

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

John
5:39

A Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadasha Ministries

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Welcome!

In this inaugural issue, President of B'rit Hadasha Ministries, Todd Baker, will explain the purpose and vision of this ministry. Search the Scriptures is a monthly newsletter that will emphasize the prophetic significance of modern day Israel within the context of End-time events. The newsletter will also chronicle the Gospel outreach witness that is conducted in Israel among the Jewish people twice a year by this ministry. Search the Scriptures is devoted to the truthful, and practical exposition of Scripture for the spiritual edification and education of every born-again Bible believing Christian.



Todd Baker

Todd Baker is president of B'rit Hadasha Ministries — a Gospel outreach ministry to the Jewish people of Israel. He is also a full-time chaplain at Medical City Hospital. Since called to the ministry in 1984 his ministering experience includes Bible teaching, jail and prison chaplaincy, counseling, evangelism, and church ministry. Todd is also a theological consultant, writer, and tour leader in Israel for Zola Levitt Ministries. He has led several Gospel outreaches to the Jews of Israel commissioned and sent by Shalom, Shalom Messianic Congregation of Dallas Texas. Todd holds a Bachelor of Science degree in biblical studies and a Master of Theology Degree from Dallas Theological Seminary. He is currently a Doctoral candidate at Trinity Seminary under the auspices of Liverpool University at Liverpool, England.✠

Vision of B'rit Hadasha Ministries

B'rit Hadasha (New Covenant) Ministries is a Non-denominational evangelistic and teaching outreach devoted to proclaiming the Gospel to the Jewish people (Romans 1:16) with particular focus on Gospel outreaches to Israel. In this holy enterprise, B'rit Hadasha Ministries works in close collaboration with Zola Levitt Ministries and Shalom, Shalom Messianic Congregation to help facilitate the Great Commission to the Jewish people of Israel. B'rit Hadasha Ministries seeks to explain the Jewish nature of the Christian faith to Gentile and Jewish believers and explore the integral relationship between Israel and the Church.



To read about our experiences concerning these Gospel outreaches to the Jews in Israel, please see the following articles in the Levitt newsletter at www.levitt.com:

- May 2001 Levitt Letter “Two Witnesses to Israel” (Part one of three)
- June 2001 Levitt Letter “Two Witnesses” (Part two of three)
- July 2001 Levitt Letter “Two Witnesses to Israel” (Part three of three)
- November 2001 Levitt Letter “To the Jew First” (Part one)



Witnessing to Orthodox Jews in Israel

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Doctrinal Statement of B'rit Hadasha Ministries

We affirm and believe the historic essentials of the Christian Faith consisting of:

(1) The divine inspiration and authority of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).

(2) The existence of one eternal God revealed through three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Trinity (Matthew 3:13-17; 1 John 5:7).

(3) The Creation of the human race in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-28).

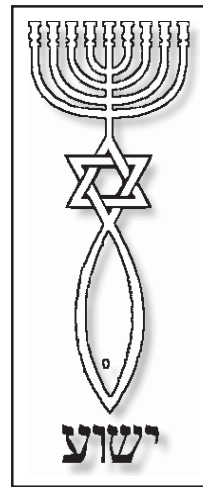
(4) The fall of mankind resulting in his total depravity and sinful state (Genesis 3:1-19; Romans 3:10-18).

(5) The deity and sinless humanity of Jesus the Messiah (Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; John 1:1-2, 14; Colossians 2:9; 1 Timothy 3:16); His pre-existence and incarnation (Colossians 1:17; 2:9; Philippians 2:5-8); His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25); His atoning death for the sin and salvation of man (Matthew 20:28; 2 Corinthians 5:21); His physical resurrection from the dead and ascension to sit at the right hand of God the Father in heaven where He currently intercedes for the Church as our Great High Priest (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 4:14-15).

(6) Salvation by the grace of God alone received through faith in Christ alone apart from human merit or work (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). John 20:1-17; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Acts 1:9-11; Ephesians 1:20-23).

(7) The local and universal Church as the Body of Christ on

earth with Him as the sole head to proclaim the Gospel and fulfill the Great commission as indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 16:18; 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 12).



Water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances as prescribed by Christ for the Church. The end of the Church age will conclude at the Rapture of the Church prior to the Great Tribulation (2 Thessalonians 2:5-8; Revelation 3:10-11). The Church is distinct and separate from Israel (Romans 9-11; 1 Corinthians 10:32).

(8) The Second Coming of Jesus the Messiah to earth. His coming will be literal, physical, and personal. The return of Jesus will be premillennial in nature, meaning that Jesus will return to establish a literal thousand year kingdom from Jerusalem over all the earth (Isaiah 2;

Revelation 20:1-6).

(9) The resurrection of the dead and the consignment of the unbeliever in the lake of fire forever and the receiving of the righteous with God and Christ in heaven forever (Luke 16:19-31; Revelation 20:11-15; 22:1-5).

(10) The eternal security of born again believers by the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ who are sealed for time and eternity (John 10:27-29; Romans 8:35-39). †

What is B'rit Hadasha Ministries?

The phrase "B'rit Hadasha" is Hebrew meaning "the New Covenant" as found in Jeremiah 31:31. The phrase can also be translated to mean "the New Testament." Jews today call the New Testament Scriptures by the name B'rit Hadasha in Hebrew. The passage in Jeremiah 31 directly applies to "the House of Israel", that is the Jewish people. Thus the New Testament and the blessings of salvation that come with it were originally designated for the Jewish people by the Lord and never taken away, their national unbelief notwithstanding (Hebrews 8; Romans 11:1-3, 26-27).

The New Covenant is one of four major Covenants revealed in Scripture that God made with Israel that binds Him to them as His people forever. The Messiah Jesus came to Israel to personally ratify this Covenant through His atoning death (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9-10) and give forgiveness and salvation to the Jewish nation of Israel. The New Testament Scriptures were written, among other reasons, to record the fulfillment of this. The New Testament is therefore a Jewish book, written by Jewish followers of Jesus about a very Jewish covenant prophesied in the Jewish Scriptures (the Tanakh) themselves.

The Gospel involves the historical events of the New Covenant (the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of the Messiah Jesus) that makes possible the salvation of Israel and the world from sin. B'rit Hadasha Ministries is dedicated to proclaiming the Jewish message of salvation to the very ones it came from and was first intended for, the Jewish people (Romans 1:16; 9:5). As the Church age is drawing to a close and the Jews have returned to their ancient homeland

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Seven Reasons From Scripture Why The Gospel Must Go To The Jewish People

B'rit Hadasha ministries is committed to proclaiming the Gospel to the Jewish people in Israel. So far I have conducted several Gospel outreaches in Israel. We found the Jewish people there to be open, appreciative, and interested in the good news of Jesus the Messiah. Several individuals there have accepted Him as their Lord and Savior and became completed Jews born anew in the Messiah. Taking the Gospel to the Jews of Israel is not an option or choice for us, it is commanded by God in Scripture. In fact the Bible provides seven reasons why this is so. It is no coincidence about the number seven. Seven, in the Bible, is the number of divine completeness. God created and completed the universe in seven days. Christ spoke seven times from the cross when completing the work of redemption. Seven years are left on Daniel's 70 weeks to complete the present age with the return of Christ to earth. And here God gives seven reasons for preaching the Gospel to Israel. Let's look at them in closer detail.

*“Seven, in the Bible,
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completeness.”*

1 Romans 1:16 plainly says the Gospel is to go to the Jew first. Paul writes in that passage: “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.” Here we have the divine order of evangelism defined. The Gospel is to go to the Jew first. Why? The answer is not because the Jewish people are somehow superior to the rest of the Gentile world but because God chose their nation and people through whom the Messiah would come and prepared them for this through the Covenants, the Hebrew Scriptures with its many Messianic prophecies, and the Temple and its sacrifices (see Romans 15:8-9 where the divine order of evangelism is confirmed again). Thus Jesus came to save the Jews as a Jew. Jesus came first to offer salvation and the Messianic kingdom to Israel. He said as much during His ministry on earth. When sought by a Gentile Jesus said in Matthew 15:24: “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.” Paul and the Apostles followed this divine order in the book of Acts when going to the Jews in the synagogues first to preach the Gospel. Salvation and the Messiah came directly from the Jewish people. Jesus told the Samaritan woman in John 4:22: “Salvation is of the Jews.” The Church is to follow the same order of evangelism given in Romans 1:16 as practiced by the Lord Jesus and the Apostles. We are to witness to the Jews first as they did and commanded us to do.

Search the Scriptures

This is a monthly newsletter of B'rit Hadasha Ministries. Special thanks go to several people who helped to make this newsletter possible:

Zola Levitt
Mark Levitt
Nancy Baker
Greg Hartwig
Pat and Claudia Rutherford
Don and Elisa Retzlaff
Sean Robinson

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2 The Great Commission was given from Jerusalem and the preaching of the Gospel began there. The holy city Jerusalem is mentioned 811 times in Scripture. God has chosen this city as the eternal city where He will place His name there forever (2 Chron. 6:6). Jesus will reign over the world from Jerusalem for a thousand years. Ezekiel 5:5 says God has placed Jerusalem at the center of the earth. There our Lord died for the sins of the world and was raised again. He will return there when He comes again. In Acts 1:8 Christ commanded the Disciples to take the Gospel to the whole world starting in Jerusalem. Jerusalem has been the Jewish capital for 3,000 years. It is not only logical but also strategically smart that if one preaches the Gospel to the Jews you should go to the place they hold highest above all else on earth—Jerusalem.

3 To fulfill prophecy and hasten the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is an obscure and often ignored prophecy found in Matthew 10: 23. Jesus said there “But when they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.” Jesus predicted in this prophecy that the evangelization of the cities of Israel will not be complete before He returns. This prophecy will be fulfilled during the time of the tribulation period when Jewish Christians are persecuted for their Gospel witness in Israel. For nearly 2,000 years of the present Church age the Gospel was not being preached to Jews in Israel because they were scattered throughout the nations of the world since 70 A.D. But all that changed in 1948 when Israel became a nation again and Jews returned en masse to their ancient homeland. The Messianic movement in Israel is growing and now for the first time since the days of Jesus and the Apostles, evangelism and gospel preaching to the Jews is happening in the land again. The fact that this has started and will not be finished before the Second Coming

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must mean the Lord's return is very soon. Not only do we have a prophecy of this kind found in the New Testament but also one of similar fashion in the Old Testament. It is in Isaiah 62:10-12. Isaiah 62:10-12 is an amazing prophecy that says God will send Gentile believers to Jerusalem "from the ends of the earth" to proclaim to the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem that the Savior is coming to redeem and rescue them. Incidentally, the Hebrew word for "salvation" in Isaiah 62:11 is the same word for the name of Jesus in Hebrew—Yeshua or Yeshuach. Yeshua (Jesus in English) means "The Lord is salvation." "She shall bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus (Yeshua) (Matthew 1:21). For He shall save His people from their sins." In other words, God wants them to say to Jerusalem Yeshua or Jesus is coming! The chapter closes with the prediction that these Gentile ambassadors of Christ will prepare the way for the return of Y'shua the Savior in much the same way John the Baptist prepared Israel for the Messiah's first coming as predicted in Isaiah 40verse 3. This interpretation is confirmed as the right one by the fact that Isaiah 63 opens with the second coming of the Messiah in glory after His way has been prepared by His Gentile ambassadors of chapter 62 who come to share the Gospel of salvation to Israel and Jerusalem. The fact that this ministry and others are doing this very thing means prophecy is being fulfilled and Christ's coming is extremely close.

4 Preaching the Gospel to Israel pays the debt we Gentile believers owe to the Jewish people. Paul said in Romans 15:27 that we are indebted to Israel because of the spiritual blessings they brought to the world. Those blessings that came through the Jewish people are the Bible, the Messiah, and the Judeo-Christian ethic on which the whole of Western civilization is built. The New Testament Church is obligated out of Christ's love to

share the Gospel to His ethnic people—the Jews. What greater way to pay that spiritual debt of gratitude than to share with them the great riches of salvation given through Jesus Christ.

5 To possibly prepare Jewish hearts for the Tribulation. The signs of the Lord's return are here to anybody who has a basic understanding of Bible prophecy. When you witness to an Israeli Jew in this late hour you could very well be planting Gospel seed that will save him

***"We must take the
Gospel to the Jews of
Jerusalem because
God commands it."***

after the Rapture and allow him to become part of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists mentioned in Revelation 7. God's Word will not return void. Jews we witness to now who do not get saved, can after the Rapture of the Church when they recall what we told them about this event and the tribulation period to follow.

6 The Salvation of Israel is the heart cry of God and Jesus. Our Lord wept over the lost condition of Jerusalem saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing" (Matthew 23:37). Jesus lamented over the fact that they would reject Him as their Lord and Savior and suffer eternal loss and ruin. The Spirit of Christ spoke through the Apostle Paul in Romans 10:1 when he expressed that his ardent desire and prayer to God was

that Israel might be saved. Jesus still weeps over the lost condition of Israel today. But He has purchased their salvation for them through His death on the cross. All they have to do, like anyone else, is believe and receive Y'shua as their Messiah to be saved. We as a Church must in love, understanding, and patience give them that opportunity by sharing the Gospel with them. If we don't they will remain lost without their true Messiah.

7 We must take the Gospel to the Jews of Jerusalem because God commands it. Preaching the Gospel to the Jews of Jerusalem, Israel, and the world is not an option for Bible believing Christians. It is commanded by God in Isaiah 40:9-10. We are not only to bring the good tidings of salvation to Israel but we are to do it with boldness and strength. But to do this takes financial support from Christians who love the Jews and want to bless Israel with an opportunity for them to be saved by hearing and believing the Gospel. I can tell you from personal experience the Jewish people are open and willing to listen about why Jesus is the Messiah of Israel and the world. The only way I can carry out this last days Gospel outreach to Israel is if people like you obey the Holy Spirit's leading and give to this ministry. For "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed. And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent" (Romans 10:14). What greater blessing to give to the Jewish people than to afford them the opportunity to hear the Gospel and believe it for salvation. God promises a special blessing on those who bless the Chosen People. In Genesis 12:3, the Lord says, "I will bless those who bless you." As you give into this ministry, God will bless you and cause prosperity to abound, "not that I seek a gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account" (Phil. 4:17). †

Matthew 13 and the Prophetic Parables About the Present Age

An Introduction to a Series on the Eight Parables



There are eight parables given by Christ in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel. Christ calls these parables "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" in Matthew 13:11. Before one can know these parabolic mysteries, the student of Scripture must define what the terms "mystery" and "kingdom of heaven" mean in the Bible before he or she can understand them within the context of Matthew 13. Let us briefly do that.

The Biblical concept of "mystery" as commonly found in the N.T. is an aspect of the plan of God that has been hid in ages past and not revealed until the appointed time by God to those whom He chooses to reveal it to (Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians

3:3-5). The word does not mean, as is commonly assumed, an inscrutable or unsolved problem or situation, but a part of God's program for man that has hitherto not been revealed. So the eight parabolic mysteries of Matthew 13 were to be new truths about the plan and purpose of God for Man that would unfold and develop during the period between the first coming and return of Jesus Christ. The mystery kingdom of heaven parables were new truths when Christ spoke them to the disciples for the simple fact that they had not been revealed ever in the past until then. This new phase of God's rule is called "the kingdom of heaven" in Matthew 13. The Kingdom of God took on this mystery form after King Jesus and His Messianic kingdom was rejected by the nation of Israel as seen in the confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in Matthew 12.

Matthew uses the term "kingdom of heaven" 34 times in his Gospel; a term that is unique to his Gospel alone, to convey the invisible rule of God in the present age culminating in the visible return of Christ in the future to close out the present age. The Lord Jesus spoke these eight parables for two reasons:

- (1) To pronounce divine judgment on unbelieving Israel resulting in their inability to spiritually understand the teachings of the Messiah (13:13-15);
- (2) To enlighten and instruct the believing disciples (which at that point was the Jewish disciples and remnant of Israel) of His who come to Him with child-like faith about God's program for Israel and the world during the time between His physical absence and return (13: 11, 16-17).

The "kingdom of heaven" as used in the context of Matthew 13 does not refer to the millennial (thousand year) reign of Christ over all the earth but to its current expression in the present age during the interregnum, that period of time, which stands between the two comings of Christ. This period largely covers the Church age we believers are presently in. The parables thus predict how the course of this age will go during the physical absence of Christ from the earth until His glorious return to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19).

The parables of Matthew 13 are thus prophetically descriptive of Christendom down through the centuries in its varied forms and stages of development until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ when the final separation of the good and bad within the Church and the world is completed (Matt. 13:40-43). In the next issue we will closely examine and study the first parable of the eight in Matthew 13, the parable of the sower and the seed. †

Vision... (Continued from page 1)

- December 2001 Levitt Letter "To the Jew First" (Part two)
- January 2002 Levitt Letter (Part three)
- February 2002 Levitt Letter "To the Jew First" (Part four)
- May 2002 Levitt Letter et al.

If you would like Todd to come speak at your church or fellowship you may contact him at (214) 356-2583. If you would like to make a financial donation to help our outreach and operational costs, you may send it to the return address of this publication.

Donations are tax deductible as you give to this Non-profit ministry.†

What Is... (Continued from page 2)

of Israel in fulfillment of Bible prophecy, God is shifting the eyes of the world to focus on Israel once again as He prepares Israel and the Gentile nations for the return of Jesus the Messiah to His earthly home to rule over the world for a thousand years from the Promised Land.

Our responsibility, like John the Baptist did for Israel when Jesus came to that nation the first time, is to prepare Jewish hearts to receive the Gospel now and be ready for the King's return. That work has begun in Israel, and by God's grace and enabling shall continue until His return. This ministry is a humble participant in such a cause.†

ROMANS 7: *Pre-Christian, Post-Christian, or Both?*

Romans chapter 7 is probably one of the most debated chapters in the Bible. The debate centers around two simple questions. Is the experience described in chapter 7 an experience Paul had before his conversion to Christ, or after? In these series of articles this writer will hopefully, by the grace of God, provide sound and basic reasons for the particular interpretation adopted with appropriate citations from other commentaries and Bible scholars representative of each main view. The particular focus of our study is on Romans 7:7-25 and whether it is indicative of Paul's past life under the Law of Moses, or applies to his present experience. Douglas Moo in his commentary on Romans believes the main focus should be on the Mosaic Law instead of the autobiographical "I" so prevalent throughout the passage (Moo, vol. 1, pg. 433).

While it is true the Mosaic Law is a prominent theme in the seventh chapter of Romans, it cannot be forcibly separated from the subject of its rule and administration -that being "I." Both the Law of Moses and the person such as Paul who was under it are interrelated together in



Romans 7 and should be taken together instead of apart. The word "I" (ego in Greek) occurs 27 times and the 'law' (nomos in Greek) 13 times in Romans 7. The preponderance of both favors taking them both, with particular attention to the recurrent "I," together as a key to help determine the meaning of the passage. Romans 7 opens with the truth that believers have been delivered from the ruling domain of the Law and the obligation to keep it as a means of gaining righteousness with God which could not be kept bringing death to the disobedient.

Our death to the Law, which occurred through Christ's saving death for us, has discharged and freed us from the Law's tyranny so that we can walk with God in the power of His Spirit (Rom. 7:1-6). This is a present reality for Christians and brings us to the threshold of verses 7-25. There are five basic interpretations of Romans 7:7-25 that have

historically been given with accompanying variations under each interpretive heading. In the issues to come we will look at each and demonstrate why one out of the five is the most likely meaning of the passage under consideration. †

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