



**The Half Shekel Journal** by Ed Rice  
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I awoke well before dawn on 'shevet' (sometimes 'shabbat') the Jewish weekly day of rest that we call 'sabbath'. The Hebrew letter 'Bet', ב or בּ, found in your Bible at Psalm 119:9, is the first of the BeGaD KePhaT letters carrying two pronunciations. It is pronounced 'v' as in 'vine' unless there is a dot, called a Daghesh Lene<sup>1</sup>, in its center, which clues us to pronounce it 'b' as in 'boy'. Hebrew Bible manuscripts did not have vowel marks or Daghesh Lene dots until added by the Massorettes<sup>2</sup> in the 8<sup>th</sup> century<sup>3</sup>. Thus there are numerous English pronunciations and we often differ from the modern Hebrew tongue. The various pronunciations aside the Massoretic text did capture every word of the Old Testament Scriptures<sup>4</sup>. Even the famous ben Asher ('son of Asher' group of Massorettes) manuscripts and the ben Naphtali ('son of Naphtali' group of Massorettes) manuscripts only differ on a few vowel marking methods with no consonant differences. Modernist textual critics play up these differences in an attempt to change the Bible to



'correct' manuscript errors that they themselves manufacture. Thus, for our short Hebrew Lesson here, the Hebrew letters בּ ג ד כ פ ת, would be pronounced B-G-D-K-P-T, while Hebrew letters ב ג ד כ פ ת, would be pronounced V – Gh – Dh – Ch - Ph - Th. But that is in old Hebrew, not modern. Being in Israel was a tremendous encouragement to my Hebrew studies. I hope yours will be set aflame; anyone who is 'someone' was multilingual and pursued linguistic studies, a Christian should at least strive to become cognizant of the languages his Christ communicated in.

Christians with a rudimentary Bible knowledge also know that Sunday is not the sabbath, nor the 'Christian Sabbath' that has been errantly marketed by the Roman Catholic Church who “think to change times and laws” and to “wear out the saints of the most High” (Dan 7:25) A slight Bible knowledge here will also defeat

- 1 Practico, Gary D., and VanPelt, Miles V., “Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammer”, Zondervan
- 2 The Massoretic text is named for a group of Hebrew scholars called the Massorettes. They had schools in Babylon and Tiberius by the Sea of Galilee. They flourished from 500 to 1,000 A.D. The word "Massoretic" comes from the Hebrew word "massorah" which means "tradition". The idea is that of both preserving something and passing it down to the next generation. The Masorettes both preserved the Hebrew text and made accurate copies to hand down to succeeding generations. <http://www.lightforisrael.org/history/histTnach.htm> accessed 03/17/09
- 3 The Massorettes main concern was safeguarding the Hebrew consonantal text. Originally the Hebrew text was written only in consonants as there were no vowels. The Masorettes added vowel markings underneath the consonants called ‘matres lectiones' meaning "mothers of reading". The vowel markings allowed those not familiar with the text the chance to read it. They also provided explanations of ambiguous words, and counted the verses, words and letters of the Old Testament. The standardization of the Hebrew text was completed between 600 - 700 A.D. Ibid
- 4 Daniel Bomberg first printed the Hebrew text in 1516-17. This was called the First Rabbinic Bible, Daniel Bomberg edition. Bomberg published the Second Great Rabbinic Bible in 1524-25. It was edited by Abraham Ben Chayyim and is also called the Ben Chayyim Massoretic text. This became the standard Massoretic text for the next 400 years. This is the Hebrew text that the King James English Old Testament was translated from in 1611. [Biblical Criticism Historical, Literal, Textual by Harrison, Walkie, and Guthrie, 1978, p. 47-82.]

the false teachings of the Ellen Whitists, called Seven Day Adventists, who will not recognize that we worship the Christ on the day that he rose from the tomb. On the first day of the week Christians have been so worshiping in the morning and evening for 1,978 years now; ever since the apostles found the tomb open in the AM, and found the Saviour amongst them in the PM. Don't be fooled about the importance of the first day of the week, it has nothing to do with the last day of the week, except that Christians are in a perpetual rest from their labors (Hebrews 4) and need not observe the Old Testament Law concerning the sabbath.

Anyway, we were told to watch out for 'shevet' elevators the night before. Since Orthodox Jews and all other Jews courteous of the strange Orthodox rendering, were not allowed to press an electrical button on 'shevet', for it would constitute causing work to be done, 'Shevet' elevators automatically stopped at every floor, on the way up, and on the way down. Of course there was even more work being done in this, but no Jew initiated the work after sundown on Friday. They were also not allowed to cook after sundown which made the aspect of our breakfast this morning intriguing I have not yet mentioned it, but indeed every morning we had a very interesting Kosher breakfast.



*Rob and Susan Carlson*

Each Mediterranean Kosher breakfast consisted of vegetables a plenty, olives, peppers, salad, everything you could make from crushed chick-pea or crushed sesame seeds, fish, eggs fried, scrambled or boiled, pancakes without syrup, olives, bread a plenty, lots of fruits, cereal, yogurt, cheeses sliced, cottaged and scrambled, and did I mention olives Never, never, never did they mix dairy and meat together, not even egg with meat. The 'shevet' breakfast had all that less what needed cooked fresh, no egg, fish or pancakes. They could serve meats on 'shevet' but not cook them. The trip must have been designed to get more exciting each day. It was so for Bev and I, and today we were headed for the sea of Galilee.

We got our bags around a half hour early and secured front seats on the bus so as not to miss a word that Ronnie, our guide, would say. The back of the buss was littered with incessant side conversations, jesting and a garbled speaker system. In this ten days I was far more interested in what we were experiencing in Israel, than in a pastors programs, problems, persuasions, learning or wit. This was not, however, a majority opinion amongst these 12 Baptist preachers. Elbowing their way to the front seats was first the Carlsons and Carpenters, then us and the Picketts. Our pending first glimpse of the Sea of Galilee, the Mount of Beatitudes and Capernaum had us almost giddy as we waited for the others to board the bus.

Cameras were clicking madly as we rounded the hill that offered us a view of the Sea of Galilee nestled in the valley below. Living in lake country and fishing on lake Erie and Ontario of the Great Lakes heightened my expectation for seeing this 'sea', it seemed larger at C-3 of Plate 9 in my Scofield reference Bible than it was in person. It was awesome to see it just the same and our first stop was at the Mount of Beatitudes Monastery.



*Lee and Donna Pickett*



*Marilyn Clarke*