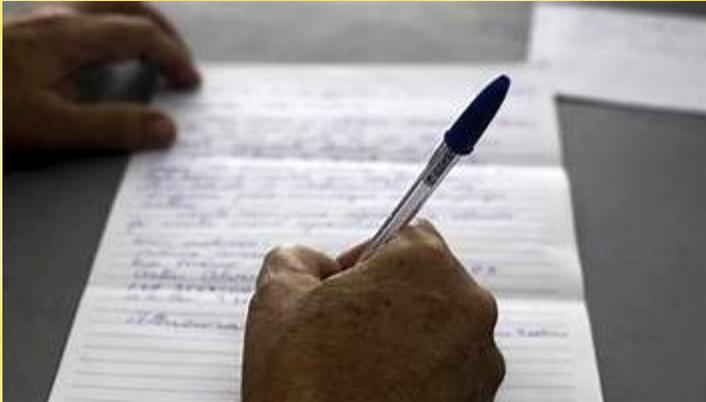


Watchman's Monthly Teaching Letter Number 84



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By Teacher Clifton A. Emahiser

**AN ANGLO-ISAAC-SON CAUCASIAN
CULTURE
AWARENESS TEACHING LETTER**

THIS IS MY EIGHTY-FOURTH MONTHLY TEACHING LETTER AND ENDS MY SEVENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION. If you will remember, we are doing a series defending the writings of Josephus. It is not the objective here to imply that Josephus was perfect in all that he wrote, but he was a man of Israel who normally would have been a priest of the first of twenty-four courses had not Herod begun appointing to the priesthood non-Israelites of a non-Levitical background. Many today are accusing Paul and Josephus of being Canaanite-Jews. As Paul was not a Canaanite-Jew, but of the Tribe of Benjamin; in similar manner Josephus was not a Canaanite-Jew, but of the Tribe of Levi. This is important, as today we would be hard-pressed to prove many passages in our Bible without the writings of Josephus.

One of the very most important of Josephus' writings is his recording of the absorption of the Edomites, which he surely wouldn't have recorded had he been like Herod who burned all the genealogical records to prevent anyone from knowing his low, ignoble lineage. How foolish the charge that Josephus was an Edomite-Jew! We find this at Josephus' Antiquities 13:9:1, which reads as follows:

“But when Hyrcanus heard of the death of Antiochus he presently made an expedition against the cities of Syria, hoping to find them destitute of fighting men, and of such as were able to defend them. However, it was not till the sixth month that he took Medaba, and that not without the greatest distress of his army. After this he took Samega, and the neighbouring places; and, besides these, Shechem and Gerizzim, and the

nation of the Cutheans, who dwelt at the temple which resembled that temple which was at Jerusalem, and which Alexander permitted Sanballat, the general of his army, to build for the sake of Manasseh, who was son-in-law to Jadau the high priest, as we have formerly related; which temple was now deserted two hundred years after it was built. Hyrcanus took also Dora and Marissa, cities of Idumea, and subdued all the Idumeans; and permitted them to stay in that country, if they would circumcise their genitals, and make use of the laws of the Jews; and they were so desirous of living in the country of their forefathers, that they submitted to the use of circumcision, and the rest of the Jewish ways of living; at which time therefore this befell them, that they were hereafter no other than Jews.”

Can you picture Josephus recording this if he were related to these Edomites or any other Canaanite tribe? How ridiculous! If Josephus were a Canaanite-Edomite-Jew, as many accuse him of being, he would rather have burned such damning evidence!

I would warn again of concocting a faulty premise without any evidence, as one must then prop it up endlessly (wittingly or unwittingly) with one falsehood right after another. This is tantamount to declaring – and all one need do is observe the clergy today who have never read this passage in Josephus, and have adopted the faulty premise – “The Edomite-Jews are God’s chosen people”! It would seem that those who know Israel Identity would avoid such false conclusions. To claim that Josephus was a Canaanite-Edomite-Jew is equivalent to today’s clergy claiming “the Jews are God’s chosen people”! A footnote to this passage in Josephus reads:

“This account of the Idumeans admitting circumcision, and the entire Jewish law, from this time, or from the days of Hyrcanus, is confirmed by their entire history afterwards. See Antiq. 14.8.1; 15.7.9. War 2.3.1; 4.4.5. This, in the opinion of Josephus, made them proselytes of justice, or entire Jews, as here and elsewhere, Antiq. 14.8.1.

However, Antigonus, the enemy of Herod, though Herod were derived from such a proselyte of justice for several generations, will allow him to be no more than a half Jew, 15.15.2. But still, take out of Dean Prideaux,

at the year 129, the words of Ammonius, a grammarian, which fully confirm this account of the Idumeans, in Josephus: 'The Jews,' says he, 'are such by nature, and from the beginning, but Phoenicians and Syrians; but being afterwards subdued by the Jews and compelled to be circumcised, and to unite into one nation, and be subject to the same laws, they were called Jews.'

Dio also says, as the Dean there quotes him, from book 36.37, 'That country is also called Judea, and the people Jews; and this name is given also to as many others as embrace their religion, though of other nations.' But then upon what foundation so good a governor as Hyrcanus took upon him to compel those Idumeans either to become Jews or to leave the country, deserves great consideration. I suppose it was because they had long ago been driven out of the land of Edom, and had seized on and possessed the tribe of Simeon, and all the southern part of the tribe of Judah, which was the peculiar inheritance of the worshippers of the true God without idolatry, as the reader may learn from Reland, Palestine, 1.154, 305, and from Prideaux, at the years 140 and 165." [One would do well to check the references cited in this footnote above. Also, to give one an idea of the nature of the Idumeans, one might check out Wars 4:5:1-5]

Are we going to cut our own throat and destroy our own family by denying this evidence, by proclaiming to everybody we know, the false accusation accusing Josephus of being a Canaanite-Edomite-Jew? Without this critical evidence of the nation of Judaea absorbing the Edomites, we would be totally in the dark today, and we too would be parroting along with the clergy, "the Jews are God's chosen people." How senseless to withhold this crucial evidence in light of our Identity!

Josephus Details John the Baptist's Imprisonment

The passage in which we are interested for this is Mark 6:17-18: "For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." According to Josephus, this prison was at the fortress-palace of Machaerus, near the northeastern shore of the Dead Sea. In the Harper's Bible Dictionary we find the following:

“Machaerus ... a fortress-palace some thirty-six hundred feet above the Dead Sea, about fifteen miles southeast of the mouth of the Jordan River. A fortress built on the site by Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.) was destroyed by Pompey’s general Gabinius; it was then extensively rebuilt by Herod the Great to include a palace within the fortress.

Because of its proximity to Arabia and its location above the north-south road from the Red Sea to Damascus, the site was regarded as strategically important by Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (4 B.C.-A.D. 39). According to the Jewish historian Josephus, Machaerus was the scene of the imprisonment and death of John the Baptist. Another account of John’s imprisonment and death is found in Matt. 14:3-12 and Mark 6:17-29.”

Herod was moved to this because of Herodias, an ambitious woman who was his second wife. Herod had first married a daughter of the Arabian king, Aretas IV. Then he became enamored with his half-niece Herodias (daughter of his half-brother, Aristobulus) who was married to Herod’s half-brother (brother includes also half-brother) Philip (her half-uncle; cf. Josephus *The Antiquities of the Jews* 18:5:1-2). They had a daughter, Salome. Herod divorced his wife in order to marry Herodias who had divorced Philip. John had repeatedly denounced this marriage as unlawful.

Josephus 18:5:1 reads: “About this time Aretas (the king of Arabia Petrea) and Herod had a quarrel, on the account following: Herod the tetrarch had married the daughter of Aretas, and had lived with her a great while; but when he was once at Rome, he lodged with Herod, who was his brother indeed, but not by the same mother; for this Herod was the son of the high priest Simon’s daughter. However, he fell in love with Herodias, this last Herod’s wife, who was the daughter of Aristobulus their brother, and the sister of Agrippa the Great.

This man ventured to talk to her about a marriage between them; which address when she admitted, an agreement was made for her to change her habitation, and come to him as soon as he should return from Rome; one article of this marriage also was this, that he should divorce Aretas’s daughter. So Antipas, when he had made this agreement, sailed to Rome;

but when he had done there the business he went about, and was returned again, his wife having discovered the agreement he had made with Herodias, and having learned it before he had notice of her knowledge of the whole design, she desired him to send her to Macherus, which is a place on the borders of the dominions of Aretas and Herod, without informing him of any of her intentions.

Accordingly Herod sent her thither, as thinking his wife had not perceived anything; now she had sent a good while before to Macherus, which was subject to her father, and so all things necessary for her journey were made ready for her by the general of Aretas's army and by that means she soon came into Arabia, under the conduct of the several generals, who carried her from one to another successively; and she soon came to her father, and told him of Herod's intentions.

So Aretas made this the first occasion of his enmity between him and Herod, who had also some quarrel with him about their limits at the country of Gamalitis. So they raised armies on both sides, and prepared for war, and sent their generals to fight instead of themselves; and, when they had joined battle, all Herod's army was destroyed by the treachery of some fugitives, who, though they were of the tetrarchy of Philip, joined with Aretas's army. So Herod wrote about these affairs to Tiberius; who, being very angry at the attempt made by Aretas, wrote to Vitellius, to make war upon him, and either to take him alive, and bring him to him in bonds, or to kill him, and send him his head. This was the charge that Tiberius gave to the president of Syria.”

As ordinary people we tend to view John's death as a tragedy, but we need to remind ourselves that death is not punishment for one of Yahweh's children, but a release from an imperfect life transferring to life eternal. It is but the door to an unending presence with our majestic Almighty. John's death graphically illustrates Matt. 10:39.

You may find Josephus' comment on Herod executing John the Baptist interesting; it attests the historicity of the gospel record, and is also independent testimony of the veneration in which John was held by the common man. Josephus thus gives us the background for this episode. It

took place at Herod's palace in Machaerus, in Perea, east of the Dead Sea. The long journey John's disciples made to carry the news to Yahshua in Galilee makes it clear that they saw a significant connection between John the Baptist and Yahshua the Christ. It is remarkable how much more we can comprehend Mark 6:17-18 once we have the testimony of Josephus!

Josephus Wraps up Acts 23:2-3

To see how Josephus finishes the story of Acts 23:2-3, it will be necessary first to read the passage: "And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?"

The high priest commanded, "smite him on the mouth" – a method of silencing a speaker common in the East to this day. But for a judge thus to treat a prisoner on his "trial," for merely introducing his defence by a protestation of his integrity, was infamous.

"Yahweh shall smite thee" – as indeed He did; for he was killed by an assassin during the Jewish war, Josephus' Wars of the Jews, 2:17:9. The epithet "thou whited wall" – that is, hypocrite (Matt. 23:27). This epithet, however correctly describing the man, must not be defended as addressed to a judge, though the remonstrance which follows – "for sittest thou," &c. – ought to have put him to shame. Thus, Josephus confirms justice to Paul at Wars 2:17:9:

"But on the next day the high priest was caught where he had concealed himself in an aqueduct; he was slain, together with Hezekiah his brother, by the robbers: hereupon the seditious besieged the towers, and kept them guarded, lest any one of the soldiers should escape.

Now the overthrow of the places of strength, and the death of the high priest Ananias, so puffed up Manahem, that he became barbarously cruel; and, as he thought he had no antagonists to dispute the management of affairs with him, he was no better than an insupportable tyrant; but Eleazar and his party, when words had passed between them, how it was not proper

when they revolted from the Romans, out of the desire of liberty, to betray that liberty to any of their own people, and to bear a lord, who, though he should be guilty of no violence, was yet meaner than themselves; as also, that, in case they were obliged to set someone over their public affairs, it was fitter they should give that privilege to anyone rather than to him, they made an assault upon him in the temple; for he went up thither to worship in a pompous manner, and adorned with royal garments, and had his followers with him in their armor.

But Eleazar and his party fell violently upon him, as did also the rest of the people, and taking up stones to attack him withal, they threw them at the so[p]hister, and thought that if he were once ruined, the entire sedition would fall to the ground. Now Manahem and his party made resistance for a while; but when they perceived that the whole multitude were falling upon them, they fled which was [sic. way] every one was able; those that were caught were slain, and those that hid themselves were searched for.

A few there were of them who privately escaped to Masada, among whom was Eleazar, the son of Jarius, who was of kin to Manahem, and acted the part of a tyrant at Masada afterward. As for Manahem himself, he ran away to the place called Ophla, and there lay skulking in private; but they took him alive, and drew him out before them all; they then tortured him with many sorts of torments, and after all slew him, as they did by those that were captains under him also, and particularly by the principle instrument of his tyranny, whose name was Apsalom.”

Maybe it would be advisable to take a lesson from this, and think twice before we bash Paul! Is not condemning the “chosen vessel” Paul’s ministry, a smiting of his mouth? In censuring Paul, are we not damning similar judgment upon ourselves to that of Ananias? In Paul’s rebuke to Ananias, Paul was identifying him as the “seed of the serpent”!

We can be quite sure of that, as Ananias was among those who were tread upon by —[the Romans]; for as Josephus explains, Ananias was slain by “robbers”, not the Romans. Read Wars 2:17:8 for the identity – in part of the robbers.) Paul, in addressing the Romans at 16:20 said, “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your (Roman) feet shortly.” Hence,

in Paul's day the Romans were of the "woman's seed", or true Israelites, and the bruising of Satan was the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D., for which Josephus' Wars give a graphic blow by blow account.

Of my many commentaries, none, except one links Romans 16:20 to Genesis 3:15. In his commentary entitled Barnes' Notes, which consists of 14 volumes taking up 24 inches of shelf-space, in the volume Acts-Romans, page 331, Albert Barnes comments thusly:

"20. And the God of peace. The God who promotes peace; chap. xv. 33. Will bruise. The language here refers to the prediction in Gen. iii. 15. It here means to subdue, to gain the victory over. It denotes Paul's confidence that they would gain the victory, and would be able to overcome all the arts of those who were endeavouring to sow discord and contention among them. Satan. The word Satan is Hebrew, meaning originally an accuser, a calumniator, and then an enemy."

We must, at least, give Barnes credit for making the connection, but neither his nor the other commentaries I have, link Paul's prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by Titus in 70 A.D. Surely if the bruising "of his (Christ's) heel" was the crucifixion of the Christ, then without question the bruising of "thy (the serpent's) head" must also be physical in nature!

Paul also, in his rebuke to Ananias used the same metaphor as Christ used, "thou whited wall", at Matthew 23:27: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." Here the "dead bones" and "uncleanness" depict spiritless racial impurity.

Other Historians of the Period Are All but Mute

I would like to demonstrate how little history we would have had we not the testimony of Josephus. Philip Shaff in his History Of The Christian Church, chapter 2 on Jesus Christ, #14 "Sources of Literature", section V, says the following:

“Roman authors of the 1st and 2nd centuries make only brief and incidental mention of Christ as the founder of the Christian religion, and of his crucifixion under Pontius Pilate, in the reign of Tiberius. Tacitus, *Annales*, I. xv. cap. 44, notices him in connection with his account of the conflagration at Rome and the Neronian persecution, in the words:

‘Auctor nominis ejus [Christiani] Christus Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat,’ and calls the Christian religion an *exitiabilis superstitio*. Compare his equally contemptuous misrepresentation of the Jews in *Hist.*, v. c. 3–5. Other notices are found in Suetonius: *Vita Claudii*, c. 25; *Vita Neronis*, c. 16; Plinius, jun.: *Epist.*, X. 97, 98; Lucian: *De morte Peregr.*, c. 11; Lampridius: *Vita Alexandri Severi*, c. 29, 43.”

It should be quite clear from this, if we didn't have Josephus, our sources would be quite meagre. Therefore it is downright preposterous to discard the witness of Josephus as if his works were merely trash. We could probably put everything these other sources cite on about five average book pages! With only that skimpy amount of historic fact, how can we ever expect our young people to have any confidence in Christianity in any way, shape or manner? Let's get real! As far as I'm concerned, every home should have a copy of Josephus within arm's reach of their Bible.

It is my opinion that if Josephus knew about John the Baptist, he also was aware of the existence of Christ, though Josephus was not born until 37 A.D., five years after Christ's death and resurrection. There may be many condemning both Paul and Josephus because they were members of the Pharisee sect. The Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes were the political parties of that day. Of these three, the Pharisees and Sadducees were under the influence of the Cain-Edomite-Canaanite-Jews.

Today, we have these same Cain-Edomite-Canaanite-Jews running our Democratic and Republican parties here in America. If one has ever voted for a Democratic or Republican candidate, he has no room to condemn Paul or Josephus for having been of the Pharisee political party, equivalent to our “Jewish” run political parties in America today! Maybe it would be advisable to remove the “beam” in our own eye before we try removing

the “mote” in Paul’s or Josephus’ eyes! The only party of that day that refused membership to non-Israelites were the Essenes, and for a while, Josephus was joined with them.

Had not Josephus been a pureblooded Israelite, the Essenes would not have allowed him to be in their company! Many who are condemning Paul and Josephus today, had they lived during Christ’s time, would have been right in there joining the Pharisees, because it was the popular thing to do. Anyone who has ever voted Democratic or Republican would also vote for the Pharisees. I personally regret the first time I ever went to the polls in 1948 when, in ignorance, I voted for the Pharisee, Harry Truman! So, it should be obvious that we are no better than Paul or Josephus when it comes to joining political parties!

Dead Sea Scrolls Justify Josephus’ Translation of 1 Samuel 9:27-11:1

To see this we will go to The Dead Sea Scrolls and Modern Translations of the Old Testament, by H. P. Scanlin, 1993 Tyndale House Publishers: Wheaton, Ill:

“Recent translations of 1 Samuel have diverged widely in their willingness to depart from the Masoretic Text. This is not only a matter of the degree of confidence the translation committees held towards the Masoretic Text, but also reflects the complex state of the text of 1 Samuel in its variety of forms during the period of the emergence of the stage-two text. Put one way, it may be claimed that the text of 1 Samuel has suffered greatly in transmission; or one may conclude that two editions of 1 Samuel existed in antiquity and that the degree of admixture between these editions may be seen in the extant forms of the text.

A translation such as the New International Version, with only fifteen Masoretic Text departures in 1 Samuel, demonstrates its reverence for the Masoretic Text. At the other end of the scale, the New American Bible departs about 230 times, many departures being based on the Qumran evidence and its frequent support of LXX (Septuagint) readings. The departures from the Masoretic Text in 1 Samuel in the following

translations provide a full picture: New International Version: 15; Today's English Version: 51; Revised Standard Version: about 60; New Revised Standard Version: about 110; New English Bible: 160; New American Bible: 230. Statistics on earlier translations are taken from Albrektson (1981:17).

“In the account of the early achievements of Saul in 1 Samuel 9:27–11:1 (anointing, proclamation as king, military accomplishments), there are a number of significant pluses in the Old Greek that add certain details which generally reinforce a positive view of Saul's kingship. In 10:1, Samuel prophesies that Saul will save Israel from their enemies. And 10:21 describes the selection process in greater detail than the Masoretic Text by saying that the men of the Matrite family were brought forth one by one, reinforcing the point that a man-by-man search for the chosen king was carried out to no avail, since Saul was hiding.

The final major plus (10:27) offers a full explanation of the gravity of the threat by Nahash, king of the Ammonites. Any Israelite who crossed the Jordan into Ammonite territory had his right eye gouged out, and Israel had ‘no deliverer.’ Thus Saul's courage and military prowess would be recognized as a particularly notable achievement and a specific fulfilment of Samuel's promise in 10:1 (Old Greek) that Saul will save Israel from the hand of their enemies. The addition to 10:27 is not attested in the Old Greek, but is found in 4Q Sama, as well as in Josephus's Antiquities (6.5.1), where Josephus offers the further explanation that gouging out only the right eye was sufficient to disable a warrior, since his shield would cover the left eye anyway.

“If the addition to 10:1 is considered a gloss, then the balance of the related textual problems would favour the Masoretic Text, which is precisely the decision made by the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project. However, if one accepts the Old Greek reading of 10:1 (as in Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, New American Bible, and New English Bible), then the fuller 10:21 and the different form of the question in 10:22, which is more appropriate in light of the fuller 10:21, follow. Since the fuller 10:27 was poorly attested in external evidence (primarily Josephus) prior to the Qumran discovery, it is not surprising that Revised

Standard Version did not add it. However, New American Bible ventures a footnote, 'There is ancient evidence for a longer introduction to this campaign,' and cite 4Q Sama in their 'Textual Notes,' published in some editions. New Revised Standard Version now places the extra material in the text, completing the process of accepting the Old Greek version of the narrative, with an attested Hebrew Vorlage for at least one of the additions.

One should keep in mind that the Qumran evidence in this section is fragmentary. Nothing is known about its witness to the text of the earlier section of the narrative. This may be construed as an admittedly weak *ex silentio* argument in favor of the Old Greek/Qumran version. But it must be remembered that a comparison of all extant sections of 4Q Sama shows that it is not consistent in its preference for the Old Greek (Tov: 1980)."

To see how Josephus renders this passage we will now go to Antiquities 6:5:1:

"1. After one month, the war which Saul had with Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, obtained him respect from all the people; for this Nahash had done a great deal of mischief to the Jews [sic. Israelites] that lived beyond Jordan by the expedition he had made against them with a great and warlike army. He also reduced their cities into slavery, and that not only by subduing them for the present, which he did by force and violence, but by weakening them by subtlety and cunning that they might not be able afterward to get clear of the slavery they were under to him: for he put out the right eyes of those that either delivered themselves to him upon terms, or were taken by him in war; and this he did, that when their left eyes were covered by their shields, they might be wholly useless in war.

Now when the king of the Ammonites had served those beyond Jordan in this manner, he led his army against those that were called Gileadites; and having pitched his camp at the metropolis of his enemies, which was the city of Jabesh, he sent ambassadors to them, commanding them either to deliver themselves up, on condition to have their right eyes plucked out, or to undergo a siege, and to have their cities overthrown. He gave them their choice, Whether they would cut off a small member of their body, or universally perish. However, the Gileadites were so affrighted at these

offers, that they had not courage to say anything to either of them, neither that they would deliver themselves up, nor that they would fight him; but they desired that he would give them seven days respite, that they might send ambassadors to their countrymen, and entreat their assistance; and if they came to assist them they would fight; but if that assistance were impossible to be obtained from them, they said they would deliver themselves up to suffer whatever he pleased to inflict upon them.”

What Does All This Variation in Translation Prove?

Some might say: “Well, this is only a minor variation in translation, and doesn’t really effect the overall picture.” **That’s Not the Point!** The main point is that we don’t throw away any evidence! We should take into consideration the Masoretic text; the Septuagint; the Samaritan text; the Dead Sea Scrolls; the Aramaic Targums; the Apocrypha and surely Josephus! Where these read alike, or in context agree, there shouldn’t be a lot of alarm, but when they read differently it should wave a red-flag at us, so we can look more deeply into the discrepancies.

We are blessed today with more Scriptural evidence than anytime in history, and we have no excuse for not using it to its fullest! In addition to that, we now have the witness of archaeology to verify many things that are written in Scripture. In addition to all this evidence, we have the evidence of history, which if we understand the historical interpretation of prophecy, we can place all this history side-by-side with our Bible and everything will fit in its proper place. The bottom line is: We should thank the Almighty Yahweh for the witness of Josephus!



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