

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

A Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries

John
5:39



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Proclaiming the Messiah in Israel!

Each new Gospel outreach in Israel means new challenges rich with new witnessing opportunities - a time for ministry to Israel, a time to see God's providence and power revealed there - a time to proclaim the risen glory of Yeshua the Messiah.

Our outreach of April 2003 was thankfully no different in this regard as we began on the airplane destined for Tel Aviv. On our way from London to Tel Aviv, Robert and I sat next to a Jewish man from



Brian

London. His name was Brian. Brian told us that his father was Jewish and his mother a Gentile. He converted to Judaism some thirty years ago. He also fought in the Yom Kippur War of 1973. From talking with Brian, we knew he was a very angry and hurting man by the fact he told us his wife died just six months earlier. It was obvious he was still going through the stages of grief. We then witnessed to Him how Jesus can fill the emptiness of his heart with His power, love, and peace. But we further said none of us could earn or be good enough for God, that it was only His grace and mercy that can save us from our sinful selves.

The God of Israel did this by providing the ultimate sacrifice for our sins through the sufferings and death of Israel's Messiah as foretold in Isaiah 53 and accurately fulfilled by Jesus at His trial and death. Brian's anger was calmed, as he seemed touched by this message of God's love. He then accepted a Messianic Gospel tract and we concluded our witness to him by saying to him that the Messiah could fill his sorrow with joy, his emptiness of being alone with Messiah's abiding presence giving true purpose and meaning to life. He thanked us for these words and promised to read the Gospel tract showing how one can be saved. Please pray for this man that He will have such an encounter with the Man from Galilee.



We had positive and powerful witnessing encounters in Tel Aviv. Robert and I went into a music store and talked to a young Jewish man named Ori (which means in Hebrew "my light"). I was looking for

Handel's Messiah on CD because I accidentally left mine at home. This young man was 22 years old and had an excellent knowledge of classical music and said he loved Handel's great masterpiece. He told us his favorite song in the Oratorio was "And He shall purify the sons of Levi" from Malachi 3:3. This allowed an open door for us to share with him why Yeshua is the Messiah of Israel and how He fulfilled these Biblical prophecies in his life, death, and resurrection that were sung in Handel's Messiah. We said these Messianic prophecies mark and identify who the real Messiah would be. Our focus was on the prophecies which foretold that the Messiah would be pierced in His atoning death. Thus we showed Ori from the Hebrew text those prophecies about this in Psalm 22:16, Isaiah 53:5-8, Zechariah 12:10 and their fulfillment in Yeshua's death on the cross in John 19:7. Ori was amazed.



Todd Baker



Ori talking with Todd

We offered him a Hebrew New Testament and some tracts going into more detail about how Yeshua fulfilled these prophecies as Messiah. This young man was so profoundly grateful for this gift that he said to us, "What you have given me today is invaluablely important to me." I

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IRAQ: BABYLON REVISITED

PART 2

In last month's newsletter, we began looking at reasons why Babylon, the literal city, must be rebuilt according to biblical prophecy.

Another important factor that seems to indicate the literal city of Babylon will be rebuilt again is the demographic factor. The study of demographics deals with the distribution, density, and size of human populations. With regard to the End-Time city of Babylon God predicts in Isaiah 13:20 that the city will never be inhabited again. ***"It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation; nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, nor will the shepherds rest their sheep there."*** Furthermore Jeremiah the prophet predicts that this same Babylon will be deserted, desolate, and devoid of human population. ***"Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness, a land where no one dwells through which no son of man passes."*** (Jer. 51:43). From roughly 539 B.C., when the Persians conquered ancient Babylon to our present day, this has not been true of the ancient site of Babylon, Hussein's rebuilt Babylon, nor of the region of small cities that were part of ancient Babylon. Never in its history has the city been completely deserted or uninhabited. The modern Iraqi city of Hillah stands where some of old suburban Babylon was built and is a thriving urban community today! Famed author Tim Lahaye of the "Left Behind" series comments:

"The latest information I can glean concerning the city of Hillah, in the suburbs of ancient Babylon though perhaps not within the walls of the literal city itself, is that it is growing rapidly and is considered a wealthy city. Urban and suburban Hillah have a population of about 250,000; in fact, its population is on par with that of any prosperous city of the modern world. It seems the Iraqi government has awakened to the fact that the ruins of Babylon make exciting attractions for the tourists of the world. In addition, the suburbs of modern Hillah are spreading out around the ancient ruins. One writer has even gone so far as to suggest that people now live in the village of Babylon. Its population has increased remarkably since 1958 because the Iraqi government is building homes and moving workers to bring old Babylon out of

her dusty grave. The ancient city of Babylon is being "resurrected"." (Tim Lahaye, Revelation Unveiled, p. 282.)

The desolation of human population must mean this will happen to a future rebuilt Babylon since it never was completely uninhabited in the past. Now that America's war in Iraq has recently been concluded on a victorious note, Hussein's rebuilt Babylon has been virtually untouched and will no doubt be used by the new government in Iraq. This victory and toppling of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship by America and its allies will now open the doors for Iraq to prosper as a free market economy with its rich oil reserves and petrel productivity; especially since the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq after the Gulf War in 1991 have been lifted by the U.N.

at the request of the United States. The fact that Babylon of the "last days" is predicted in Scripture to be the cosmopolitan center of commercial prosperity under the world empire of Anti-Christ is underscored by the fact that even now Iraq "sits on at least the second largest crude oil reserve in the world" and has the potential, according to some oil magnates and experts, to equal about 25 percent of the known reserves in the world (see The Second Coming of Babylon, by Mark Hitchcock pp. 147-150). This is no coincidence or unrelated fortuity in the plan of God for the End times. But as the astute author Mark Hitchcock writes; "And we must remember who put the oil there. God did. It all fits His blueprint for the end times. It's no accident that Babylon is in Iraq, a nation with staggering oil reserves. God said that Babylon will be rebuilt as a great commercial center in the end times" (Mark Hitchcock, The Second Coming of Babylon, p. 148).

The last factor to be considered that makes a rebuilt Babylon certain in the future is the destruction factor. Isaiah 13:9 and Jeremiah 51:8 predict that Babylon will be suddenly destroyed and overthrown like Sodom and Gomorrah. ***"And Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldean's pride will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.... Babylon has suddenly fallen and been destroyed."*** We know from history that Babylon was never suddenly destroyed by a fiery conflagration of any kind like we read in Genesis 19 about Sodom and Gomorrah. There were people living in Babylon well after a thousand years when these prophecies were given. The city gradually declined but was never destroyed in a sudden devastating and cataclysmic fashion by fire of any kind. Therefore what Isaiah and Jeremiah predicted will not be fulfilled until another Babylon is rebuilt. Babylon's location today makes it ripe for the same kind of incendiary destruction as the Bible predicts. Again, Dr. Tim Lahaye and coauthor Jerry Jenkins make a most insightful and fascinating observation about this.

"An interesting aspect to Isaiah's prophecy is that, like the city of Sodom, Babylon is built over vast supplies of bituminous asphalt and pitch. When my friend, prophecy preacher Dr. Charles Pak, led a tour to Babylon in 1975, he was told that the asphalt is only ten feet below the surface of the earth throughout the whole city. And while that may indicate oil is underground, it is also an ideal condition to produce its ultimate destruction by fire and brimstone... Taking all this into account, we see that Babylon must be rebuilt in order to be destroyed and made a desolation in the way the Bible predicts"

(Tim Lahaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, Are We Living in the End Times?, p. 136).

The evidence from the prophetic Word and Babylon's past history and

present reality make it compellingly clear this ancient city has been resurrected and rebuilt to fulfill End-Time prophecy concurrent with the return of Christ. For further study on this particular aspect of End-Time Bible prophecy see the following books: *The Second Coming of Babylon* by Mark Hitchcock and *The Rise of Babylon* by Charles H. Dyer. ☩



Old Babylon

Matthew 13 and the Prophetic Parables About the Present Age

Part 5 - the Parable of the Sower and the Seed

MATTHEW 13:7, 22

"And some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns sprung up and choked them." (Matt. 13:7)

The most common thorn of the four mentioned by Jesus is "the care(s) of this world." They primarily include the domestic needs everyone must have to continue living, expressed by the mundane and urgent requests of "what shall we eat?" "what shall we drink?" or, "how shall we be clothed?" (Matt. 6:3). A mind constantly worried over obtaining these things prevents one from looking to the Heavenly Father as the all-providing source meeting every legitimate need in this life. If we seek Him above all, He will give us the necessary things for living (Matt. 6:33; 7:7-11). If God can easily provide for nonhuman creatures and elements of creation that are incapable of worrying about life existing needs, then He will certainly tend to the needs of His greatest masterpiece of creation—Man. Heeding the sublime and simple truths of Christ's Sermon on the Mount can cure any domestic worries about the cares of this world. For in the same way God richly adorns the grass with fresh verdure, He is sure to amply supply men with the numerous materials to spin and weave durable, quality clothing for the body with much greater care. God meticulously feeds the scores of sparrows without them having to exert some type of agricultural labor. If God effortlessly supplies them

But the thorny ground soul takes it upon himself to do everything in his own strength.

with food, then He will supply us with many edible products that we might sustain a healthy existence too, whose value in God's estimate greatly exceeds that of a little sparrow.

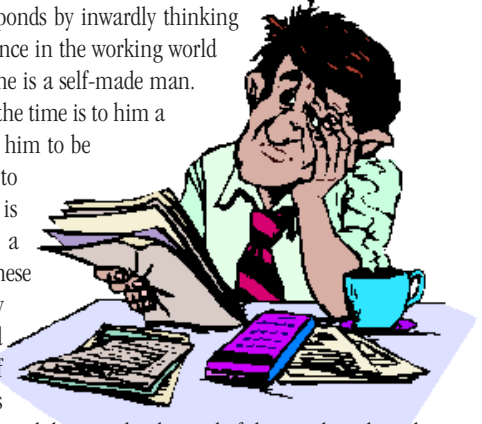
A faithful heart full of the Word will trust in the unfailing name of Jehovah-Jireh (which means from Hebrew ***"the Lord will provide"*** —Genesis 22:14) when pressed with the urgent needs of life. Whatever need confronts the reliant child of God, whether it be spiritual, physical, emotional, or financial, he will confidently stand on God's unbreakable promises given in the Scriptures. This is a major earmark noticed of a believer in the Word of God. Unlike the thorny hearted unbeliever, he will be anxious for nothing, but in prayer and humble supplication let his requests be made known to God, fully expecting Him to supply all his needs according to the riches of glory in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:6-7, 19). The Bible of course does not teach faith is a substitute for responsibility or a passive deferment from working to make a living as the worldling and unbeliever frequently assume; quite the contrary. Abdication of working for a living is strongly disapproved in Scripture. If a lethargic person will not work, he will not be allowed to eat (2 Thess. 3:19). If a person refuses to lawfully provide for himself and his family with an honest day's labor, his faith is vain and suspect. The church should then consider him worse than an infidel (1 Tim. 5:8). Real faith in God is never expressed in these terms. When the cares of this world are greater than one's work capacity to appropriate for survival, the believer in Christ will wisely cast his cares on the Lord trusting in His providence to sustain him through times where his own natural resources are not enough. He will stand on the Word when realizing

man's finite abilities are not sufficient to carry every task through. ***"Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you. He shall never allow the righteous to be moved"*** (Ps. 55:22; 1 Pet. 5:7-8).

But the thorny ground soul takes it upon himself to do everything in his own strength. He hears the Word of God tell him that without Christ he can do nothing (John 15:5). He responds by inwardly thinking no one has helped him advance in the working world but himself, and that he alone is a self-made man. Relying on someone else all the time is to him a sign of weakness. This leads him to be overly concerned with how to make ends meet. The Bible is therefore not considered a practical tool for attaining these earthly necessities desired by him. In being more concerned with the supplies instead of the Divine Supplier, this unbelieving listener of the Gospel does not let the seed of the Word produce the peaceful trust of God in his life. There is nothing wrong with being moderately concerned about finances, housing, and employment. But to be inordinately fixated on these things all the time as ends in themselves makes it idolatrously sinful. The soul that is fully distracted with gains and losses is too overly preoccupied with them to give it to God and let Him direct and regulate these areas of life.

Dear reader, if you are busily pursuing after material possessions all the time anxiously wondering how to get more of the good life, could it be you are a thorny ground pretender of the faith? If all you do is strive to feed the belly, collect the latest fashions in clothing, and greatly increase your monetary value, then you are as the heathen who set their hearts on these things alone instead of first placing trust in God (Matt. 6:32). The satisfied believer in God's Word learns to be content in whatever state he is in (Phil. 4:11). He knows that God is the heavenly Father, and as such will take care of his children that trust Him for every thing.

Next issue we will look at the second thorn Jesus mentioned in this parable—"the deceitfulness of riches." ✠



Search the Scriptures

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

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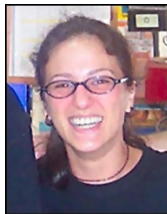
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responded by telling him that we believers in Yeshua are indebted to the Jewish people for giving us the Scriptures and the Messiah. His reply blew us away leaving us astonished and surprised. He said "It is I who will be forever in your debt for these things you brought to me today."

I was almost in tears and moved beyond words at this witnessing encounter. Ori's overwhelming gratitude for receiving the Word of God reminded me of when Jesus marveled at the great faith unexpectedly shown by the Gentile centurion in Matthew's Gospel (Matt. 8:5-10). In the same way, similar to Jesus, in all my witnessing experience for Christ in the U.S. for 19 years, I have seldom found such overwhelming gratitude shown for receiving the Scriptures by American Christians as Ori in Israel expressed to us when we gave him the Word of God!



On the same day, we stopped at a mini-mart and pool hall to buy some soft drinks. In the course of our purchase, we ended up talking to a young lady working there. Her name was Moran. Robert and I shared with her how the Jewish Messiah of Israel is the central person of Jewish history and Bible prophecy that binds the Tenach (Old Testament) and the B'rit Hadashah (New Testament) together. When we offered her a free copy of a Hebrew New Testament, she excitedly exclaimed, "I have always wanted to



Moran

read this book, but could not find it." We joyfully responded by saying to her that God obviously arranged this very moment as a divine appointment so that she could read for herself about Israel's true King and real Messiah as truthfully documented in the New Testament. We also gave her a "Prophesied Messiah" bookmark provided by Zola Levitt Ministries that lists all the major Messianic prophecies that were fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth.



The next day in Tel Aviv, while walking the streets, Robert wanted to stop in a bakery he spotted to buy a pastry or two. During his purchase, we started a conversation with the owner (whose name was Ezekiel) about the restoration and regathering of the Jewish people back into the land of Israel as a major fulfillment of End-Time prophecy and a sign of Messiah's soon return. We showed him these prophecies from Deuteronomy 30:1-13, and Amos 9:14-15 in the Hebrew text. He also read the great prophecy of Isaiah 66:7-9 about Israel becoming a nation again in one day after going through great travail and suffering. This prophecy was amazingly fulfilled with modern day Israel being declared and born a nation in one day, May 14, 1948, just after the Jews experienced the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust a few years earlier!

Initially Ezekiel seemed irritated and uninterested when we first came in. But as the Holy Spirit began to open his eyes, his whole countenance changed and he was beaming

with excitement. We then went on to say to him that the prophecies of Israel's restoration and regathering was just one stream of Bible prophecy that has been accurately foretold and fulfilled by God to the letter. We said that the other major field of prophecy in the Jewish Scriptures is the prophecies about the



Ezekiel

Messiah called Messianic prophecy. Naturally, from that point on in our witness to Ezekiel, we focused on Jesus of Nazareth as being the Person who fulfilled many of those prophecies when He came the first time and will complete the rest of them when He returns. We asked Ezekiel if he wanted to study and know more about Jesus being the Messiah by reading the B'rit Hadashah and the prophecies about Him in the Tenach. He answered with an enthusiastic "yes," so we gave him a Hebrew Bible containing the Old and New Testaments with a list of the major Messianic prophecies Yeshua fulfilled. What a thrill it was to see this man become joyous and highly interested in the good news of Israel's Messiah. In September, we plan to follow up and see if at that time he will make a decision to believe in Jesus the Messiah.

"Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out" (Romans 11:33). God is opening the eyes of Israel slowly to the pierced One they have long rejected which means His coming is near, for the veil is being lifted from Israel's eyes (2 Cor. 3:15-16). Truly God is preparing the Chosen People for His return in these last days as evidenced by our witnessing encounters.

Next month, I will share some more of these encounters as we traveled throughout Israel. ✠

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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ISRAEL: The Sign of the End Times (Part 2)

Secular historians generally write history from an anthropocentric view. That is how it relates and centers on Man and his development and various achievements in a closed universe. But the Bible concentrates on the historical fulfillment of God's covenantal relationship with the nation of Israel leading up to the first coming of the Messiah and His second coming to Israel in a supernatural fashion whereby God freely and arbitrarily intervenes in the affairs of man. In fact, the Bible says God determines the national boundaries and demographic habitations of humanity with the intent that the children of Israel could live in the land of Canaan in an area that would perfectly accommodate their numbers and allow for this. For Deuteronomy 32:8 says: ***"When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel."*** And all that the Bible has predicted about Israel's divine history thus far has literally come to pass.

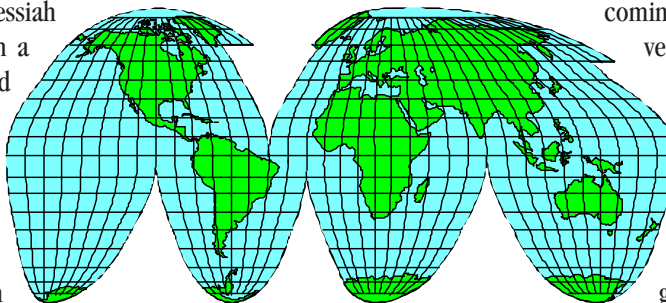
So then it is only reasonable and natural to conclude that the prophecies about Israel's future will also literally be fulfilled. Bible

Prophecy predicted as a super sign and precondition for the return of Christ the regathering of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland as the nation of Israel. That took place on May 14, 1948. The rest of this article will explore and explain how the modern nation of Israel is fulfilling this role as the super-sign to indicate the coming of Christ is close at hand and could very well happen in our generation.

The Bible predicts in Deuteronomy 30:1-3 that the return of the Lord Jesus Christ will occur sometime after the regathering and return of the Jews from world wide dispersion into the land of Israel. God gave this prophecy through Moses and

the Jews just before God brought them into the land of Canaan. The Authorized Version of these verses is most telling:

"And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey His voice. According to all that I commanded thee this day, thou and thy children, with



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Watch for Todd Baker on Zola Levitt's television show
- **Zola Levitt Presents** - the last weekend of June.
Zola will be talking with Todd about his recent mission
trip to Israel. Dates, times, and channels of broadcast
vary, so check Zola's online broadcasting schedule at
<http://www.levitt.com/airsch.html>
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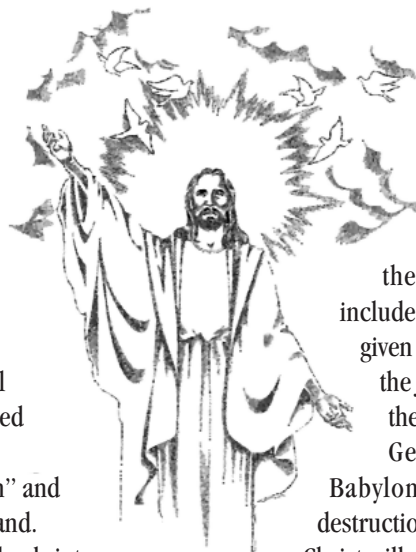
Israel: The Sign... Continued from page 5

all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee."

Notice the chronology or sequence of prophetic events here:

- (1) God will bring the Jews back to the land of Israel from the nations of the world where they were scattered abroad by Him for their disobedience.
- (2) During this regathering the Lord Himself "will return" and complete the restoration of all Israel back into the land.

In others words, when God begins to bring the Jews back into their land He gave them, Christ will return! The phrase "will return" is omitted from most modern translations of the Bible since the Masoretic text (upon which the majority of modern translations of the Old Testament are based upon) and the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) do not include it. But the Dead Sea Scrolls copied some 150 years before the birth of Christ and over 1,000 years older than any previously discovered manuscript of the Bible includes this very phrase! The passage reads as follows: ***"...then the Lord your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will return and gather you from the peoples, [from]***



where the Lord your God has scattered you..." (Martin Abegg, Jr.,

Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich, The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible, p. 187). Thus,

the phrase has good precedent for being included as from the original. And the prophecy given in Deuteronomy 30:3 foretells that when the Jews return to their ancient homeland from the Diaspora (the scattering of the Jews to all Gentile nations of the world after the Babylonian exile in 586 B.C. and the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.), the Lord Jesus Christ will return. If we just had this prophecy alone in

Scripture concerning the return of the Jews to Israel and the return of the Lord following it, this would be adequate alone to believe in His word that He would regather the Jews back to Israel and subsequently return at the second Coming. This unquestionably means in the words of author Homer Duncan that:

"For centuries, the prophecies concerning the regathering of Israel lay dormant in the Word of God. There was no outward indication that they would be fulfilled, but they are now being fulfilled before our eyes, and this can mean but one thing: THE COMING OF THE LORD DRAWS NEAR." (Homer Duncan, Israel: Past, Present, Future, p. 16) †