

BEMA

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BEMA

Notes on the Christian faith from a Jewish perspective, based upon the works of rabbis such as Ray Vander Laan and Marty Solomon.

[BEMA Discipleship](#) - Marty Solomon

[That the World May Know](#) - Ray Vander Laan

1 RVL Israel

God's people are called to be city gates, standing stones, and at the crossroads

Mashal - Hebrew Parable (Strong 4911)

Jesus stops funeral procession.- cf Elisha "A prophet has awakened in Israel"

1.1 Cities

- Always found on untillable land
- Req water source - Place king can store food
- Defensive position
- Place of safety
- Rich lived in cities
- Surrounded by daughter villages

Don't weep for me, weep for yourselves. The enemies will throw your babies against the wall

You are a city on a hill

4000 extant parables from biblical times, but only two involve cities:

- Hillel
- A certain man when down to Jericho

1.1.1 Gezer

- Located on Via Maris near coastal plain and Aijalon Valley
- 4000BC Glassade
- 2000BC Cannanite
- 1300 DC Joshja
- City not taken by Joshua. Egyptian king gave Gezer as dowry 950BC
- Destroyed
- Destroyed again by Babylon
- Conquered 15 times in 3500 years

1.1.2 Hazor

- City in Northern Israel along Via Maris - Fortified by Solomon

1.1.3 Jaffa = Joppa

- Chief seaport to float cedars of Lebanon to Jerusalem for the temple

1.2 Trade Routes

- Via Maris along coast
- Kings' Highway east of Jordan Valley - more difficult than Via Maris

1.3 Gates

- Defensive
- Define relationship to the world
- Unusual to breach the gates
- Place of commerce
- Place of justice Boaz went to city gates
- Lot - an elder in Sodom and Gomorrah
- Crucifixion just outside city gates
- After Babylonian captivity, Jews separated from wider society
- Nehemiah rebuilt the gates

1.4 Canaanite cosmology

- World is conflict between chaos and order (Ma'at)
- Yamm is Canaanite God of primordial chaos
- Genesis - in the beginning it was chaos, and the spirit of God hovered over the earth
- Plagues: 10 gods addressed by 10 plagues
- Fall: return to chaos
- Jesus: I am the gate
- Care for the poor in your gate (**BibleNIV?**, Deuteronomy 15:7)

1.5 Levant Geography

Coastal - Philistines Foothills

- Can't farm due to chalk in soil
- Shephelah

Judean Mountains

- Farmed in terraces

Back Slope

- 12 miles
- Wilderness

Desert

- Rift Valley

Valleys - Run East West

- Aijalon - Joshua made sun stand still (**BibleNIV?**, Joshua 10:12-13)
 - Pass of Beth Horon - Macabees victory
 - Road to Emmaus (**BibleNIV?**, Luke 24:13-35)
- Sorek
- Elah
- Lachish

1.6 Religious Movements **RVL**

1.6.1 Pharisees

- From Hasmodian freedom fighters of Maccabee era
- 6000 middle-class merchants
- Accepted oral interpretation of OT
- Supported synagogue for Torah study and interpretation
- Strict, detailed obedience to Torah and oral law

1.6.2 Saducees

- Descended from Zadok, Solomon's highest priest
- Formed 200BC
- Priests who were wealthy, aristocratic, and Hellenistic
- Only Torah as God's law
- Temple was the only path to God
- No bodily resurrection
- Dominated Sanhedrin

1.6.3 Essenes

- Resisted Maccabees claim to high priesthood in 170BC
- Preferred isolation in wilderness
- Ritual cleansing
- Unclear if origin from Pharisees or Saducees

1.6.4 Zealots

- Formed in opposition to Roman census 6 AD lead by Judas the Galilean
- Extreme Pharisees living in Galilee
- Similar theology to Pharisees, but only God could rule
- Slavery was worst evil
- Taxes due only to God (refused to pay Roman tax)
- Adhered to Torah interpretation

1.7 Standing Stones **RVL**

- Matzevah = Testament to what God has done
- Both lawful practice and pagan
- I Peter 2- You are living stones
- Jacob - Beth El - God has been here. Sets up standing stone
- Joshua sets up standing stones in Jordan river (**BibleNIV?**, Joshus 4:3-9)
- Moses sets up 12 pillars in (**BibleNIC?**, Exodus 24:4)

References