

# SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

John  
5:39

A Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries



Volume 1, Number 3

March 2003

## Encounters in Israel

*B'rit Hadashah (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. This being our vision, it is appropriate that we share with you glimpses into the work we are doing. These excerpts will be a continuing feature of this newsletter, keeping you in touch with our work in progress.*

*This excerpt was taken from an article written by Todd Baker which appeared originally in the June 2001 issue of the [Levitt Letter](#). Todd was joined by Kevin Parker, an Israel tour leader for Zola Levitt Ministries. This was their first evangelistic mission to Israel. And this is just one of many amazing encounters they had.*

**“W**hile in Jerusalem, we went to Mt. Zion where the tomb of David and the Upper Room are closely situated. There is a small synagogue in the room with David's tomb. There, on the Sabbath day, Kevin and I were led to talk with two Yeshiva (Jewish seminary) students studying to be rabbies about how Y'shua of Nazareth fulfilled many of the Messianic prophecies, with special emphasis on the Messianic Psalms. By the way, one of the young men, named Menachem, was reading the Psalms from the Hebrew text before we came into the room!

We shared with them from the Hebrew text about prophecies that foretold the Messiah's virgin birth (Gen. 3:15; Is. 7:14); where He would be born (Mic. 5:2); the manner of His death (Ps. 22); His resurrection from the dead (Ps. 16:10-11) and His

glorious return, when the Jews are regathered to Israel from dispersion and Jerusalem is excavated from ruins and rebuilt (Hos. 3:3-5; Ps. 102:12-16). We spent almost an hour with them. They were intrigued and said they would give this important matter serious attention and study.

Please pray that the Holy Spirit will open their eyes and hearts to accept Y'shua as Lord and Messiah.” †

Dear readers,

Please pray for our Gospel outreach team consisting of Robert Cuccia and myself as we go to Israel from April 6th to April 25th to conduct another witnessing campaign sharing the Gospel of Yeshua with His people. It is not too late to pledge your financial support to underwrite some of the cost for this outreach. May God bless you as you do so in blessing the Jewish people (Genesis 12:3). Below is a suggested prayer list to use when praying for us. We will give a full report of how things go over there in future newsletters.

Your servant in the Messiah,  
Todd Baker



### Prayer List

**for Baker/Cuccia Mission Trip  
to Israel April 6 - 25, 2003**

- Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6)
- Pray that we have the Father's wisdom and guidance in everything we do (Psalm 32:8; 48:14; Colossians 4:5).
- Pray for witnessing opportunities (John 4:35; Luke 10:2; Acts 1:8).
- Pray that God will open the hearts of those who will hear (Psalm 110:3; Acts 16:14)
- Pray that God will give us the boldness to proclaim the Gospel to the Jew first and also the Gentile (Acts 4:31; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 6:19).
- Pray for spiritual unity and agreement among us (Psalm 133:1).
- Pray for favor among the Chosen People as we share the Gospel with them (Proverbs 12:2).
- Pray that the Chosen People will come to faith in Messiah (Christ) Jesus (Romans 10:1; Matthew 15:16; Mark 8:27-29, 14:61-62; Luke 9:18-20; John 4:25-26).
- Pray for spiritual fruit that will last (John 15:7-8; Galatians 5:22-23).
- Pray for our health, protection, safety, and God's protection from the hand of the enemy, both seen and unseen (Psalm 91; Matthew 6:13).

### **In This Issue**

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# FRIENDS: An Acronym for Sharing the Love of Jesus with the Jewish People

**J**ewish people are like everybody else. They need to be introduced to the Savior Jesus and experience God's forgiveness from sin and have eternal life through Him. Two thousand years ago, Jesus, a born and bred Israeli Jew, came to this very people first to bring them such blessed realities. Indeed, our Lord stated this in Matthew 15:24: **"I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."** The plain fact is that, like Gentiles, the Jews need the Gospel, particularly since the Messiah is Jewish and came to Israel for the

express purpose of proclaiming the Gospel to them (Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:18). This fact alone, if for any another, makes it imperative for Gentile believers in Jesus the Messiah to make known His saving grace to His own ethnic brothers and sisters.

In my varied experiences with sharing the Gospel to the Jewish people, I have developed the acronym FRIENDS to lay out the basic principles easy to

*The prophecies that  
mark His identity  
come from the Bible  
alone — the  
Hebrew Scriptures.*

remember as guidelines for sharing Jesus the Messiah with your Jewish friend or neighbor.

## F (FRIENDSHIP)

Before engaging in a thought-provoking discussion about why Jesus is the Messiah with your Jewish neighbor (which is a serious thing for anyone to consider), you must first establish a bond of trust and friendship with that person. Some people approach evangelism in general, and Jewish evangelism in particular, with a numbers game mentality that places a greater emphasis on quantity (how many can be saved) instead of the quality of one's Gospel witness (the quality of one's witness). But with the Jewish person, you must earn the right to share your faith with them by gaining their respect. This involves befriending him or her with genuine love for them and a concern for their spiritual welfare.

Establishing a friendship with anyone means to take a keen interest in him or her, like how they think, and the particular background he or she comes from. It also means taking time and energy to know and understand that person as a unique individual made in the image of God. Friendship is a gift from God and one of the most important expressions of His love for establishing healthy and lasting relationships. It is a valuable way of connecting yourself with other people living in the world we live in.



## R (REACH)

The very nature of taking the Gospel to the world means we must seek people out to share the saving message of Jesus the Messiah with them. Jesus commanded the Church to **"Go into all the world"** and preach the Gospel (Matthew 28: 19-20). "All the world" most certainly includes where the Jewish people live, too. In fact, they are the first people group who should hear the Gospel (Romans 1:16). To reach your Jewish neighbor, you must develop a sincere desire to understand and know the history, religion, and customs of the Jewish people. These are the ancient people who gave us the Bible and the Messiah, and it behooves us to keep that in the forefront of our minds as we share what is a very Jewish message — the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah. You cannot preach until you are willing to reach. Take the initiative and learn what it is to be Jewish — think Jewish — so that you can effectively reach them for Jesus. Paul utilized the accommodation principle of evangelism too when he said in 1 Corinthians 9:20, **"To the Jews I became as a Jew that I might win Jews."**



## I (ISRAEL)

Two ways to effectively accomplish this are to read and believe the Scriptures written cover to cover by Jews and familiarize yourself with their 4,000-year history as the nation of Israel. The regathering and rebirth of the Jewish nation of Israel in May 1948 is indisputably the single greatest fulfillment of Bible prophecy since the time of Christ. The Bible foretold that at the end of days (that period of time immediately before the return of Christ) God would regather the Jewish people from worldwide dispersion and bring them back to their ancient homeland (Deuteronomy 30:1-3; Isaiah 11:11-12; Jeremiah 12:14-15; Ezekiel 20:33-42; 37).

For over 1900 years, the Jewish people were scattered throughout the world and suddenly became a nation again in one day on May 14, 1948, after the travail and horrors of the holocaust a few years earlier. Isaiah 66:7-9 predicted this very thing. Knowing the history of Israel and the divine destiny God has for them goes a long way in having an effective Gospel witness to them. On several occasions, when I have shown these very same prophetic Scriptures to Jewish people to whom I am witnessing, they are utterly amazed at how the Bible exactly foretold their history as it has come to pass thus far. It makes them realize that the Bible has a divine Author who has accurately predicted their history and that Christians who lovingly demonstrate this to them have a deep respect and interest for their past, present, and future.

*Continued on page 4*



# WHO IS ALLAH?

One of the five pillars of Islam is that there is no God but Allah. Every Muslim must believe that Allah is God, and God alone is Allah. He is the only one true God. Muslims, and those with an ecumenical outlook, further assert that Allah is the same God Jews and Christians believe in, too. "All three faiths believe in the same God" is the presumed conclusion of many. But is this common assumption true? Upon closer examination of Arabic, pre-Islamic Arab history, and Ancient Near East polytheism, it is quite obvious that Allah is certainly a different god than the God of the Bible worshipped by Jews and Christians.

The original Arabic word "Allah" betrays a pagan and polytheistic origin utterly foreign to the current monotheistic belief system of Islam. The word "Allah" comes straight from the Arabic derived from two words "al" ("the") and ilah ("idol" or "god"). Thus translated, alilah means "the idol" or "the god" to indicate a particular god among many gods. The word Allah certainly existed before the birth of Muhammad and the creation of Islam. In fact, Allah was the tribal god of Muhammad's Quraysh tribe. In Pre-Islamic Arabia, Allah was the name of the moon god that was one of the idols worshipped by Arabs in the Kabah at Mecca. The Kabah is a cube shaped structure in Mecca converted in the seventh century A.D. from the pagan worship of Arab deities into the central place of worship to Allah where all Muslims must make a pilgrimage to at least once in their lives.

Prior to Muhammad's birth, there were about 570 tribes that comprised the Arab people. These tribes worshipped about 360 gods at Mecca in the Kabah structure. Allah the moon god was the chief deity over them all. Each tribe had their own deity they worshipped in the Kabah. The Kabah served as the pantheon where the idols of each tribal deity stood and were worshipped by Arabs making pilgrimages to Mecca. The black stone in the Kabah that stands for the central symbol of Islamic worship today, during Pre-Islamic Arabia, was originally the idol for the moon god, Allah.

In the last 100 or so years, archaeologists have excavated various temple sites dedicated to the moon god from the Arabian peninsula to the Mesopotamian region. The worship of the moon god was one of the most popular forms of worship in the ancient Middle East. The symbol for the moon god found in most of these excavated places was the Crescent Moon. It is no coincidence that the preeminent symbol of Islam is the crescent moon seen on the minarets of mosques and the flags of Islamic nations! The fast cycle of the Islamic holiday of Ramadan is based on the lunar cycle of the moon at its crescent phase in the sky. The image of the crescent moon in Islam came straight from the idol worship of the moon god

alilah and was carried over into Islam's worship of Allah.

The cult of the moon god was extremely prevalent and popular among ancient civilizations of the Middle East. The Babylonians, Sumerians, Persians, Assyrians, and Akkadians were avid worshipers of the moon god who took on various names down through the millenniums, the most popular names being the moon god Sin (no joking here), and Bel of Babylon. In Muhammad's day, his name was "Al-Ilah" which was later changed into the name "Allah" of Islam.

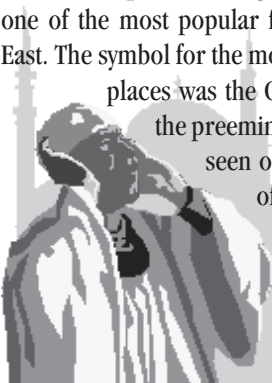
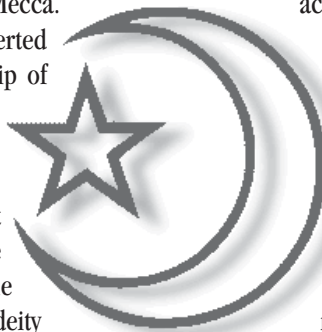
When Muhammad rose to military power and his creation of the Muslim religion was gaining ground in Arabia, around 360 A.D., he conquered Mecca and purged the Kabah of the 359 or so Arab gods except for one, Allah the moon god, whom he and his tribe exclusively worshipped. He proclaimed Allah as the one true God and left the black stone idol in the Kabah as a visible reminder of this. Christians and Jews living in that region naturally refused to

accept Muhammad's claim because they already knew Allah was the moon god and to accept such was to commit the sin of idolatry. For their refusal, Muhammad slaughtered most of them and subjugated the rest.

The Bible repeatedly condemns idolatry of every form and kind. The first and second of the Ten Commandments expressly forbid the worship of other gods and idols (see Exodus 20:3-5). The Old Testament repeatedly condemned the worship of the moon god (Deuteronomy 4:19, 17:3; 2 Kings 21:3,5; Jeremiah 8:2; 19:13). The Bible says that behind every idol believed and worshipped, whether Allah or any other, are demon spirits (Deuteronomy 32:17; 1 Corinthians 10:20). Therefore, when one worships them, he is worshipping demons. Unbeknownst to Muslims, Allah is not the same Yahweh God of the Bible in which Jews and Christians believe, but rather a *demon spirit* in the form of the idol moon god Allah falsely claimed by Islam as the one true God.

Anyone claiming Allah is the same God of Christians, Jews, and Muslims is ignorant, lazy in their thinking, and sloppy in their research. We concur with the summative comments of Dr. Robert Morey in his excellent book, "The Islamic Invasion", about the real historical and spiritual origins of the Islamic god Allah:

*"The Muslim's claim that Allah is the God of the Bible and that Islam arose from the religion of the prophets and apostles is refuted by solid, overwhelming archaeological evidence. Islam is nothing more than a revival of the ancient moon god cult. It has taken the symbols, the rites, the ceremonies, and even the name of its god from the ancient pagan religion of the moon god. As such, it is sheer idolatry and must be rejected by all those who follow the Torah and Gospel."* †



## E (EXPLAIN)

Once you can reasonably do this in your witness to your Jewish friend, you are able to more easily explain how believing in Jesus as the Messiah is a natural step for the Jewish person to take. That is, explain to the Jewish person how the Messianic prophecies in his Bible have been fulfilled by Jesus showing

### *1 Corinthians 9:20, "To the Jews I became as a Jew that I might win Jews."*

beyond all doubt He is the Messiah of the Jews. Most Jews today have not heard of Messianic prophecy simply because the study of it largely fell out of Judaism (except for some Orthodox circles) several centuries ago and also because most secular Jews today do not study the Bible seriously. Like many Christians in the church today, most Jews do not know their own Bible. Prophecies about the Messiah were given to the Jews so that they could recognize Him when He came. The prophecies that mark His identity come from the Bible alone — the Hebrew Scriptures. Detailed prophecies about the Messiah's pre-existence, deity, lineage, birth, ministry, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension are given and are so exactly fulfilled in the life of Jesus that no one else has fulfilled or could fulfill them. Mastering the major Messianic prophecies from the Jewish Scriptures is a must for anyone who wants to effectively witness to Jews. Jewish people have and will come to faith in these prophecies as the Holy Spirit works through them to convince them of the truth that Jesus is in fact the Messiah.

*...you must earn the right to share your faith...*

## N (NEUTRALIZE)

When witnessing to Jews about Jesus, you must be prepared for objections given against Jesus for not believing He is the Messiah. The purpose here is to neutralize such objections with informed and truthful information that will show how believing in Jesus as the Messiah is a naturally Jewish thing to do instead of a Non-Jewish thing as they are wrongly taught and led to believe. For nearly two thousand years, Jewish people have been thoroughly indoctrinated by their rabbies, religious traditions, and culture not to believe Jesus is the Messiah. Over the long centuries, the Church has treated the Jews deplorably as the Crusades, Inquisition, and Holocaust graphically testify. This mistreatment by alleged 'Christians' has greatly harmed the cause of Christ. Jews are taught that followers of Christ committed these horrible atrocities against their people. Therefore, they assume that most Christians hate Jews. This has built up a natural wall of resistance whenever Jews are told about Christ. Answering these objections with a clear understanding of Jewish history and Scripture will go a long way in clearing up any misunderstanding between true Christians who are Philo-Semitic (they love the Jewish people) as opposed to pseudo-Christians who are Anti-Semitic. True followers of the Jewish Jesus will love His people because He loves them and chose them through whom He would come to redeem the world. Jesus

said, "**salvation is of the Jews**" (John 4:22). Showing a sincere interest and knowledge of your Jewish friends' religion and history will no

doubt impress them with the fact that you took enough time to study and understand their culture. I remember sharing with a group of young Israelis at a Kibbutz about certain key events in Jewish history. One of the individuals was so impressed

by this that she remarked, "You know our history better than I do." This provided a golden opportunity to share the Gospel with the group.

## D (DESTINY)

We must learn and know the divine destiny of the Chosen People as central to the Messiah so that we can make them see that the Gospel message directly pertains to them. God has chosen the Jewish people to fulfill a divine destiny. An integral part of that destiny involves, of course, knowing and recognizing Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. God chose the Jews to receive and write the Holy Scriptures (Exodus 24:4-8; Romans 3:2), to reveal the character of the one true God to the nations of the world (Isaiah 43:10), and to bring the promised Redeemer (Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:15-16). The Jews' future destiny will involve the complete restoration of their nation (which is partially taking place now) back into their ancient homeland of Israel for national salvation when Messiah Jesus returns to Israel with power and great glory (Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:26-27).

Israel's hope is not in their military prowess, or in America's ongoing support for their survival, but in the Savior who can alone save them.

## S (SAVIOR)

The problems for Jew and Gentile that stand between him and God are sin. Sin separates us from God. God's Word tells us the only way this barrier can be bridged between the sinner and God is that appropriate blood atonement must be made (Leviticus 17:11). The animal sacrifices of the Old Testament provided only a temporary covering for these sins and pointed to the once-and-for-all final sacrifice of Messiah Jesus for sin granting full and final pardon to Jew and Gentile who believe. God's final and perfect blood atonement came by way of Messiah Jesus (Isaiah 53; Hebrews 9-10). This free gift of the Messiah is received by faith through the prayer of a believing heart.

We at B'rit Hadashah have and will always endeavor to implement the FRIENDS acronym in our Gospel witness to Jews in Israel. It works. Do the same and watch God move in your witness and bring Jewish souls to Jesus the Messiah. ✚

### About the Author

Todd Baker is president of B'rit Hadashah 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.✚

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## **Romans 7:**

**Pre-Christian,**

**Post-Christian,**

**or Both?**

**PART 3**

*This is a continuation of our series of lessons on Romans 7.*

The third proposed meaning for Romans 7:7-25 is that Paul is describing the experience of Adam, especially verses 7-12 where Adam, in the person of Paul, is thought to be spiritually alive before the Law was given. But when the commandment came, sin "revived" and came to life through the serpent and deceived Adam bringing spiritual death to him and the rest of his posterity. Paul moves on in verses 14-25 to detail the ongoing effects of Adam's solidarity with us in the person of Paul.

The Adam view first emerged in the early church and was held by Methodius and Theodore of Mopsuestia. The immediate problem with this meaning is that, when Paul spoke of Adam in Romans, he did so clearly (Rom. 5). While it is true that the reality of Romans 7 morally applies to Adam and his fallen descendants with him, the individual

in view here is Paul who is representative of those consciously trying to keep the Law in their own strength and failing in the process. Besides that, Adam was not deceived (contra what Paul claimed for himself in Romans 7:11); Eve was first deceived by the devil through the agency of the serpent (1 Tim. 2:14). When Adam disobeyed, he did so knowingly.

To decipher Adam from Romans 7 can only be done so by reading it into the text and ignoring the fact of Paul's consistent method of being clear, direct, and to the point when wanting to teach a truth. This is readily apparent in 1 Corinthians when dealing with the problems of the Church there. Paul was frank and anything but indirect in his writings. When he wanted to use the historical Adam, he did so plainly (see Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15). The Adam interpretation for Romans

7:7-25 must be rejected since it reads into the text by assumption instead of letting the text plainly speak for itself.

The fourth interpretation holds that Romans 7:7-25 is descriptive of the moral bankruptcy and failure of the unregenerate person. The verses depict what is generally true of non-Christians and specifically true of Paul prior to his conversion. This view was maintained by most of the Greek Fathers of the early church. Commentators of this persuasion treat Romans 7:7-25 as one single unit instead of two. Those who advocate this meaning highlight certain expressions of Paul that leads them to preclude verses 14-25 from applying to present Christian experience. Do phrases like "I am carnal and sold under sin"



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### *Romans 7... Continued from page 5*

and “**O wretched man that I am**” (verses 14, 24) realistically represent the Christian’s present condition? Especially when the believer is said to be dead to sin and no longer enslaved by it (c.f., Rom 6)? The difficulties with these objections can be reasonably cleared up if we remember that Paul said other things in this section of Scripture which could never be true of the unregenerate.

True, Paul does say “he is carnal and sold under sin,” but it was said in the context of sin as an intruding force and power that is alien to his delight and desire to serve God after the inner man (verse 22). This could not apply to the unregenerate because Paul writes in chapter 8 of Romans: “**The mind of the flesh is enmity against God and will not submit itself to the law of God**” (8:7). Paul says he served and delighted in God’s law with his mind (7:21-25). He was mentally compliant in



contrast to the unsaved who are mentally rebellious.

The conclusion is obvious: Paul is not detailing the life of an unbeliever in Romans 7:14-25. If he were, then this section would contradict what we see about the unsaved in chapter 8. This can only be resolved by taking verses 14-25 as a separate unit from verses 7-13. Romans 7:14-25 therefore depicts the regenerate believer struggling against the inward power of sin still present within the members of his body, whereas the person of chapter 8:5-8 is the unregenerate person fully given over to a sinful lifestyle without any moral compunction. The Law of Moses can only show what a man is by nature — saved or unsaved. The purpose of the Law was not to save but to expose and define sin (Romans 7:7; Galatians 3:19) regardless of whether a Christian or unbeliever is in view.

In the next continuation, we will consider the fifth interpretation of Romans 7:13-25 and its practical ramifications for Christians living in the present time. †



## Search the Scriptures

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