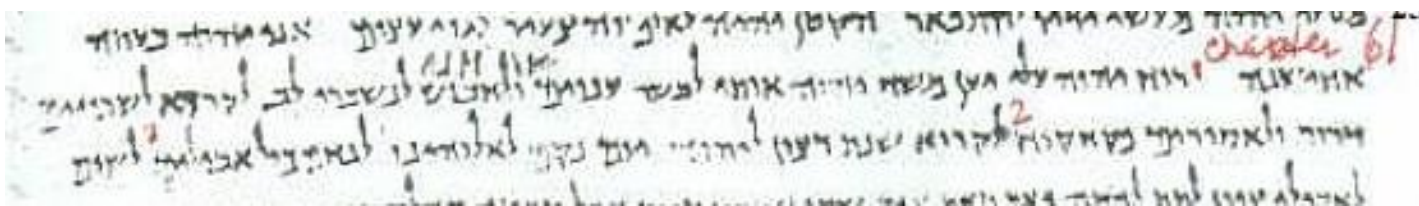
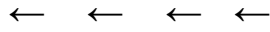
- (1) Yeshua stood up to read from a scroll.
- (2) The attendant of the synagogue handed Yeshua a scroll of Isaiah.
- (3) Yeshua found the portion in the scroll that he read.
- (4) He read it to the audience.
- (5) When he finished, he rolled up the scroll and handed it back to the attendant of the synagogue.
- (6) He then sat down.

This is very similar to Torah reading rituals in synagogues today. Interestingly, the account from Luke is one of the earliest recorded accounts of activities in early synagogues and it is often quoted by Jewish sources. Among the Dead Sea Scroll discoveries were two Isaiah scrolls. The one in the picture is called *“The Great Isaiah Scroll.”*



There were no chapter or verse markers in ancient scrolls, but the portion Yeshua read in the synagogue in modern Bibles began with Isaiah 61:1 and ended in the middle of verse 2.

Below is a picture of the section Yeshua read from that scroll. The English letters and numbers were added by scholars. Keep in mind that Hebrew is read from right to left.



Today, synagogues follow Torah reading schedules determined by the organizations they are affiliated with. Some are designed for congregations to read the complete Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) every year, while other schedules take three years to complete. The earliest Torah reading schedule we have found so far is a **triennial schedule**, which means it took three years to read the complete Torah. However, there are significant differences between it and modern schedules, especially the *haftarah* readings.

This brings me back to the importance of being familiar with the Jewish calendar. Below are the months of the Jewish calendar along with where they are found on our calendar.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (1) Nissan (March-April) | (7) Tishri (September-October) |
| (2) Iyar (April-May) | (8) Heshvan (October-November) |
| (3) Sivan (May-June) | (9) Kislev (November-December) |
| (4) Tammuz (June-July) | (10) Tevet (December-January) |
| (5) Av (July-August) | (11) Shevat (January-February) |
| (6) Elul (August-September) | (12) Adar (February-March) |

The Jewish calendar has a cycle of nineteen years of which seven are leap years in which an extra month of Adar is added before the regular Adar. The extra month is called **Adar I**, while the regular month of Adar becomes **Adar II**.

The ancient three-year cycle Torah reading cycle we call **The Yeshua Torah Reading Schedule** divides the Torah into the following sections:

- (1) **First Year** ó *Genesis 1:1 – Exodus 12:28*
- (2) **Second Year** ó *Exodus 12:29 – Numbers 6:21*
- (3) **Third Year** ó *Numbers 6:22 – Deuteronomy 34:12*

Readings from Isaiah and other scrolls are called the **Haftarah reading**. They follow the Torah reading on each Shabbat and on Jewish festivals and fast days today. The **haftarah** is thematically linked to the **parasha** (Torah portion) that precedes it. The origin of haftarah reading is lost to history, but several theories have been proposed. One is that it arose in response to the persecution of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes which preceded the Maccabean revolt, wherein Torah reading was prohibited. The Talmud mentions that a **haftarah** was read in the presence of Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, who lived c.70 CE. As pointed out above, Jewish sources quote the account from Luke as even earlier evidence of **haftarah** readings in synagogues.

When we look through the ancient triennial Torah reading schedule we discovered that the only time the section Yeshua read appears is the 4th Shabbat of the month of Heshvan (October-November). The Torah portion that was probably preceded Yeshua's reading is Deuteronomy 15:7-17:13. This year the 4th Shabbat of Heshvan falls on November 11th.

We encourage you to make the **Yeshua Torah Reading Schedule** part of your Shabbat ritual. To help you do this, we added it to this newsletter and the **Yeshua Torah Reading Schedule** for the month will be posted on the front page of each issue. Follow the readings and consider the life and teachings of Yeshua in light of those readings ó just like his Jewish and the Gentile members of the Yeshua movement did every Shabbat. **BHC**

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(BIBLE continued from p. 1)

Jim: Back in the late 1980s I created the **Bible Study Guideline** that we still use today to help people deal with **belief conflicts** and questions about the Bible and their öbiblical heritages.ö

*My Belief System will be large enough to include the facts,
open enough to be examined and questioned,
and flexible enough to change if errors or new facts are discovered.*

Ike: Yes, but too many people do not know that guideline nor are they willing to risk any change to their current belief system.

Jim: So, are you saying that they are more interested in beliefs about their Bibles than the facts about their Bibles?

Ike: Yes, because change is difficult for anyone ó and, especially, when the change impacts their religious beliefs.

Jim: I have noticed that öfactö on many occasions. Now letø talk about some facts about öthe Bible.ö One fact is that there are many books called öthe Bibleö but those books are not all the same.

Ike: Very true. What we call öthe Bibleö never existed in antiquity. And that is a basic fact that people need to know!

Jim: In the church I attended during my younger days, we literally believed our *King James Bible* was öthe Bibleö that God gave mankind.

Ike: That was and is still true for far too many people!

Jim: I was amazed to discover that different Bibles share some books, but also have different books, for example Jewish, Catholic and Protestant Bibles.

Ike: I have always tried to teach that there are 3 Bibles ó and comment on the differences of their content.

Jim: Being aware of those differences really changes the way we understand verses we have quoted for many years. One that immediately comes to mind is 2 Timothy 3:16 ó ö*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...ö* If Paul wrote those words, the only Scriptures that existed at that time were the Jewish Scriptures.

Ike: Yes, but this raises some major questions ó e.g., *what does the word “Scripture” mean in 2 Timothy 3:16? What was known at that time to be “Scripture”?*

Jim: Those are very important questions and their answers should include as many facts as possible. Something else that must be considered is the fact that for each book in the Bible there are multiple ancient manuscripts ó and they are not identical.

Ike: We need to learn and to teach all of these basic facts to help people have more informed belief systems.

Jim: I agree. We have been spending a great deal of time working on **The Real Yeshua Project** lately. When we go back to the oldest complete manuscripts of the **Synoptic Gospels**, they were produced after 350 CE.

Yeshua was crucified around 30 CE, so that means there is a gap of over 300 years between the time Yeshua taught and the earliest manuscripts of the Gospels were made. Consider the size of that gap in light of the fact that the United States is only 240 years old.

Ike: The major question, in my opinion, is whether the manuscripts actually reflect what went on in Jesus' day *ó between and among the people ó and what he actually taught*. So, the Bible *ó as important as it is to many of us ó* is still open to rigorous research! *Selah*. **BHC**

(Email suggestions for future discussions or comments to jim@biblicalheritage.org)

(LIFE continued from p. 1)

Even before my beloved wife Karen passed, the fearful specter of the unfamiliar haunted my thoughts. *What will happen with my kids, my career, my life?* Throughout my studies, there are certain sayings and words which I carry with me. First, from the *Wisdom of the Sages*, *óDaya Le'Tzar'arah B'sha'atahó* which is Aramaic for -- *óIt's enough to worry about your problem in its own hour.ó*

Practically, if we worried and had anxiety about everything, it would be like a Tsunami, so we take one thing at a time, one day at a time, and then the next. After a while, I was aware of the fact that, even though nothing would ever be the same -- *It Would Be Different*. Different can be scary, unsettling, unfamiliar, but not necessarily Bad; just Different!

I can't tell you why these things happen, but my observations are that most people never change anything, move or grow unless there is a crisis, trauma or death. Those things ensure that nothing will be the same. My father of blessed memory always said, *óLife is not static, it's dynamic, ever changing.ó*

The Chinese word for *ódangeró* is also the word for *óopportunity.ó* *In the midst of the losses we all face are opportunities as well*. Even though things will never be the same, this may also be freeing. *We do not have to continue to live our histories*. It enables us to re-imagine our lives and reinvent ourselves. I have watched a number of people who end up following their lost passions along the way. Others find new meaning and purpose by following what tugs upon their hearts.

I am reminded of a story in the Torah. After the Israelites left Egypt, they are trapped by the Sea of Reeds. The Egyptian chariots are bearing down on them. Moses is crying out to God. God responds, *óWhy are you always crying out to me -- JUST MOVE FORWARD!!!ó* The first person enters the water and the sea splits.

While nothing will ever be the same, we have the power to decide *ówhat making it different will be.ó* Even in grief, sadness, and loneliness -- *remember to take each problem in its own hour, and just move forward*. *Choose Life when you make decisions and Do acts of TOV! Shalom*. **BHC**

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The Spanish Inquisition

By Jim Myers

The **Spanish Inquisition** began with a papal bull issued by **Pope Sixtus IV**. **King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain**, who also backed **Christopher Columbus**, were behind the pope's decision to issue the decree. Isabella was a "fervent" Christian and she asked the Pope for permission to set up an Inquisition to weed out heresy in the Christian world.

SOURCE: <http://journal.jitt.travel/spanish-inquisition-comes-to-an-end/>

The Pope obliged, issuing on **November 1, 1478**, a papal bull called *Exigit Sincere Devotionis*. Ferdinand and Isabella followed by issuing a royal decree on **September 27, 1480**.¹

*The royal decree explicitly stated that the Inquisition was instituted **to search out and punish converts from Judaism** who transgressed against Christianity by secretly adhering to Jewish beliefs and performing rites and ceremonies of the Jews. No other group was mentioned, no other purpose indicated — a fact that in itself suggest a close relationship between the creation of the Inquisition and Jewish life in Spain. Other facts, too, attest to that relationship.*²

Unlike other inquisitions, the Spanish Inquisition sought to only punish Jews who had converted to Christianity, but were not really "sincere" in their conversions. The charge was that they continued secretly to practice Judaism. The job of the Inquisition was to find such people, torture them until they admitted their "crime," and then kill them. Of course, their property was also taken and found its way into the assets of the state and church or their officials.

The year **1492** marked **the fall of Granada**, the last Muslim stronghold on the Iberian Peninsula. **This brought an end to the Muslim domination of Spain, which had lasted nearly 800 years.** Shortly thereafter, Ferdinand and Isabella decided to throw all the Jews out of Spain, too. **On August 2, 1492 the Jews of Spain (150,000 to 200,000) were forced to abandon their vast possessions and leave.** An estimated 60,000 Jews were allowed to stay, if they agreed to convert. **The day after the expulsion, August 3, 1492, Christopher Columbus embarked on his famous voyage.** Many have speculated that Columbus was of Jewish ancestry (see book *Christopher Columbus's Jewish Connection* by Jane Francis Amler).³

Historian Will Durant cites Juan Antonio Llorente, General Secretary of the Inquisition from 1789 to 1801, when estimating that **31,912 people were executed from 1480-1808**. He also cites Hernando de Pulgar, a secretary to Queen Isabella, in estimating that **2,000 people were burned before 1490**. Philip Schaff in his *History of the Christian Church* reported that **8,800 people were burned in the 18 years of Tomas de Torquemada** served as the Grand Inquisitor of Spain. R. J. Rummel cites some historians who give figures of up to **135,000 people being killed under Torquemada**. This number includes **125,000 asserted to have died in prison due to poor conditions**, leaving **10,000 sentenced to death**. There are no death toll figures available for the massacres of 1391, 1468 or 1473.⁴

BHC

¹ <http://www.aish.com/jl/h/cc/48951681.html>

² The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain by B. Netanyahu © 1995; Random House, New York, NY; p. 3

³ <http://www.aish.com/jl/h/cc/48951681.html>

⁴ <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20060903192705AAZ0Dnd>

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