

BEMA

Jonathan Salo

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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
- King's 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 (mishpat) 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 Cannanite 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 - David and Goliath
- Lachish

Adullam - Story of two caves

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?**, Joshua 4:3-9)
- Moses sets up 12 pillars in (**BibleNIC?**, Exodus 24:4)

2 Chronology

2.1 Babylon

-Captivity 586BC - Origin of Scribe, Torah Teacher, Hasidim, Synagogue

2.2 Persia - Post Exilic 500BC

- Return from captivity
- Temple rebuilt
- Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel
- Saducees

2.3 Greece - 333 BC

2.3.1 Ptolemies 333-198BC

-Jews left Judaism -> Hasidim renewed Torah Study

2.3.2 Selucids - 198BC

- Hellenism by force
- Resisted by Hasidim

2.3.3 Maccabees 167- 37 BC

- Hasmodian family led revolt in 167 BC
- Supported by Saducces
- Became Hellenistic

2.3.4 Rome 63 BC - 325 AD

- Pompey subdued area in 63BC. Made treaty with Antipater of Idumea -> Herod becomes king

2.4 Negev

2.4.1 Jericho

- City of palm trees (**BibleNIV?**, Deuteronomy 34:3)
- Herod's palace

2.4.2 Masada

- Eliezer Ben Yair and 960 people fled here in 70AD
- Possible place where David fled (**BibleNIV?**, I Samuel 23)
- Stronghold referenced in I Chronicles 12:8

2.5 En Gedi

- “Fountain of the Goat”

2.6 Avdat

2.7 Arad

References