

# WHAT I AM UP TO THESE DAYS

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I don't have any public readings or book signings lined up in the near future.

Happily, both of my books are on Amazon and Kindle: *The Ring of Torrents: A Jewish Mary* and *The Drop*, which is a contemporary sci-fi mystery that takes place at the United Nations in NYC.

I occasionally write a serious or amusing blog.

I had a good idea of merging my multitude of word graphics [www.illustratedwords.com](http://www.illustratedwords.com) with some of my blogs, news parodies and short stories, into short books. I'd make these as ebooks due to the amount of colorful graphics. The cost of such a print book vs ebook is considerable. But, once I got my word graphics prepared, my heart went full force into writing a novel. Now that project sits—where do the hours and days go?

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**What have I been doing?** I've been working on my third book, not sure of a title yet. I focus on ancient Jerusalem's Upper Room, so I'll call it *The Upper Room*, for now. It's another speculative, First Century, character rich, historical fiction novel. Currently it's 42,000 words and gaining. This tale is written for general audiences of average churchgoers and Messianic Jews=easy reading. *The Ring of Torrents: A Jewish Mary*, was culturally rich in Judaism and a Hebrew language dominant project.

The Upper Room was where Jesus (yes, I use his Greek name in this book) enjoyed his last Passover Seder. Pet peeve #1 of mine and other Jews, is that English readers erroneously know this annual, ceremonial, religious meal as the Last Supper=just a dinner.

In the New Testament book, the *Acts of the Apostles*, written by Luke, the close companion of the Apostle Paul (Rabbi Sha'ul), we read further that the Upper Room was a temporary place where disciples met in Jerusalem after the crucifixion and Resurrection.

I portray this spacious second story of a house as sort of a safe hangout. Several weeks after Jesus disappeared from earth at the Mount of Olives, the Apostles spent time in the Upper Room waiting ten days for the Jewish holiday of Pentecost—in Greek, Shavuot in Hebrew). Not only was there ten days until Pentecost, Jesus had firmly instructed the Apostles to wait for a special spiritual event to occur. He called it, the Promise of the Father, the immersion (baptism) in the Holy Spirit.

The speculative platform of *The Upper Room* is where I bring up theological curiosities and controversies. There are interesting visitors from the pages of the Gospels who return, such

as Nicodemus or the woman who had the “issue of blood for 12 years.” Mary the mother of the Messiah plays a large part and finally feels confident, and safe, to tell the gathering, her up-to-that-point hidden miracle of her son’s conception.

**Why am I writing this book?** Many have published Bible fiction books since the 1960s. I’ve read plenty to see what the purposes were. Of course most portray these ancient people of whom we have skimpy facts and make them like real persons. I do that too. It’s educational religious entertainment. Readers need such literature. I try to stay as close to Scripture. While researching I come across various conflicting commentaries by degreed authors. So, I chose.

However, myself, being a Jewish follower, of some 40 years, I lean into areas that most Gentile authors have paid little attention to. Also, since I am associated with Messianic rabbis and scholars, and attend Orthodox, regular and Messianic synagogues, churches and charismatic fellowships, I see and experience what others don’t.

Pet peeve #2. It’s a rare movie that doesn’t stray far from Holy Scripture into poorly invented, boring, and replacement side stories. Writing a script sticking to the Bible or any worthwhile literature is traditionally avoided by Hollywood at any cost. Solid adaptation is blowin’ in the wind. *Don’t get me started on the Lord of the Rings trilogy nightmare....*

**Why am I writing this book?** In *The Upper Room* I slowdown the dynamic events of the arrival of the Holy Spirit. The *Book of Acts* is quite brief on these facts. I chose to write in such a way, by research in books and Internet, interviews and prayer, that readers will remark (as with the Mary book), “I never thought of that! I never knew the Jews did that! Now I understand the Bible better!”

**Why am I writing this book?** I enjoy writing. I’m gifted in creativity and teaching. Writing is one outlet of artistic expression. By writing, I make available in print form what I would teach in person. The process is indeed lonely and difficult work, as any serious author knows. Success doesn’t remove the isolated hours of crafting stories.

**Why am I writing this book?** There’s something in me, and perhaps in you, that wants a story, incident or joke to be told correctly. Whether among friends or in a formal setting, I get bent outta shape when this doesn’t happen – I’m guilty of poor retelling too. I believe (as do many crazy persons), that God wants me to honor Him in my personal works by portraying Him more accurately.

As one pastor told me, “The Bible raises more questions than it answers.” We grumble at such a truth and wish God had done a better, fuller job with His book. Perhaps if the approximately 1,300 pages of Scripture were instead 13,000 pages, we’d have less divisive places of worship and a remarkable religious harmony. I did quick research on the amount of words in the Bible. I didn’t foresee a variety of sums due to translations. To round off the count,

there are 790,000 words total, the Old Testament (TeNaCh) has 590,000 and the New Testament (Apostolic Writings) 180,000. That is, give or take a 200,000 words or so.

Finally, I hope to publish my Upper Room book by summer 2017.