

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

John
5:39

A Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries



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"He is Risen!"

On April 16, the sixth day into our Gospel outreach in Israel, Robert Cuccia and I visited a family that I witnessed to and developed a close friendship with on a prior trip. The mother and father's names are Tamar and Yoram and the names of their three children (all triplets consisting of two sons and one daughter) are Dana, Noam, and Ophir. They invited us to stay at their house and celebrate the Passover with them and their family. Passover of course is one the seven feasts of Israel celebrated every year by the people of Israel to commemorate the Exodus



when God delivered the Jewish people from bondage and slavery in Egypt some 3,500 years ago. The Lord gave Robert and me opportunities among Tamar, Yoram, and their family members to explain how things associated with the

Passover meal is a type and shadow of

Yeshua the Messiah in His atoning death as the lamb of God. In addition to having the Passover Haggadah (the liturgical instruction manual for the order of celebrating the Passover) in English for Pesach, I also brought a book on the Passover written from a Messianic Jewish perspective that showed how Jesus the Messiah fulfilled Passover and the other feasts of Israel. Tamar's brother David took an interest in the book and I explained the premise of the book was to show how the seven feasts of Israel are prophetic and point to the person and work of the Messiah. David turned to Robert later during the Passover meal and mentioned the fact that part of the prayers said during the Passover meal is for the Jews to be regathered back into the land of Israel to await for the coming of the Messiah.

Robert responded by telling him that this is exactly what God is currently

Proclaiming the Messiah in Israel Part 3

doing by bringing the Jews back to the land in this day—a sure sign that the Messiah is soon to return!

After everyone left the house, Tamar and I cleaned the house until three in the morning. During this time Tamar asked me if I felt God's presence there. I enthusiastically said, "Yes!" She replied, "I wish I could experience that, too." I told her she could by accepting Yeshua into her heart and believing He is the atoning Messiah for her sins. When this is done, I further went on, God will

fill you with the Ruach Hakodesh (Hebrew for "Holy Spirit"). I further said to her that Yeshua promised in His Word to give God's Holy Spirit to those who simply ask in childlike faith. For if she, an imperfect person and mother, gives what is good to her children, how much more will God, who is perfect, give her the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who believe in Yeshua (Luke 11:9-13). She listened attentively and I later read to her what Jesus said about the process of regeneration and the necessity of spiritual rebirth (being born-again) in Him from John chapter 3. I concluded this biblical discourse by informing Tamar that all these things were written and foretold in the Jewish Scriptures. God told Israel He would make a New Covenant with them wherein He would give the covenanted nation a new heart and put His Spirit within them (Ezekiel 36:25-27). Dear readers, please pray for Tamar and her family. She is not far from the kingdom of God and is close to accepting Yeshua as her Messiah.

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A day later, back in Tiberius, Robert and I decided to visit the Caesar Hotel for a cappuccino. Our waiter was eager to listen about Israel's supernatural history guided and

directed by the power and providence of a sovereign God from Abraham to the present time. We told this young man, whose name was Zyion (in English that translates to Zion), that God chose the Jewish people to reveal Himself to the world through the Holy Scriptures they wrote culminating in the coming of Yeshua the Messiah whose life and ministry were written and recorded by Jews in the New Testament—a Jewish book.

We also emphasized that God has promised Israel to preserve them as a nation forever. No other ethnic nation can claim such a promise from Scripture (Jeremiah 31:35-37). Zyion listened with sincere interest and eagerly accepted a Hebrew copy of the Old and New Testaments.

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Todd Baker



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ISRAEL:

The Super Sign of the End-Times (Part 5)

The scattering of the Jewish people from the land of Israel throughout the nations of the world was a result of their disobedience to God's law and their rejection of the Messiah.

The first dispersion, as mentioned in a prior article, was the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity (721 and 586 B.C., respectively). The reason for this, as unanimously witnessed by both the pre-exilic and exilic prophets, was Israel's gross idolatry and apostasy from the Lord (Jeremiah 7, 9; Isaiah 1-6; Ezekiel 8-11, et al.). The second dispersion occurred for Israel's rejection and mistreatment of the Messiah who came to redeem them and offer the Messianic kingdom (Luke 19:41-44).

But in the beginning of their national history, God foretold all these things would happen as a warning to the nation through Moses, right before the people of Israel were to enter the Promised Land. In Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28-32, Israel's covenantal obligations as the Chosen Nation of God are spelled out by the Lord. The blessings that would accrue to their obedience are given and conversely the curses that would fall on them if they chose to walk contrary to the Lord and not obey Him were clearly spelled out to the nation. A cursory reading of these pivotal chapters at once reveals a precise and accurate prophetic portrait of the history of the Jewish people that has been fulfilled to the letter for the last 3,500 years!

"I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you." (Leviticus 26:33-39; Deuteronomy 28:64-67)

This scattering of Israel to all the Gentile nations of the world would serve as a sign for all to see God's reproach and displeasure for their disobedience to Him. ***"And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever."*** (Deut. 28:46)

Lest the reader think this too harsh, the Kiddush (the standard daily prayer book used by religious Jews in synagogues all over the world) offers the following



penitential prayer: ***"Cause us to return with perfect repentance to Thy presence. Pardon and forgive all our iniquities. Blot out and remove our transgressions and sins from Thy sight. Nullify the evil of the sentence decreed against us."***

Now in our day with the recent partial restoration and regathering of the Jewish people back to Israel, God is in the process of answering this very prayer. Throughout the long Diaspora, God promised that He would preserve the Jewish people as a distinct people among the Gentile nations so that by and large they would not be assimilated or be expunged by them.

"For I am with you, says the Lord, to save you. Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, and will not let you go altogether unpunished. Yet I will leave a remnant, so that you may have some who escape the sword among the nations, when you are scattered through the countries." (Jeremiah 30:11; Ezekiel 6:8)

The Assyrians, Babylonians, and the Romans all invaded Israel and conquered the Jews and subsequently led them captive away from the land to be scattered throughout the nations. After the dispersion of 70 A.D., the Jewish people were to live without a homeland for almost 2,000 years. All throughout that time they only survived in small numbers in isolated scattered communities. Their numbers greatly dwindled when they were hunted down and killed by the scores during the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Russian Pogroms, and the greatest of all numbers

killed in the horrific Holocaust. This is precisely why most Jewish people do not accept Jesus as the Messiah because those very people who claimed to follow Him instigated and carried out these violent campaigns and atrocities against the Chosen People. Sadly the tragic prophecy of Jesus in John 16:2 has been fulfilled in one way through the form of 'Christian' anti-Semitism when He foretold to His Jewish disciples:

"The time is coming that whoever kills you will think he offers God's service."

The enemies of the Jews slanderously did so in the name of Jesus Christ—a sin the Christian Church has all been too guilty of throughout the centuries. On this point Messianic Jewish author Barry Rubin explains what the Gentile name "Jesus Christ" means to the average Jew. "To a Jewish person, Christ conducted the Crusades, invoked the Inquisition, and prompted persecution of Jews over the last twenty centuries. To a Jewish person, Christ is the first part of the term used by those who accuse Jews of deicide: "Christ-killers" (***"You Bring the Bagels, I'll Bring the Gospel,"*** p. 94).

This brings us to our next point that we will take up in the next issue: Universal Anti-Semitism as one of the signs of the End-Times and for the return of Jesus the Messiah. †

Matthew 13 and the Prophetic Parables About the Present Age

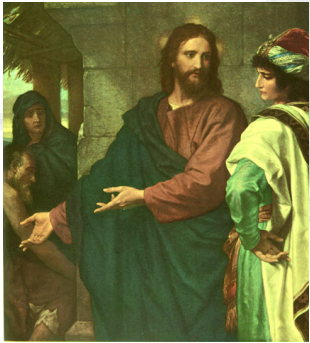
Part 7 - the Parable of the Sower and the Seed

"Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the Word, and...the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and he becomes unfruitful." (Matt. 13:22)

Continued from last month's article. The second thorn Jesus mentions in this parable is the "deceitfulness of riches."

God is a jealous God (Ex. 20:3). He will not take second place to anything or anybody, particularly to the god of money so obsessively idolized today in modern society. **"You shall have no other gods before Me"** (Ex. 20:3). There is no neutral ground. Jesus says, **"No man can serve two masters; for he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money"** (Matt. 6:24). In the end, the thorny-heart unbeliever naturally prefers money above Christ and, in exchange, tragically loses his soul in a sinner's hell; **"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"** (Mark 8:36). In the eyes of God, the value of one eternal soul is exceedingly greater than all the accumulated riches of the world. The sad truth is very few that are rich will make it into heaven because of their reluctance to part with their riches and rely totally on God (Mark 10:23-25).

Of the many thorny-ground hearers Christ preached to in His day, perhaps the most recognized in the New Testament is the rich young ruler who zealously asked Jesus, **"Good Master, what good thing must I do to inherit eternal life?"**



Jesus and the rich young ruler

(Matt. 19:16). Jesus demanded of the rich young ruler to sell all his wealthy possessions and give the proceeds to the poor in order to follow Him totally. But upon hearing this stipulation, the rich young ruler sorrowfully declined, **"For he had great possessions"** (Matt. 19:22). The rich young ruler was fervently religious, but intentionally remained unsaved. When forced to make a decision, he chose to let his fortune and great possessions control his life instead of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, like a thorny-ground listener of the Gospel, he foolishly preferred the riches of the world above Christ.

But riches are not the only thorny things uppermost in the heart of a thorny-ground hearer. His heart also avidly pursues after **"the desire for other things"** and **"the pleasures of this life"** (Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14). The meaning of these two deadly diversions used to dissuade the thorny-hearted unbeliever from embracing the Word of God with the whole heart are really interchangeable. Both

can similarly be classified in the same category as one when describing the wanton sinful activities of unsaved carnal man as alienated enemies of God in their minds by their wicked works (Col. 1:21). Drunkenness, promiscuity, partying, sexual lust, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, pornography, drug addiction, gluttony, narcissism, and false religion are a few of the common pleasures and desires of the world that are universally sought out and shamelessly indulged in by modern-day heathendom.

These vices are pernicious poisons to the soul. Those who verbally profess Christ and willingly do these things without the pang of moral conscience or the conviction of the Holy Spirit are foreigners of saving grace headed for the eternal doom of perdition if refusing repentance (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21). The thorny-ground listener hears the Word and keeps right on sinning as a way of life.

The Word is not able to bring forth fruit and formulate the life of holiness in a heart where impurity is cherished. He is beguiled by the thorny pleasures of sin while it works spiritual death (separation from God) within him. Sensual pleasure and worldly desire are the all-consuming gods of thorny-ground hearers. The visible Church is copiously filled with these types of listeners who are **"lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God"** (2 Tim. 3:4). The Bible predicts this would be one of the particular signs to exist in the apostate church during "the last days" right before the return of Christ (see 2 Timothy 3:1-9). The infatuation with pleasure-seeking is a commonly accepted practice encouraged and highly lauded by today's secular neo-pagan society.

The idolization of pleasure is rooted in the ancient Greek philosophy called hedonism. Briefly defined, it means the highest aim and meaning of life is found in the pleasure and happiness of the person or society as a whole without taboo or moral restraint imposed. It goes without saying that today's society, especially in the western hemisphere of the world, is totally engrossed in the sensual pursuit of hedonism. Pleasure at whatever cost is the acceptable agenda for the day. The thorny-ground hearer devotes himself to this soul-destroying philosophy. ☩

PRAYER REQUEST

Dear readers,

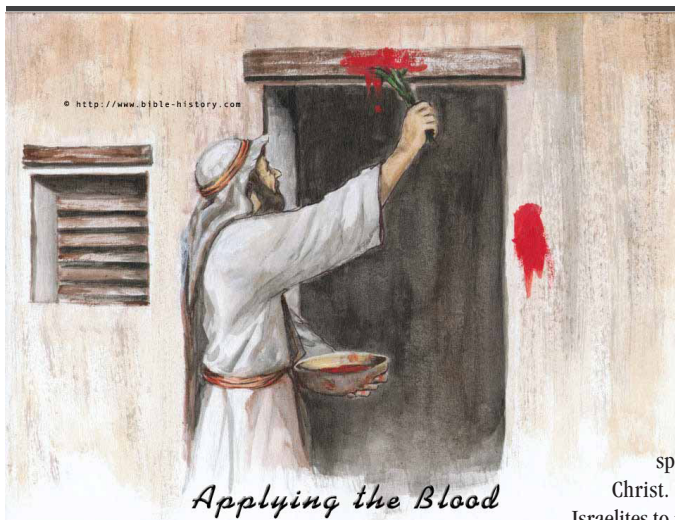
Please pray for our Gospel outreach team consisting of Robert Cuccia and myself as we go to Israel from November 2nd through 22nd to conduct another witnessing campaign sharing the Gospel of Yeshua with His people. It is not too late to pledge your financial support to underwrite some of the cost for this outreach. May God bless you as you do so in blessing the Jewish people (Genesis 12:3). Here 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

- 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 our health, protection, safety, and God's protection from the hand of the enemy, both seen and unseen (Psalm 91; Matthew 6:13).
- Pray for spiritual fruit that will last (John 15:7-8; Galatians 5:22-23).
- 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). ☩

EXODUS 12: CHRIST OUR PASSOVER LAMB (PART 2)



Applying the Blood

Exodus chapter 12 is one of the most important chapters in the Bible for the simple fact that it is where God instituted the Passover for Israel and, at the same time, it establishes one of the most prominent types in the Bible that prefigures the Messiah in His atoning death on the cross. The Passover is the epochal event in Jewish history -- a Jewish celebration observed every year that has lasted for some 3,500 years, virtually making it the oldest holiday celebrated in the world! The Passover was the signal event that brought deliverance for Israel out of the bondage of slavery in Egypt. God instructed the Israelites on that first Passover night to slay a lamb and to sprinkle the blood of it upon the doorposts and lintels of their houses so that when the Lord passed through the land of Egypt to strike down the first born of Egypt, Israel and their firstborn would be spared and saved from the destruction that was coming (Ex. 12:1-13).

The qualifications and particulars for the Passover lamb that we will carefully look at in Exodus 12 point to the character, ministry, and manner of the work and Person of Jesus the Messiah in His atoning death as God's final Passover lamb. The correspondence between the type (the Passover lamb) and the fulfillment in the anti-type (Jesus Christ) is clear and unmistakable.

1 Every man and every household was to have a lamb for sacrifice (Exodus 12:1-4)

The Passover sacrifice involved the whole family in Israel. The prophetic paradigm laid out for us here is obvious. Like Israel of the Exodus, each one of us must experience salvation individually and celebrate it together as a community. Every individual Jew had to personally appropriate and accept God's deliverance through the blood of the lamb. Salvation then, like now, is an individual decision and experience between him or her and the Savior. You must personally come to Christ and believe He, as the Lamb of God, took away your sins to save you from the wrath to come. No one else can do it for you. Scripture knows no such thing as surrogate salvation. God has no grandchildren, only born-again children who have been born twice—

once physically and once again spiritually through faith in Jesus Christ. It was an act of faith for the Israelites to put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts. But once they did so that faith saved them from the angel of death. Once you and I put our trust in the blood of Christ we too are saved from the "second death", which is eternal separation from God in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:13-14).

2 The lamb had to be unblemished, only the best from the flock would do (Exodus 12:5)



Before Pontius Pilate

The Passover lamb was to have no visible defect or blemish on it, flawless and no stain of imperfection found. This requirement for the lamb obviously points to the fact that as God's final Lamb Jesus was sinless and perfect in his humanity and moral character. The lamb without mark or blemish represents the spotless character and impeccability of Jesus the Messiah. The disciples lived with Jesus for over three years and never once did they see Him sin or commit wrong in all that time. No wonder the apostle Peter identified Jesus as "**the Lamb without blemish and without spot**" in 1 Peter 1:19. Notice in this passage Peter makes an allusion to the Passover lamb in Exodus 12:5 and sees its fulfillment in the perfect character and conduct of Messiah Jesus. John, one of the closest apostles of Jesus, testified of Him, "**In Him is no sin**" (1 John 3:5). On this same theme the writer of Hebrews adds that Jesus was "**holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners**" (Hebrews 7:26). Not only did Jesus' close friends and followers affirm His personal impeccability as God's sacrificial lamb for man, but also even His fiercest foes and those

very enemies who conspired in His death were forced to admit His faultless character. After closely examining Him in a Roman court of law Pontius Pilate exclaimed of Christ, "**I find no fault in Him**" (John 19:4). Judas said of the Master he betrayed, "**I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood**" (Matthew 27:4). Jesus boldly affirmed His perfection of character when He challenged His enemies with the question, "**Which of you convicts Me of sin?**" (John 8:46 see also John 7:18). As the Lamb of God Jesus was unblemished in thought, word, and deed. Thus He alone by His perfection was worthy to be our sinless substitute and Sacrifice Lamb for our sins. Christ was born sinless and died sinless. "**For He made Him who knew no sin to be a sin offering for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

3 The Passover lamb was to be a young male (Exodus 12:5)

Again Jesus answers to this type. He was a young man when He went to the cross. Christ died in the prime of His life at 33 years of age. Indeed some medical doctors and researchers have said that 30-35 years of age is the healthiest period of manhood in life.

4 A time period of four days from the selection of the lamb to the slaying of it was given to examine the lamb for any defects (Exodus 12:3, 6)



God specified this time period to occur on the 10th day of Nisan until the 14th day of Nisan (Abib). This amazingly corresponds exactly with the length of time of Jesus' last week of public ministry on earth when He entered Jerusalem for the Passover week, which corresponded from Palm Sunday to the crucifixion. On Palm Sunday Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey—it was the tenth day of Nisan! He publicly taught in the Temple and in

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Proclaiming the Messiah - Continued from page 1

After he took the copy of the Scriptures, he came back to our table and seemed surprised that the New Testament Scriptures was written in Hebrew. We told him that it was written in the original language of Israel because Jesus was Jewish, the first Christians were Jews, and the first "church" was in Jerusalem. Thus, the New Testament would naturally be originally written in Hebrew reflecting the people, land, and culture it came from. He was very open to our Gospel witness for Christ



Several days later, we arrived in Jerusalem and on Resurrection Sunday (In the West, it is called Easter by main-line denominational churches) proclaimed to the Jewish people there that, on this day, mankind's greatest enemy, death, was conquered by the Prince of life when He came out of the tomb in the city of Jerusalem 2,000 years ago. This epochal event of human history is extremely relevant to every human being because death happens to us all and we need a real answer to this universal enemy of life — that answer is exclusively found in the risen Christ! After prayer for God's anointing to boldly proclaim this message in Jerusalem and His guidance in leading our steps on the right path, we hit the streets of Jerusalem near our hotel to proclaim the good news of Yeshua the Messiah risen from the dead.

Our first witnessing encounter took place when we stopped to ask an elderly Jewish man for directions to a certain section of the city. He was sitting on a park bench reading a newspaper. His name was Joseph. Joseph patiently listened to us as we told him about what happened on this Sunday in the city of Jerusalem two thousand years ago. The Messiah died for our sins and the God of Israel raised Him from the dead to signify that Jesus was the unique Son of God and that His payment for Israel's and the world's sins was approved by the Father, which gives ultimate victory over death to those who believe in Him (Romans 1:1-4; 2 Timothy 1:10). Joseph said he had a problem with

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the existence of God because of the holocaust and the gratuitous amount of evil in the world. Our reply was that we understood why he felt that way but that evil exists not because God does not exist, but rather man being a free moral agent and given the gift of free will chose to disobey God from the beginning. This in turn brought the negative consequences (pain, suffering, evil, and death) of that

disobedience on all creation and human posterity (See Genesis 2 and Romans 5). God originally endowed man with a free will so that he would love his Creator by choice, not by force or coercion. This naturally involved a risk that man would choose to do wrong. The present reason for the existence of evil is because each of us is born with a natural tendency toward evil ("the evil inclination" as the rabbis call it); and it is this inward evil we need a Savior to save us from.

We further shared with Joseph the good news that God so loved Israel and the world that He sent His Son to be our Savior and Messiah to deliver us from the evil within us and without us. The resurrection of Yeshua from the dead is God's guarantee that death and sin, which produces it, will finally be destroyed. Joseph agreed with this line of reasoning in principle. We gave him a Hebrew New Testament to read and a Gospel tract in Hebrew too. He politely thanked us and left when his girlfriend arrived. Pray that our sharing the Gospel truth will take root and bear fruit and produce faith in the Messiah in his life. ✝



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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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Exodus 12 - Continued from page 4

Jerusalem until Thursday of that week—the 14th day of Nisan when He and His disciples celebrated Passover. During the four day period this Lamb of God was



Before Caiaphas

under close scrutiny, questioning, and examination by the scribes, priests, and Pharisees of the Temple hoping to catch Him in some error or inconsistency with His teaching and conduct. But on each occasion Jesus came out spotless every time. The very ones (the High Priest Caiaphas and the chief priests with him) responsible for overseeing and slaying the Passover lambs could find nothing legitimately wrong with the words and works of Jesus Christ

after four days of close examination. As the Lamb of God the High Priest and chief priests of the Temple could not find anything legitimately wrong with what He said or did. In the end this forced them to bring in false witnesses and fabricate alleged infractions against the spotless Lamb of God that were false and untrue (Matt. 26:59-60). Thus as the Lamb of God, Jesus passed the inspection test for sacrifice.

In the next issue, we will continue to look at how the particulars and qualities of the Passover lamb in Exodus 12 has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. †



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.†

Join Todd Baker as he assists Zola Levitt in an enriching evening of teaching the Bible and the Jewish roots of Christianity. Each Friday evening at 7:30 at the Biblical Arts Center located at Park Lane and Boedeker in Dallas, Texas. For more information, visit <http://www.levitt.com/congregation.html> or call (214) 696-8844 during normal business hours.