

# THE EPISTLE

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## This Month's Cover

In honor of the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (May 31), our cover is Raphael's *Visitation of the Virgin Mary to Saint Elizabeth*. It was originally sketched out on a wood panel, and then painted in oil on canvas. Measuring 6'7"x4'9", it was completed in 1517. It is displayed in the Museo de Prado in Madrid, Spain. It depicts Mary, pregnant with Jesus, visiting her elderly cousin Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist (Lk. 1:39ff). Raphael has Mary "showing" considerably more than would be expected at the first few weeks of pregnancy. In the left background is an image of John baptizing Jesus. In the sky above is God supported by two putti, with an angel, presumably Gabriel, who announced Elizabeth's and Mary's conceptions (Lk. 1:19, 26).

Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino (1483-1520), usually known as Raphael, is considered to be one of the "Trinity of Masters" of the High Renaissance, along with Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. Although he died at age 37 and his active career lasted only a little over two decades, he was enormously productive during that short time. Critics generally break his career into three stages, each with its own style: his early years in Urbino, then a period of about four years studying the artistic traditions of Florence, and his final triumphant twelve years in Rome, where he executed some of his greatest works. He was widely respected and influential during his Roman period, but his reputation throughout Europe was gained more from his printmaking than from his paintings. This was probably because his greatest works were primarily frescoes, and therefore were seen only by those who came to Rome. He is best known for his huge fresco *The School of Athens* in the Vatican, where

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the majority of his works can still be seen. After his death, his rival Michelangelo attained extraordinary fame, and it was not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century that critics again came to acknowledge Raphael and Michelangelo as equals. He died in the Papal States in Rome in 1520 of an unidentified respiratory disease.

*(Information on Raphael copied from the April 2021 Epistle.)*

Richard R. Losch+

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## ***A Word from the Editor***

There is no question that a substance abuser in withdrawal is in great physical and emotional pain, and anyone around him with a scintilla of empathy feels that pain. There are three responses that we can have to the pain of others. The most consistent with human nature, unless we are very close to that person, is to turn a blind eye and get as far away as possible in order to avoid sharing the pain ourselves. The second response is the easiest and yet the most destructive and uncompassionate, and that is to enable an abuser by supplying the substances that will temporarily alleviate pain, but in the long run will exacerbate it. The third and most moral response (and often the hardest) is to provide all the emotional support we can, and to do everything possible to help with the recovery. Sometimes this requires “tough love” and can appear hard-hearted, because in the process it may involve inflicting even more pain in order to achieve a successful result that will ultimately remove all the present pain. Any doctor knows that it sometimes required the infliction of pain in order to remove worse pain.

It is a virtue to be sensitive others’ pain, yet it is often far from a virtue if our response is purely emotional and does not also call on common sense and reason. Trying to help others without considering both the immediate and the long-term consequences of our help can ultimately cause worse and more enduring suffering. The desire to help is an emotion, and emotion without the stabilizing guidance of reason can lead us far astray. Many of our church and government programs are well-intentioned but ill-considered, resulting in immediate relief but

long-term harm. Such “feel-good” programs are usually useless and often dangerous. There is a clever play on words in Hebrew that unfortunately doesn’t work in English. It says that if you put your brain before your heart you are a king, and if you put your heart before your brain you are a fool.<sup>1</sup>

Good works are essential to being a Christian, but good works done without faith are empty. They are still good, but they avail nothing toward salvation. Likewise, as Saint James reminds us, faith alone without good works is equally empty. For our works to be of any help either to ourselves or to others, they must be thought out and executed with reason and faith, and not done rashly out of emotion alone. Think first, then act.

*Father Rick Lorsch*

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## ***Be Wordly Wise Complete, Finished***

These two words are considered synonyms, yet each has a different overtone. When something is finished, it has simply ended. There is no indication in the word as to whether there is any more to be done or added. Complete, on the other hand, has the implication that the task is fully accomplished, and that all is fulfilled and there is no more to be done. Jesus’ final words on the cross were, “It is completed” (Jn. 19:30).<sup>2</sup> The KJV and some others translate this as “finished,” but a far more accurate translation of the Greek (*tetelestai*, τετελεσται) would be completed, accomplished or fulfilled. The word finish comes to English from the Old French *fenir* (present participle *feniss-*), to stop, come to an end, or die. That comes from the Latin *fenire*, to limit, to put an end to. The word complete

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<sup>1</sup> In Hebrew, brain is *moch*, heart is *lev*, king is *melek* and fool is *lemech* (an idiom, literally a lump of starch). If you put the ***m*** (*moch*, brain) before the ***l*** (*lev*, heart) you are a *melek* (king); but if you put the ***l*** (*lev*) before the ***m*** (*moch*) you are a *lemech* (fool).

<sup>2</sup> This statement should not be interpreted as, “It is over because I am about to die,” but rather, “What I came to do has been accomplished.”

comes from the Latin *completes*, full, which derives from the prefix *com-* and *pletus*, full or sated. Therefore, to be finished means to be ended, while to be complete means to be fulfilled, with nothing more to be done.<sup>1</sup>

Richard R. Losch+

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## ***A Roman Secret Revealed***

The Romans passed on to us an amazing number of important engineering and technological discoveries, but one that has remained a mystery is the strength and durability of their concrete. Our formula is not significantly different from theirs, but scientists for centuries have been searching for the secret that made Roman concrete so vastly superior to ours. The largest un-reinforced concrete dome in the world is that on the Pantheon in Rome, and it has survived almost 2000 years of aging, and several earthquakes, without a single repair. It would be a major challenge to modern engineers to reproduce it, and if they did, they would expect it to last only a few decades before needing serious repair and reinforcement. Roman concrete not only cured much faster than modern concrete, enabling rapid building, but it was actually self-healing. Over time, any concrete structure will tend to develop small cracks. When it does, water can seep into the cracks, causing even further damage. On structures like bridges, this problem is exacerbated by the constant pounding of vehicles passing over them. One of the unsolved mysteries of Roman concrete is that as soon as a crack develops, it begins to heal itself, and like a healed broken bone, that spot is eventually stronger than it was when the crack developed.

We said it was an unsolved mystery, but the secret may have

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<sup>1</sup> The prefix *con-* or *com-* literally means with, but it is frequently used to intensify the word to which it is attached. *Pletus* means full, but *completus* means as full as possible, as in our expression “full to the brim.” A humorist once said that if you marry the right woman, you are complete; if you marry the wrong woman, you are finished; if the right woman finds you dallying with the wrong woman, you are completely finished.

been recently discovered. Ironically, the discovery came about because of another mystery. The Romans were amazing engineers, and they developed their concrete formula over centuries of careful research and experimentation. Modern engineers have long been mystified as to why, after all that careful work, they were so obviously sloppy in the actual mixing of the ingredients. Roman concrete is riddled with lime clasts, which are tiny clumps of unincorporated lime. When the lime paste is mixed as a binder for the aggregate (sand or gravel), it should be perfectly smooth. If the materials are of poor quality or are not properly mixed, then lime clasts develop. This is considered to be a sign of shoddy preparation, and is very inconsistent with high standards of Roman engineering. Notwithstanding, from the first discovery of these clasts, modern scientists assumed that the Roman military, who did almost all the building and was always hurting for money, simply cut corners in order to save a few sesterces. A team of researchers from MIT was unwilling to accept this, and came up with another explanation.

Modern concrete is made by what is called cold mixing. A paste of water and lime is made as mortar, and then the aggregate is mixed in with it. Poor mixing or low-quality materials can then create clasts. However, there is a process called hot mixing that always produces clasts, and therefore is avoided. If the dry lime and aggregate are mixed together first and then the water is introduced, there is an endothermic reaction in which the lime crystallizes under high heat and low humidity. Some of it is not incorporated, thus forming clasts. What the team discovered is that under hot mixing, other chemical reactions take place that do not happen under cold mixing. As well as speeding up the curing time, these reactions tend to strengthen the chemical bonds that make the concrete hard. What was thought to be a disadvantage, however, was the formation of lime clasts that they thought would weaken the concrete. The MIT team, however, discovered that the clasts do not weaken it, but rather provide the self-healing quality of Roman concrete. If a crack develops and water seeps in, the clasts provide

a source of calcium to regenerate the bonds that were broken by the crack. This effect can last for thousands of years.

If this hot-mixing process can be perfected, as is quite likely, it could have a significant effect on the environment. Concrete construction is responsible for almost 8% of the carbon gases released into the atmosphere every year by industry. If the concrete cures faster and repairs itself, it will significantly reduce the amount of concrete that has to be mixed annually for repair and replacement of existing structures. This would have a notable effect on the reduction of these carbon gases.

*Richard R. Losch+*

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## ***The Name Jehovah***

In much Christian literature, including many translations of the Bible, the name Jehovah is used as the Name of God. For all of the frequency of its use, this name is manufactured. It is not scriptural, but rather is the result of a misunderstanding of a Jewish custom. For the Jews, the ancient Sacred Name of God in Hebrew is JHVH (יהוה).<sup>1</sup> Since the ancient Hebrew alphabet has no vowels, no one is quite sure how this was pronounced. “Vowel pointing” (the indication of vowel sounds by placing dots and lines underneath the consonants) did not come into being until the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. For most words in the Bible this was no problem, because faithful Jews had been reading the Scriptures aloud for millennia, so they already knew how the words were pronounced. The only exception was the Name of God, JHVH, because it was considered blasphemy to speak it aloud. Most modern scholars agree that it was likely pronounced Yahweh (yah'-whay), but they cannot be positive.

The reason for this uncertainty is that very early in the development of the Jewish faith, after the building of King Solomon’s Temple in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, it became the practice

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<sup>1</sup> This is believed to have been derived from God’s command to Moses. When Moses asked God who he should tell the Israelites had sent him, God said, “Tell them I AM (*Ehyeh*, הִיאָנָה) has sent you” (Ex. 3:14).

for no one but the High Priest to speak the Holy Name of God, and then only when he was alone in the Inner Chamber with the Ark of the Covenant. Eventually even he spoke it only on the Day of Atonement. The pronunciation of the Name was passed on orally from priest to priest, but no one else heard it. After the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent demise of the Levitical priesthood in AD 70, there was no one left who knew how to pronounce it. When Jews were reading the Scriptures and the Name JHVH appeared, they always substituted the word *Adonai* (אֱלֹהִים), which means Lord. In English Bibles, when you see LORD or GOD in small caps, it means that the Hebrew text reads JHVH.

When vowel pointing started in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, no one knew how to pronounce the Sacred Name JHVH. To remind readers not to attempt to pronounce it but rather to substitute *Adonai*, they left the Sacred Name JHVH, but used the vowels for *Adonai*. This produced what in Hebrew is a nonsense word, J<sup>a</sup>H<sup>o</sup>V<sup>a</sup>H, thus reminding the reader to say *Adonai*. Early Christian writers, being unaware of this tradition, tried to transliterate the Sacred Name into Latin. The best they could come up with was *Iahouah*, *Yahowah* or *Jahovah*, which today is usually written as Jehovah.<sup>1</sup> Because it is a fabricated name, when we see it, we should say either Yahweh, God, or the LORD.

Richard R. Losch +

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## ***The Epistle is Online***

The last ten years of *The Epistle* are online. Go to [rlosch.com](http://rlosch.com) or [rlosch.net](http://rlosch.net) and click on the “Epistle” tab at the top. You can read it online or download it as a .pdf file. This is an easy way to share articles with others. For those who have had trouble connecting in the past, the link has been repaired.

Richard R. Losch +

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<sup>1</sup> As the Latinized *Iahouah* spread through Europe during Late Antiquity, the *I* and *u* came to be written in the local vernaculars as *Y* or *J* in place of *I*, and *w* or *v* in place of *u*.

## ***Was Nero Really All That Bad?***

The simple (but not very helpful) answer is, yes and no. All the evidence indicates that Nero never really wanted to be emperor, but was pushed onto the throne by his extremely ambitious and strong-willed mother, Agrippina. He wanted to be an actor, singer and poet, and even as emperor he devoted far more of his energy to these pursuits than to governing the empire. He also loved chariot racing, an extremely dangerous sport that was very popular with the people. Generally only slaves or very low-class athletes were chariot racers. He was badly injured a couple of times while racing. He fancied himself an expert charioteer, but according to others he was just barely competent at it. He was very popular with the common people, but the aristocracy despised him (and apparently the feeling was mutual). It was beneath the dignity of any gentleman, especially a patrician, and even more especially a member of the Imperial Family, to compete in sports or to perform in public in any manner whatsoever other than as an orator. Nero would perform in costume as a common actor before any audience he could find, no matter how low. According to contemporary critics he was a mediocre but adequate actor and singer, but a very good poet. Unfortunately, none of his poetry has survived but a few lines that were quoted in other writings.

His masterpiece was a poem in the Homeric style on the burning of Troy. Allegedly, he recited it to the accompaniment of a lyre on a parapet of his villa on the Palatine Hill as he watched Rome burn. This led to the legend that he “fiddled” while Rome burned.<sup>1</sup> In fact, he was not even in Rome when the fire started. He was in his vacation villa in Antium (modern Anzio), about 40 miles south of Rome. Rome was a firetrap in those days, and fires were common. By the time the authorities realized how serious this one was and got word to Antium, the fire would have been blazing for over a day. It was another day

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<sup>1</sup> The fiddle (or violin) would not be invented for another 1400 years. Nero's favorite instrument was the lyre, a simple hand-held harp.

before Nero could have gotten back to Rome. By the time he arrived, although the fire had been horribly destructive, it had subsided considerably, and they thought they had it under control. Nero ordered the destruction of several rows of buildings as a firebreak. It was then that he allegedly publicly recited his poem about the burning of Troy. A new wind came up, however, blowing embers over the firebreak and igniting several other districts in the city. The holocaust continued three more days, killing thousands and leaving thousands more homeless. Nero responded immediately. He allocated huge amounts of money for the relief of the injured and homeless, and began a program of rebuilding the city. He enacted many new strict building codes to help correct the shoddy building practices common to most Roman housing at the time. This further alienated him from the slumlord aristocracy. He set aside several acres of valuable land in the center of the city for the building of a new palace, the Golden House, which would be unimaginably opulent. To raise the money for the rebuilding of the city and for his palace he squeezed the aristocracy mercilessly, even to the point of falsely accusing many of major crimes and forcing them to commit suicide so he could confiscate their estates. The common people, however, had little objection. He built them new and better homes, and even as the Golden House was being built, with its lavish expansive parks and an enormous man-made lake, they were free to use the parks, lake and swimming pools whenever they wanted. When the palace was partially finished, he frequently hosted huge banquets for the people of Rome. He said that even though this was his home, much of it was also to be open to the people. They loved him, and for 150 years after his death the people of Rome looked for him to return from the dead and lead them again.

The people's love was not shared by the aristocracy, who loathed him. There were numerous attempts to assassinate him, all of which failed. They would do anything to get rid of him. Technically, the Senate could simply declare him deposed and the Republic restored, but then they would have to deal with

the Praetorian Guard. This was a large elite military force that was intensely loyal to the emperor. They were very well paid and well-treated, and under a restored Republic they would have to go back to the barracks as common soldiers. There is little doubt that the aristocracy were responsible for the rumor that Nero arranged the fire in order to clear land for his palace, and that he exulted in the destruction by joyfully reciting his poem while the city burned. It is unlikely that either is true.

One of the few times that the people turned against Nero was when they began to believe the rumor that he had ordered the fire. He needed a scapegoat quickly, and the obvious one was the new religious sect called Christians, about whom little was known. They were thought to be a weird and inscrutable cult. Romans scorned them much as Americans in the 1970s scorned the “Moonies”, so persecuting them did not bother most people. It was not an empire-wide persecution, but was mainly only in Rome. It was vicious and bloodthirsty, but the Christians were not treated any differently from the way all criminals were treated. Executions of criminals were brutal and barbaric. However, the stories of unimaginable sadism, such as Nero having Christians coated with tar and burning them alive as torches to light his garden parties, are clearly untrue. There is no mention whatever of any such atrocities in any literature, pro- or anti-Christian, until 150 years later, when Christians started writing about the martyrs. These stories were obviously fabricated to enhance the horror of the tales of persecution.

We can therefore say no, in some respects Nero was not the monster that legend has made him out to be. On the other hand, we can say yes, in other respects he was. In his early days as emperor he enjoyed dressing as a slave and going into the slums of Rome with his young friends, most of whom were quite rowdy and quite strong enough to protect him. There they would mug and rob passers-by and rape women just for the fun of it. There were no police in those days, and the poor could not afford the private protection enjoyed by the rich. He often bragged about these exploits. He never liked his first wife, his

own step-sister Claudia Octavia, so he had her murdered, along with his step-brother Britannicus, the rightful heir to the throne. Tired of his mother Agrippina's attempts to control him, he murdered her. He married the wealthy Sabina Poppaea, but one night during an argument he kicked her in the stomach. She was pregnant, and died a few hours later. He then married Statilia Messalina, who loved him, but whom he divorced shortly before his death. Soon after that he noticed that a Bithynian slave boy, Sporus, looked like Poppaea. He castrated him, dressed him like her, publicly married him, and called him the empress.<sup>1</sup> The aristocracy were scandalized and outraged.

Nero badly neglected his duties in governing, rather spending his time in sports or the arts. He once spent almost a year away from Rome on an extended tour of Greece, acting, singing, and reciting his poetry. The theaters were packed. The common people loved him, and the elite did not dare not show up, even though it was dangerous to be there. If someone fell asleep or left early, he could well lose his political appointment or even his life. Nero's favorite general, Vespasian (who would later become emperor), lost his commission and was sent into exile after he was spotted yawning during a poetry recital.

Nero so alienated the aristocracy that they managed to turn the Praetorian Guard against him with bribes, along with promises of huge bonuses and promotions. He tried to flee Rome, believing that he could go to Alexandria and make a living as a performer. The Senate declared him an Enemy of the State, meaning that anyone could kill him with impunity. He fled to a villa outside Rome, but his whereabouts were discovered. As the soldiers closed in, in the presence of his ex-wife Statilia and a couple of loyal slaves, he stabbed himself in the throat. His last words were, "What an artist the world is losing."

*Richard R. Losch+*

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<sup>1</sup> Sporus did not seem to object very much. After Nero's death he was freed, but continued to dress as Poppaea, and had affairs with the Prefect of the Praetorian Guard, and then with two of Nero's successors, the short-lived emperors Galba and Otho. He returned to Bithynia, where he died.

## Was Jesus a Rabbi?

This seemingly simple question has a not-so-simple answer, because no one is quite sure just what a rabbi is.<sup>1</sup> When people hear the word today, it usually means to them the Jewish equivalent of a Christian priest or pastor who has been trained and theologically educated to minister to a congregation or to teach. It did not have that meaning in ancient times, and was in fact a fairly rarely used word. It is found in a few inscriptions in the Near East, but the earliest of these is in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. It is not found in any ancient Jewish literature outside of the immediate environs of Israel, and it appears only once in the Hebrew Bible, in Daniel 2:48.<sup>2</sup> There King Nebuchadrezzar promoted Daniel to be a governor. The word used for promotion is *rabbi* (רָבִי). Nebuchadrezzar called him a great man (*rabraban*, רָבָרָבָן), not a teacher.

In Hebrew, the word *rav* (רָב),<sup>3</sup> especially when used as a root, means many, much, or great, and it implies importance and authority. From the earliest days of Israelite culture, education and wisdom ranked among the most highly respected of human qualities. Someone who displayed these qualities was often referred to as *Rab*, *Rav* or *Reb*, meaning a great person or one with authority.<sup>4</sup> In *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye is an unedu-

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<sup>1</sup> For an in-depth answer, we refer you to our source, a lecture by Rabbi Pinchas Shir at <https://www.pshir.com/from-rabbi-to-lord-to-jesus/>

<sup>2</sup> Daniel 2:4-7:28 was written in Aramaic, not Hebrew, although both are Semitic languages and are quite similar in many ways. This is possibly because that this portion was written in Babylonia during the Exile. It was then that the Israelite captives started speaking Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of the Middle East at the time. It became the everyday language of the Jews from then on. Jesus' primary language was Aramaic.

<sup>3</sup> In Hebrew the letter *bet* (ב) can be transliterated as either *b* or *v*. We see this in many languages. For example, in Spanish *v* and *b* are pronounced exactly the same (say *b* but do not completely close the lips). This is why in Spanish the capital of Cuba is spelled *Habana* but pronounced *Havana*.

<sup>4</sup> This has no relationship to the Christian clerical title *Rev.*, which is the abbreviation for Reverend, even though that does mean revered one.

cated milkman, yet one of the wisest men in the community. He is often addressed as Reb Tevye. The people recognized Jesus as “one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matt. 7:29), and is often addressed as Rabbi. The suffix *-i* (‑) means my, so *rabbi* (ר֔בִי) means my teacher, my master, or my great one.

Except for that one reference in Daniel, which refers to him as a political rather than religious leader, the term Rabbi is found nowhere else in the Tanakh (the Hebrew Bible). The earliest Jewish literature to use the term Rabbi frequently and with a consistent meaning comes from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, and it is the gospels. Yes, the gospels are Jewish literature because except for Luke (a Greek) they were written by Jews for Jews. It was not until after they were written that the followers of The Way (the first followers of Christ) were expelled from the synagogues and were considered a separate religion from Judaism. Even Luke’s gospel has a distinctly Jewish overtone, and although John was written during the time that Christianity was separating from Judaism, it is a very Jewish writing, and was written for a readership who were mostly originally Jews.<sup>1</sup> From the late 4<sup>th</sup> century BC to about the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, the universal language throughout Europe, North Africa and Western Asia was Greek. Regardless of the local language, all educated people understood Greek. It was the equivalent of English today. For this reason most Jewish literature was written not in Hebrew, but in Greek. The Greek word for teacher is *didaskos* (διδασκος) or *daskalos* (δασκαλος), and those are the words used everywhere except in the immediate environs of Israel, where the Greek would occasionally transliterate the Hebrew *rabbi* (ר֔בִי) as *ραββι*. That was not a Greek word, but a Hebrew word imported into Greek, much as we have imported Sauerkraut into English, even though it is a German word.

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<sup>1</sup> John’s gospel is often accused of being anti-Semitic because in so many passages he blames the Jews for the death of Christ. The phrase usually translated “the Jews” is *hoi Joudaioi* (‘οι Ιουδαίοι). This does not mean the Jewish people, but the leaders—the Pharisee, the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, and Temple authorities, and were an elite who were apart from the masses.

In ancient Judaism, the religious authorities were the Aaronic priests. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC the Pharisees became the primary teachers and self-appointed defenders of the faith, but they had no real defined authority, which remained in the hands of the priests. There were also other recognized religious teachers, but they were recognized as such because of their learning and wisdom, not because of any specific schooling or training. These men were referred to as Reb or Rabbi. After the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, the practice of animal sacrifice ended and the Levitical priesthood became irrelevant. At that point the religious authority shifted from the priests to the teachers. These teachers had no formal title, but most were addressed as Rabbi, my master, and in time that came to be a recognized designation for a Jewish religious leader. The destruction of the Temple marks the shift in Jewish history from what is called Sacrificial Judaism to Rabbinic Judaism, which is the form of Judaism that we know today. Over the centuries the recognized religious leaders came more and more to be acknowledged as such on the basis of the people under whom they had studied. With the advent of the Christian universities in the Middle Ages, Jewish institutions of higher learning also developed. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century it had become common to call a Jewish religious leader Rabbi only if he had been educated in a recognized institution of theological training.

Jesus never went to a seminary (they did not exist in those days) and never formally studied as a student ("at the feet") of any of the great teachers of his time, yet his erudition and wisdom certainly qualified him to be honored by being called Rabbi. Many times he was so addressed, and no one, including his enemies, seems to have challenged the title. In that sense, therefore, we can say yes, Jesus was a Rabbi. In the modern use of the word, however, a Rabbi must have a degree and a clerical certification, so by that standard, Jesus was not a Rabbi. It would seem that this makes the question of whether Jesus was a Rabbi a moot one.

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Richard R. Losch+

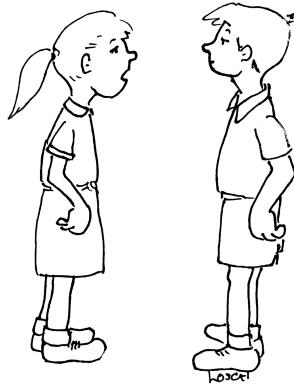
## A Touch of Trivia

Shakespeare invented 420 words, such as accommodation, birthplace and pedantic, as well as many phrases such as “a laughing stock” and “in the twinkling of an eye.” He also invented the name Jessica, the rebellious daughter of the money-lender Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. Scholars think he derived it from Abraham’s niece and sister-in-law Iskah (ישכה). In Shakespeare’s time, Bibles transliterated the name as Jeskah. The Bible mentions her only once (Gen. 11:29).

Richard R. Losch+

JAMIE

by Richard R. Losch



*“No, I don’t want to come  
to your party on Saturday.  
How about on Never?  
Is never OK with you?”*



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