

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

A Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries

John
5:39



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Israel: The Super Sign of the End Times (Part 9)

World War One and its aftermath was the next significant stage and development for Zionism and the Jewish return to their ancient God-given homeland of Israel. The British had successfully defeated the Ottoman Turks in the Middle East who ruled Jerusalem and the land of Israel for exactly four hundred years (1517-1917)! The British victory was a critical one in this terribly bloody war that eventually brought final victory to the allies.



Todd Baker

One prominent leader of the Zionist movement arguably helped turn the tide of World War I in Britain's favor. That person was the brilliant Jewish chemist Dr. Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952). During the midpoint of the war (1916), Britain's navy was dangerously low on gunpowder for their naval artillery, so much so that if supplies were not quickly increased, they were in jeopardy of losing the war to the Germans. First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, called on the ingenious Weizmann to prodigiously develop some 30,000 tons of acetone to produce a synthetic type of gunpowder extracted from maize. He was able to successfully accomplish this and earned the profound gratitude of the British government and at the same time greatly contributed to England's victory in World War I.



Chaim Weizmann

To express their sincere thanks, British Foreign Secretary, Arthur James Balfour, wrote an official letter from the British government to Lord Lionel Rothschild, a gifted and leading senior member of the Zionist Federation of England, expressing Britain's formal support for a national homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine (the British term for what was ancient biblical Israel). This letter became what is known today as "The Balfour Declaration." The letter dated November 2, 1917 in part read:

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of His Majesty's Government the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations, which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet:

"His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

I should be grateful if you would bring this Declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours Sincerely,

Arthur James Balfour



Arthur Balfour

In this momentous document of Jewish history lay the beginning for the eventual reestablishment of the nation of Israel in the modern day. Balfour was able to convince The War Cabinet to sign off on this official endorsement

*...we as American, Bible-believing,
Zionist Christians must always defend the
Jewish people's right to exist in their own
ancient homeland as the nation of Israel.*

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for a Jewish State with the help of the British Prime Minister and the largely overlooked skillful and persuasive Roman Catholic diplomat, Sir Mark Sykes. Balfour's intention here was not political or personal, but self-admittedly biblical. For he simply believed from a literal and simple reading of Scripture that the God of Israel would in due time restore the Jewish people back into

Continued on page 5

The grace of God is offered through Jesus Christ alone. It does not come from anyone else—not through Abraham, Moses, the prophets, the saints, Mary, or the Apostles, but strictly through Jesus Christ alone when He appeared and was sent to redeem mankind at the incarnation. In Jesus, **“the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men”** (Titus 2:11). Scripture also points out that this saving grace extending through Jesus Christ is received by faith alone.

The channel of saving grace is through faith resulting in a personal relationship with the living Lord of the universe. God's saving grace cannot be dispensed or received by the church through a ritual (like baptism) or sacrament (like communion) but is personally, immediately, and directly given by Christ Himself the moment the believing sinner turns to Him in faith (see Luke 23:42-43; John 6:47; 10:9, et al).

Faith then is the sole instrumental means by which grace to save the soul is appropriated and received. **“For it is by grace you are saved through faith...”** Ephesians 2:8-9 states. It is the arms and hands by which we accept and take the free gift of God's grace extended by Jesus Christ. Grace therefore is based alone on the redemptive merits of Jesus Christ that He wrought and accomplished for us on the cross of Calvary. Since Christ purchased our redemption by His atoning death on the cross, God's grace can never be earned or merited by man, but is a free gift freely offered to all who receive it by faith, even as Romans 3:24 gloriously proclaims:

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (see Romans 5:17-18).

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, accurately wrote this about the reality of divine grace: *“Grace is neither treating a person as he deserves, nor treating him as better than he deserves. It is treating him graciously without the slightest reference to his deserts. Grace is infinite love expressing itself in infinite goodness.”* God is the

4:22 tells us that the people in Israel who heard this message of Jesus **“wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth.”** Today, grace gives us access to God in prayer. The only way to God in prayer is through His Son Jesus Christ alone (John 14:6; 13-14). No one can directly speak to God, unless he goes through the one divinely appointed mediator between God and man—that man being Jesus Christ, **“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus”** (1 Timothy

2:5). God encourages us to come boldly before His throne of grace for the merciful provisions that accompany salvation. **“Let us therefore come boldly before the throne of grace, that we may obtain help in time of need”** (Hebrews 4:16). We do this by imploring God through the grace that is offered in Jesus Christ. God's grace produces an inseparable bond between the Savior and the saved sinner. God has promised concerning this, **“I will never leave you or forsake you”** (Hebrews 13:5; see also Romans 8:31-39; John 10:27-29).

Grace delivers us from being consigned in hellfire forever. When Christ took our

place on the cross and bore our sins in His own body receiving the penalty for them, He graciously provided an everlasting escape from the pit of hell and damnation. **“Then He looks at men and says: ‘I have sinned and perverted what was right, and it did not profit me.’ He will redeem his soul from going down to the pit, and his life shall see the light. Behold, God works all these things, twice, in fact, three times with a man, to bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of life”** (Job 33:27-30, see also Psalm 86:12-13). For the company of the redeemed, the power of God's grace established by the all powerful Christ promises that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His empowered Church (Matthew 16:18). Grace moves the sinner to repentance when God exerts His saving kindness upon the sinner; the believing sinner will then have a change of mind and will turn from his rebellious and ungodly lifestyle to embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; **“for it is the goodness of God that leads one to repentance”** (Romans 2:4). ☩

The Doctrine of Divine Grace Part 3

(Psalm 86:15, 103;
Romans 5:21;
Ephesians 2:4-9)

source and issue of all grace. Such is not only an act or gift, but is one of the attributes of the infinite God. Grace reveals who God is and what He does as **“the God of all grace”** (1 Peter 5:10; James 1:17; 4:6). Grace expresses the love of God, an everlasting love from the God who is love (Jeremiah 31:3; 1 John 4:8). God the Father has grace to give, **“the Lord will give grace and glory”** (Psalm 84:11). God the Son gives

abounding grace to save repentant sinners (Romans 5:15). Christ expressed loving grace toward ill-deserving humanity when He came through the miracle of the incarnation, when He came **“to save His people from their sins”** (Matthew 1:21).

Grace uniquely comes through the liberating and comforting Gospel Christ preached. Luke

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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Matthew 13 and the Prophetic Parables About the Present Age

“He that received seed into the good ground is he that hears the word, and understands it, which also bears fruit, and brings forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Matt 13:23).

The parable of the sower and the seed is a simple historical scenario depicting the preaching of the Gospel by the Savior, the sowing of the seed by the Sower Jesus Christ who implants it in the hearts of men.

When the seed is sown and received in the ground of a repentant and believing heart, it will germinate spiritual fruit bringing forth salvation and full acceptance of the Gospel resulting in forgiveness of sins and the reception of eternal life in the heart of the believer. On the other hand, if the seed will not so much as bud effectively in the long run, there occurs a rejection of the Gospel by the self-centered, non-Christian person. After this happens, spiritual death, fruitlessness, and eternal separation from God are the end results.

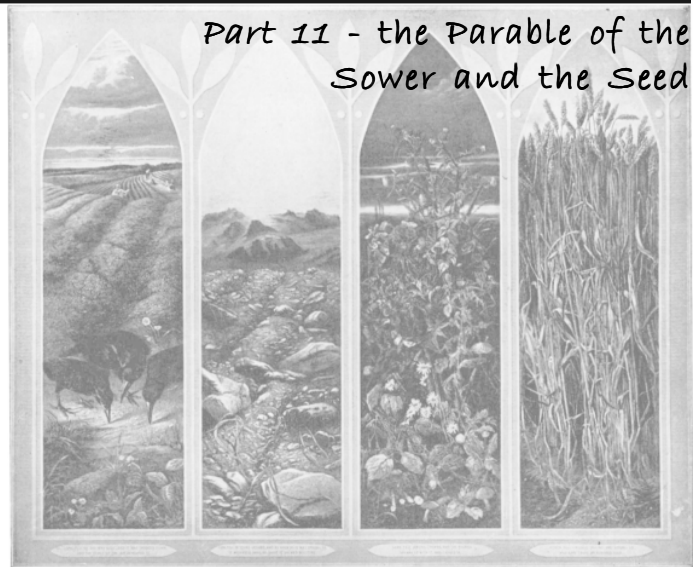
The parable of the sower and the seed classifies all of mankind into two classes. The first class is the unbeliever. He is represented by the three conditional ground hearers who come first in the order of the parable, indicating overall,



sadly enough, that the majority of humanity will have rejected the Gospel and have chosen a life of rebellion and unbelief devoid of the saving presence of Jesus Christ. The second class is the true Christian believer. He is the last of the four listeners who is the good ground hearer. Believers are in a class by themselves and are distinct from the rank unbeliever (the wayside hearer) and those who professed Christ but lacked real saving faith in the end (as represented by the stony- and thorny-ground hearers). They represent all the saints of God called out of the world in sanctification and righteousness into God's elect body of believers corporately known as the Church of Jesus Christ.

We have a mathematical ratio given by the Lord in this parable. Seventy-five percent, three out of four, are representative of all known unbelieving and unproductive hearers of the Gospel who turned away from it to unfruitful destruction. This left only twenty-

Part 11 - the Parable of the Sower and the Seed



five percent, one out of four, really saved by hearing and believing the Gospel. They are representative of all the good ground hearers who are saved upon receiving the Gospel and will dwell with the Lord forever.

The four classes of Gospel hearers do not include the rest of humanity who assumed ignorance to the Gospel. This ratio as put forth by Christ sadly denotes the fractional result of favorable responses to the preaching of the Gospel during the present age. Scripture plainly declares few, compared with the many, will be saved during the inter-advent period we are now living in (Luke 13:23-24; 1 Peter 4:18). Only a divinely elected multitude, “which no man could number,” will be saved by Christ, while the rest of mass humanity will be allowed to perish in their iniquities, seeing they refused to believe in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and thereby be saved from sin's eternal punishment.

Now we see more clearly here in the light of the parable of the sower and the seed what Jesus meant by such eye-opening statements of: ***“Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 6:14). For narrow is the gate, and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 6:14).*** The good ground hearer is like the diamond in the rough, few and far between, but when found and chosen, precious is he to the lost and unsaved world and infinitely valuable is he in the eyes of the Lord.

In conclusion, Christ teaches in this parable the moral accountability of man as the chief element in accepting or rejecting the Gospel of divine truth. Hearing and knowing about Jesus Christ and making mental assent to the Gospel truth are not sufficient enough for salvation. Our required responsibility is to surrender to the Gospel with repentance (a turning away and confessing of sin)

Continued on page 6

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.†

From time to time, we will run a series in this newsletter called "Now That's a Good Question" dealing with difficult questions regarding the Bible. Below are two fairly common questions we have encountered in the ministry all the time.

NOW THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION!!



If Jesus was crucified on Friday, that would mean He was actually only in the tomb for two days at most from Friday to Sunday. But the Gospel writers claim He was in the tomb three days and nights. Wouldn't he have to have been crucified on Wednesday and no later than Thursday for it to be three full days and nights?



Three days and three nights in ancient Israel was different from the way the modern Western world measures time for the simple fact that Jews of that period counted a part or half a day as a full day (see 1 Samuel 30:12-13; 2 Chronicles 10:5, 12; Esther 4:16). The idea for this kind of time measurement was a rabbinical concept called the "Onah." The Jewish day of measurement in Jesus' time was from sunset to sunset. However if anything happened in part of that time period, it was considered to have happened in one full day. Thus, in light of this cultural practice in first century Israel, Christ was crucified and died on Friday (first day); He was placed in the tomb and remained all day Saturday (the second day), and rose physically from the dead early Sunday morning (the third day). So then from Thursday sunset to Friday sunset was one day, from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset was the second day, and from Saturday sunset to Sunday morning was the third day if you consider the practice of Onah. The Wednesday scenario would mean Jesus would have been in the tomb for five days, four days if it was on Thursday. If indeed Jesus rose after the third night, that would patently contradict other passages that predict or state He would be raised on the third day (Matthew 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:64; Luke 9:22; John 2:19-22). Therefore, according to the rabbinic and Jewish custom of Onah, "three days and nights" need mean no more than the three days or the combination of any part of three separate days.



Why is there a difference about the day Jesus celebrated Passover between the Gospel of John and the Synoptic Gospels? John says Jesus died before the Passover celebration began on Friday evening, whereas Matthew, Mark, and Luke say He died after the Passover meal and feast was celebrated Thursday evening. What's the explanation?



The difference about the Passover and the death of Jesus between John's Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) is due to the fact that there were two systems of time measurement in Jesus' time for celebrating the Passover day. The Galileans (People from northern Israel) used a different method of reckoning the Passover day than the Judeans (people of southern Israel). The Galileans and Pharisees used the sunrise-to-sunrise reckoning, whereas the Judeans and Sadducees used the sunset-to-sunset reckoning. Thus from the Judean reckoning in John's Gospel, Jesus did die on the eve of Passover when it began Friday evening. But with the Galilean reckoning in the other three Gospels, the Passover meal began Thursday evening with Passover day starting at sunrise Friday morning. There is no contradiction here as shallow critics of the Bible allege, for the simple fact that the Gospels record the two different chronological systems for determining the Passover used at the time of Christ.



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Israel: The SuperSign... *Continued from page 1*

the land of Israel before the return of Christ as foretold in the many prophecies of the Old Testament (See Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour*, page 311). The Balfour Declaration was confirmatory of this truth in the affairs of human government and illustrates the fact that in the common, mundane, and ordinary affairs of men, God

...God sovereignly chooses a particular point in time and history to fulfill His plan ...

sovereignly chooses a particular point in time and history to fulfill His plan for history through the instrumentality of rulers, authorities, and individuals. Implementation of the Balfour Declaration occurred a year later in 1918 when the Zionist Commission headed by Chaim Weizmann traveled to what was then called Palestine to begin surveying the land for the return of Jewish immigrants to Israel.

A modern myth about this period of time usually promoted by Arab propaganda and the Western media is that there were hardly any Jews living in Israel at the beginning of the twentieth century. Nothing could be further from the truth. There were already as many as 55,000 Jews living in the land by 1918 and were to later serve as the demographic nucleus for a reborn Jewish State! Indeed, from the time of Christ, there has always been a significant Jewish presence living in the Holy Land after the dispersion of A.D. 70.

President Woodrow Wilson publicly voiced the American government's full support of the Balfour



Woodrow Wilson

Comments? Suggestions?

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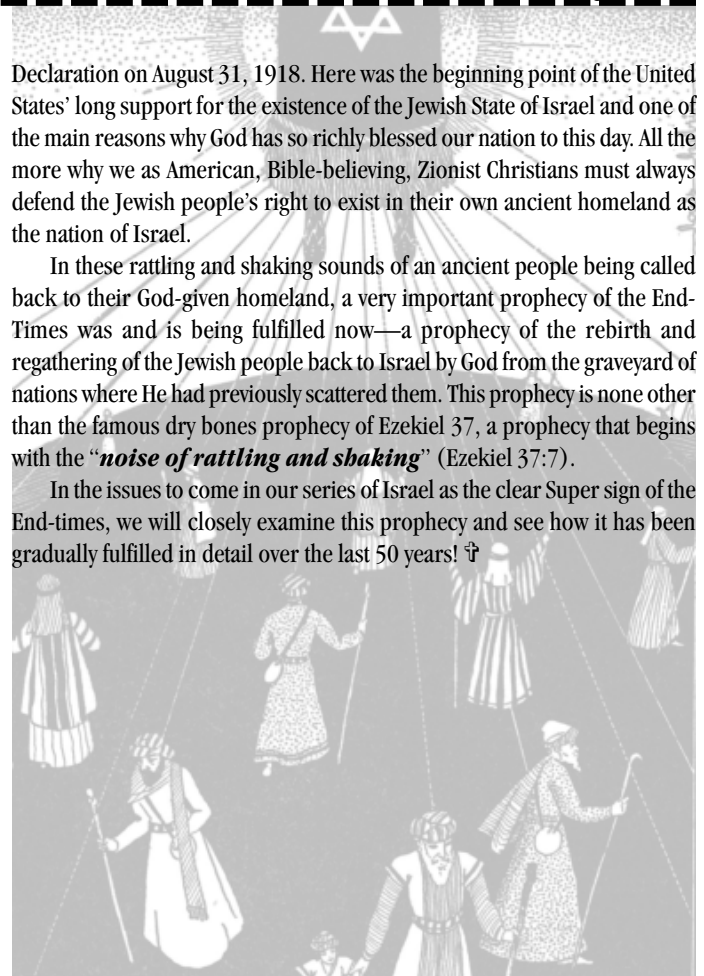
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Declaration on August 31, 1918. Here was the beginning point of the United States' long support for the existence of the Jewish State of Israel and one of the main reasons why God has so richly blessed our nation to this day. All the more why we as American, Bible-believing, Zionist Christians must always defend the Jewish people's right to exist in their own ancient homeland as the nation of Israel.

In these rattling and shaking sounds of an ancient people being called back to their God-given homeland, a very important prophecy of the End-Times was and is being fulfilled now—a prophecy of the rebirth and regathering of the Jewish people back to Israel by God from the graveyard of nations where He had previously scattered them. This prophecy is none other than the famous dry bones prophecy of Ezekiel 37, a prophecy that begins with the **"noise of rattling and shaking"** (Ezekiel 37:7).

In the issues to come in our series of Israel as the clear Super sign of the End-times, we will closely examine this prophecy and see how it has been gradually fulfilled in detail over the last 50 years! ✞





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New Time!! New Location!!



Join Todd Baker in an enriching evening of teaching the Bible and the Jewish roots of Christianity. The Shalom Shalom Congregation meets each Friday evening at 7:00 at Fellowship Bible Church located at Meadow Road and Central in Dallas, Texas. For more information, visit <http://www.levitt.com/congregation.html> or call (214) 696-8844 during normal business hours.

Matthew 13... Continued from page 3

and faith in Christ. Jesus said, ***"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent"*** (John 6:29). By our submissive action (faith) or defensive reaction (unbelief) to Jesus Christ and the Word, we will either be acquitted and

saved, or judged and condemned in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men's hearts by Jesus Christ according to the everlasting Gospel (Romans 2:16).

Dear readers, if you are unsaved, what will you do with Jesus Christ? ***"How***

long will you stand between two opinions?" (1 Kings 18:21). This is by far the most important decision you will make in life, for where you will spend the rest of eternity is riding on it. On the Day of Judgment will Christ either be your forgiving Redeemer or your punishing Judge. God has left the choice to accept or reject Jesus Christ with you. God says, ***"Choose you this day whom you will serve"*** (Joshua 24:15). We pray after considering the eternal implications of the parable of the sower and the seed that you will follow God's desired choice for all people everywhere as expressed in Deuteronomy 30:19 and embrace eternal life through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. ***"Therefore, choose life that both you and your seed (descendants) may live."*** †

