

121-135

121- Jesus reduced the “Minyan” by 80%. In Judaism there is no valid, kosher public worship event without a minimum of 10 Jewish men present. Jesus said, “I’ll accept it if there are only two or three...” Great, yes?

122- You may not know what to do with a worn-out Bible but if you belonged to a synagogue you’d take your used item to be buried in the “Genizah.” It’s a congregational burial site (or room or closet) specifically for the purpose of honorable disposal of sacred ritual objects that have seen better days.

123- The original “Eternal Flame” was in the wilderness temple. God triggered the first flame from Heaven and the nation kept that going, even through the Exodus wanderings. They had a metal box in which priests would carry coals from the altar so that they had the “fire starter” for all the burning elements when the temple got set up again. That’s why they could perpetually call it “sacred flame.”

124- Once a year the High Priest had a “wife-in-waiting.” Leading into “The Day of Atonement” there was provision made so that the High Priest would be able to fulfill the command that he “make sacrifice for himself and his family.” What if, God forbid, the High Priest’s wife died the day before? What “family” would he have? It was arranged that he would quickly marry another woman and go on with the ritual. I’m not kidding.

125- Goats got stoned in the Old Testament times. As the “Day of Atonement” came to an end an “able-bodied” man would lead the remaining, living goat (“the Scapegoat”) three days journey into the wilderness. But, as he left the camp the nation would line up along the path of exit and hiss and boo and throw objects at the goat as it ceremonially carried away the remainder of guilt.

126- You probably know that it’s legend that Jeremiah took the Ark of the Covenant out of the temple to protect it from the Babylonian invasion. So, did the “Most Holy Place” just stay empty? No. The priests put a large boulder on the spot to reserve it until the day would come when the Ark could take its place again. The stone was called “The Shetiyah” and it seems that it actually lasted on into and beyond the days of Jesus until the Romans destroyed the 2nd Temple.

127- Be honest. If you (out of a vacuum) were to read about the women listed in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 you might not easily claim any of them because of the scandals associated with each of them. For that reason, it's all the more wonderful that Heaven/Matthew chose to include them. Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary all had reasons to blush in the story. Amazing!

128- Herod offered a "homestead act" to get people out of Jerusalem/Judea so that they could populate the historic path of invasion through the Golan Heights and down past the lake. This is an important factor in understanding some of the inherent animosities of those in the south toward the Galileans. After all, didn't they abandon Jerusalem? Didn't they line up with the wishes of evil Herod? (That's only one factor but it's important.)

129- In II Kings 19 God promised the nation protection for at least three years. Then, just like God, He ended up stretching it out to about 185. Amazing grace!

130- When anointed the High Priest got bucketed. The process was no token event. Psalm 133 tells us that the oil ran down his hair and his beard and dripped off his robes. That's more of a dedication than some simple splatter, isn't it?

131- There was a time when the High Priest's mother actually ministered to convicts. Why? Because she wanted them to like her and her son. If they liked them they might not pray for the High Priest to die right away so they could be released from a City of Refuge. (The Mishnah tells us this.)

132- Most westerners have a legend that Eve ate an apple in the garden. In historic Judaism it is assumed it was an Etrog. (That's' the citrus fruit that is part of the ritual of *Sukkot*- The Feast of Tabernacles.)

133- The four letter name of God Y-H-V-H (or J-H-V-H) is called “The Tetragrammaton.” It’s the unknown/unpronounced name that was ONLY said out loud once a year- By the High Priest in the Most Holy Place on The Day of Atonement. That’s reverence for you!

134- The “veil” of the temple was not a single curtain, but rather was two panels. But they did not split in the middle like we see on the stage of a theater. The two curtains overlapped. That way the High Priest could enter (on The Day of Atonement) by weaving through the maze and not just flipping the two open and thereby exposing the Holy Place to outside viewing.

135- Pentecost wasn’t about the Holy Spirit. It was about Jesus and His role in Heaven. The Holy Spirit was there to “testify” of Jesus (as John 16:13-14 said He would) and to fulfill the promise of Jesus to the early church. Is that a new thought to you?