

# The Christian Bible from a Different Angle

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After studying Judaism as a religious Jew I thought it would be interesting to look at the Christian Bible from a Jewish perspective. Mostly I did this because I have family members who are still Christians. I was amazed at some of the things that I found in the so-called "New Testament."

I began my examination in the Book of Acts. It is important to keep in mind as Isaiah says "*For Torah and for testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*" Any thing that the New Testament says that is true isn't new and everything that the New Testament says that is new isn't true.

Many times we approach the New Testament (from a Jewish perspective) as if there were nothing true in it. However, it is sometimes amazing to see that at times the New Testament will make brief mention that if considered from a Christian perspective would seem either mysterious or unimportant, but from a Jewish perspective it would make sense in light of Jewish practice.

For example, Acts 2:42 "*They were constantly devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*" It is startling that in the margin it notes that "*Literally: **the** prayers.*" The proper reading of this verse is: "*They were constantly devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to **the** prayers.*"

What were/are these specific prayers?

*"Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he went into his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem; and he continued kneeling on his knees three times every day, making requests and giving thanks before his G-d, as he had been doing before...13 Then they answered and spoke before the king, 'Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the injunction which you signed, but keeps making his petition three times a day'."— Daniel 6:11, 13*

Jewish law requires all male Jews to pray at three particular time frames every day, in correlation to the 3 main time-frames of sacrifices which are to be made in the Temple. Daniel, as well as the other prophets of his era, including Ezra, who were members of the Sanhedrin at that time, made a ruling on the structure and words of these prayers which Jews pray three times a day. The faithful among the people of Israel kept the ruling of this court, in accordance with Deuteronomy 17:8-13. Jews continue to do so even unto modern times. This is very likely what the word "*the*" in the phrase "*the prayers*" is referring to.

Notice that Daniel had his windows opened toward Jerusalem. This was in fulfillment of the supplication of King Solomon who asked:

*“If they sin against you, for there is no man who does not sin, and you are angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive to the land of the enemy, far or near: 47. Yet if they take thought in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to you in the land of them that carried them captive, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness: 48. And so return to you with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, who led them away captive, and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city which you have chosen, and the house which I have built for your name: 49. Then hear you their prayer and their supplication in heaven your dwelling place, and maintain their cause”*—I Kings 8:46-49

King Solomon’s petition is composed of several parts concerning how the prayers offered by Israel in captivity should be made to God. First, King Solomon recognizes that men sin. Second, Israel will take thought of the land of promise (Israel) and repent, make supplication in the land of their captivity admitting their sin. Third, they will pray in the direction of their land, and the city which God caused his name to dwell and, finally, the house that Solomon built.

Solomon was specific on the direction that the Jewish people were to pray. It would have been enough for Solomon to say that they should pray toward the house that he built, but he did not, he began by saying they should pray toward the Land of Israel, then the city where God caused his name to dwell, and finally toward the house that Solomon built.

It is also important to point out that God accepted Solomon’s supplication.

*“And the Lord said to him, I have heard your prayer and your supplication, that you have made before me; I have hallowed this house, which you have built, to put my name there forever; and my eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually”*—I Kings 9:3

For Daniel to pray in a manner different from the way of his forefathers was unthinkable. Just as Daniel was careful to maintain the direction of prayer established by Solomon he would maintain the orders of the Sanhedrin of Ezra to pray three times a day.

It is essential that we recognize that Daniel 6:10-13 is doing more than just mentioning some extra religious fervor Daniel had taken upon himself. By mentioning first, that Daniel was praying in the direction of Jerusalem and then mentioning that he prayed three times a day Daniel 6:10-13 establishes not only the importance of keeping the laws written in the Torah but also the oral tradition that is, in part, established by the Sanhedrin. The position of these two elements of prayer next to one another established their equality of obligation for the modern reader. For the ancient Hebrew there was never a thought to think twice about the authority of Oral Law. Only today in the modern

world have we furthered the division between ourselves and God by establishing standards of false requirements to “prove” the Oral Torah’s authority. The book of Daniel provides us with an incontrovertible proof for the authority of the Oral Torah.

There are a number of similar passages in the Christian Bible which refer to the tradition of three times a day prayer. Most Christians probably overlook these places, having no idea to what they refer. See for example Acts 10:9 “...Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour [around noon time] to pray.”

Psalm 55:17 says "As for me, I shall call unto G-d, and the ALL-TRANSCENDENT One will save me. 18 Evening, morning, and noon, I shall make supplication and moan; and He has heard my voice."

Concerning Stephen in Acts 6-7

*"They placed forward false witnesses who were saying, 'This man constantly speaks against this Holy Place (the Temple in Jerusalem) and the Law (the Law of Moses); 14 for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jes'us, will destroy this Place and alter the customs which Moses has handed down to us.'"*— Acts 6:13

Although I am not a Christian, my life perspective is based on the Tanakh, which is the Jewish Bible, also called the "Old Testament," and on the 'customs of Moses' which are mentioned in this verse. One need not be a genius to know that the general perspective of the majority of Christianity is that the Law of Moses as a whole has been abolished, or, at the least, altered to fit the 'new covenant' which Christianity teaches has arrived. Having this general perspective of Christianity in mind, does one notice something strange about this passage?

Verse 13 says that the accusations brought against Stephen were made by a “*false witness.*” This means, according to the writer of the Book of Acts, we are repeating the words of a false witness to say that Stephen taught that Jes’us altered the customs of Moses and that Jes’us will destroy the Holy Temple!

Stephen is not the only person who was accused by false witnesses concerning the destruction of the temple. Jes’us was accused of claiming that he would destroy the temple and raise it in three days. This was according to John 2:19-20 either a misunderstanding or misrepresentation of Jes’us’ claim to be able to raise the “Temple” in three days—temple meaning his body! The use of Temple and body interchangeably is continued in 1 Corinthians 3:17.

No less a person than Jes’us said: *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law (Torah) or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."* Why do so many people today claim that the Torah is no longer binding when the person who supposedly made it no longer binding says he did not come to destroy the law? Further, clearly the book of Acts makes a case that it was a false witness against Stephen who

claimed that Stephen taught that Jes'us taught that the Torah was no longer binding! Note it.

A common theme in the New Testament that is almost completely ignored is the continued references to the importance of keeping the Torah.

Peter's vision in Acts 10 of 'unclean' animals seems to challenge Peter's adherence to the Torah. The heavenly voice commands Peter to kill and eat, but Peter refuses because he is steadfast in keeping the Torah. Peter's refusal to obey a heavenly voice that tells him to break Torah is startling, but not unknown in Judaism. A Jew is not allowed to break the Torah for we are told:

*"It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it: 13. Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it: 14. But the word is very near to you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it"—*  
Deuteronomy 30:12-14

Once the Torah was given at Mt. Sinai it was no longer possible to violate, change or add to the Torah—even if you are told to do so by a heavenly voice!

*"After he had greeted them, he began to recount one by one the things which G-d had done among the nations through his serving. 20 And when they heard it they began magnifying G-d; and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all passionate for the Torah! 21 But they have been told concerning you, that you are instructing all the Jews who are among the nations to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk in accordance to the traditions. 22 "What, then, is to be done? They will surely hear that you have come. 23 "Therefore do that which we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; 24 take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their dues so that they may shave their heads; then all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but rather that you yourself also walk according to the order, keeping the Torah. 25 However, concerning those of the nations who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from whatever is strangled and from sexual immorality." 26 Then Paul took the men, and the following day, purifying himself along with them, went into the Temple giving notification of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them."—Acts 21:19-26*

Keeping the Torah and being steadfast in their observance was important even to the so-called Jerusalem "church." In fact, we see from the above passage that the rumor that Paul was violating Torah was unacceptable. So much so that he was required to prove his continued adherence to the Torah by taking a Nazirite vow!

Torah is the center of both Jewish and non-Jewish life. Anyone who wishes to truly serve God through adherence to the Torah; for the Jew this is the 613 mitzvot that he is

required to keep. For non-Jews keeping the Noachide Laws is an obligation for all who desire a relationship with God. Any attempts to violate Torah, or to claim that Jes'us somehow called for the destruction of the Temple or the removal of observance of the Torah was treated by the disciples of Jes'us as lies. The work of false witnesses bent on misrepresenting the teachings of their leader Jes'us. Christians, who claim to be adherents of the teachings of Jes'us, ought to consider this and then notice that they have been called forth, by the church and its traditional teachings, to make Torah no longer obligatory.

Although I do not put very much stock in the "New" Testament, it is interesting to notice how much teaching by the original disciples of Jes'us is at loggerheads with what Christianity has taught for thousands of years. Anyone who truly wishes to serve God should realize that the true things in the New Testament are nothing more than a restatement of traditional Jewish teachings. Everyone would be better served learning these teachings from their source, the Jewish people, than from learning them through second-hand garbled information. Only the Torah can give the proper instruction for holy and devoted lives to God.