

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

John
5:39

A Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries



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Special First Anniversary Issue

January 2004

Sharing "Good tidings" to Zion

Isaiah 40:9-10

November's Gospel outreach to the Jewish people of Israel commenced in Jerusalem. We arrived to the Holy City in the late morning of November 4. After a short rest, we drove into the city to begin our witness of Jesus the Messiah to His ethnic people. We parked the car and walked to Ben Yehudah Street—a place always teeming with social activity. Our evangelistic purpose of course, as with all these short-term mission trips, was to share the Gospel of Yeshua Hamashiach (Hebrew for "Jesus the Messiah") to those who would listen and to those whom the Spirit of God led Robert Cuccia and myself to talk to about the wonderful Savior of Israel.



Todd Baker

Having purposed this in our hearts, we stepped into a jewelry shop and talked to the owner, a man by the name of Rami, about God's pledge to protect and preserve the nation of Israel forever and the fact that He is bound to them through the eternal, immutable, and unconditional covenants He has made with the chosen nation as revealed in the Scriptures. Rami replied by showing us his copy of the Jewish Scriptures (what Christians would call the Old Testament) that he had received while in the army. To verify what we told Rami, Robert and I showed him the great promise God gave Israel in Jeremiah 31:31-37 guaranteeing their eternal existence and the fact that He

would make "a New Covenant" with "the house of Israel". Rami read the text for himself that I showed him in Hebrew. I then showed him from the New Testament (Matthew 26:28, to be precise) in Hebrew how Jesus as the Messiah had fulfilled and brought that New Covenant to Israel so that forgiveness of sins could be offered. We offered Rami the inspired



and official record of how the Messiah ratified this New Covenant with Israel and all who believe by giving him a copy of the New Testament in Hebrew so he could study for himself to see that such things were true and worthy of reception.

After we left the jewelry store, a young teenage couple immediately approached us and asked us for money. Whether it was wise or not, I gave them \$5.00. But such a gesture opened the door for a Gospel witness to



them; indeed, we are willing to spend and be spent so that the crucified and risen Messiah may be proclaimed to Israel. You could tell by looking at this couple that they were searching for a purpose to their lives but were still left unhappy and without answers to the basic questions of life. This led Robert and me to tell them that we too were looking for answers to

life's basic question (questions like: "Why am I here," "What is the meaning of life," "Is there a God" and so forth) and found those answers satisfactorily answered in a personal relationship with the God of Israel through His son Yeshua the Messiah. I then felt led to ask if I could pray with them there on the spot. They allowed me to do so and I asked the Lord to reveal His great love for them and convict them of sin and bring them to the Savior. They prayed with us and received a Hebrew New Testament and Messianic Gospel tracts that demonstrate from the Jewish Scriptures why Jesus is the Messiah of the Jewish people.

Several minutes later, two Orthodox Jews who belong to the Chabad Lubavitch movement approached us asking for alms. The names of these two men were David and Moses. This Orthodox sect of Judaism believes that the founder of their movement, the late Rabbi Menachem Schneersohn (1902-1994), was the Messiah! No surprise here, for Jesus predicted that one of the signs in the last



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Grace justifies the believing sinner before God (see Romans 5). To justify means to simply make the wrong-doer right before God resulting in the guilty sinner receiving a right standing before a holy God. The only basis for this is through the personal expression of faith toward Jesus Christ shown by the repentant and believing sinner. The act of justification issues forth from God's grace alone and from nowhere else. God's righteous pardon is not given to the sinner based on whether the sinner earns it or not, but on the atoning death of Jesus Christ. Our sins were laid upon Him and in exchange the perfect righteousness of Christ is deposited (imputed) into our account by God, declaring us righteous and without sin through the perfect and imputed righteousness of Christ freely given to us the moment we believe. **"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).

The righteous and merciful pardon of sinners is certainly not based upon how good the sinner is and whether he or she earns it or not. **"For there is not a just man upon the earth, that does good, and sins not"** (Ecclesiastes 7:20). In His natural and fallen state, man stands guilty and condemned before God. But through justification he is acquitted, pardoned, and declared righteous and blameless before the Lord through the redemptive work Jesus Christ accomplished at the cross. This is what justification is and is a

The Doctrine of Divine Grace Part 4

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

significant by-product of grace that reveals God's saving grace in providing a substitute like Jesus Christ for our sins (see Romans 3:22-26).

The only way to be declared in a right and acceptable standing before the Lord of moral perfection is to receive the justifying work of Jesus accomplished at Calvary. The suffering Job asked: **"But how should a man be just before God?"** (Job 9:2). The answer is by faith in the impeccable righteousness of Jesus Christ - **"even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ to all and upon all them that believe."** Justification reveals God's grace in freely providing a substitute to die for our sins and reconcile us to a forgiving God. For **"Christ also has suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God"** (1 Peter 3:18).

Grace spared no expense

to save mankind. When God condescended to save sinners, He gave the very best heaven could afford - His one and only beloved Son. God the Son left the eternal glories of heaven and took residency in a fragile and frail human body like ours. The Creator of the universe became a creature like unto us and endured the unspeakable

shame of the cross. This purchased us and cleansed us from moral defilement and saved us from the inexpressible horrors of an eternal hell. Now, as the redeemed Church of His, we can look forward to spending eternity with Him in the unending bliss of heaven.

Grace, as we have said before, is God's riches given at the costly expense of Jesus Christ. **"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich"** (2 Corinthians 8:9). Through grace we are made co-heirs with Christ and freely inherit all things. **"He that**

spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things. Whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (Romans 8:32; 1 Corinthians 3:21-22; 2 Peter 1:3).

By grace, Christ makes us loved and accepted in God as His holy people (Ephesians 1:6; 1 Peter 2:10).

Even after believers are saved and they sin and fail God, they are prone to think of themselves as unworthy and beyond the

reconciling reach of the gracious hand of God. But Christ loves us despite our sins and moral shortcomings as His chosen and cleansed people. Though we should say as the Shulamite bride to the Solomonic bridegroom: **"Look not upon me because I am soiled,"** Jesus our heavenly bridegroom says instead: **"Behold you are fair my love."** By grace, in God's sight, we are loved because of being clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ.

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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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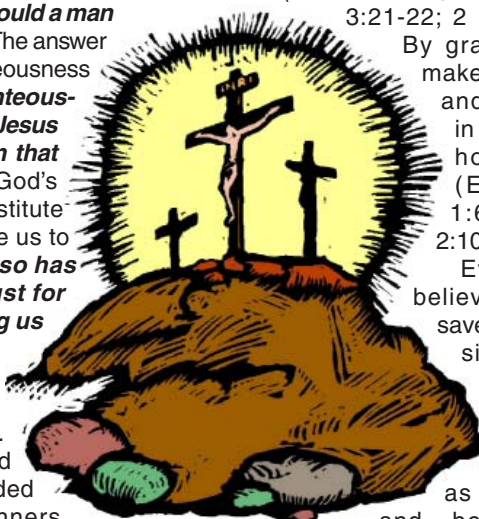
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Matthew 13 and the Prophetic Parables About the Present Age

Part 1 - the Parable of the
Wheat and the Tares
(Matthew 13:24-30; 37-43)

"Another parable He put forth to them, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn'" (Matthew 13:24-30)."

In verses 37-43, Christ gives the interpretation of this parable. *"He answered and said to them: He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

The first parable of Matthew 13 described the evangelical work of Jesus Christ in the world. This second parable of the mystery form of the kingdom describes the imitating work of Satan to bring about moral disruption and spiritual defilement within the Church of Jesus Christ in its visible earthly expression. The parable of the wheat and the tares unveils the satanic infiltration of falsehood within Christendom, and the universal presence of evil and wickedness it would take in the present age throughout the world. The parable seems to pay particular focus on the broad dissemination of spurious Christianity during the present time having the outward appearance of

being true, when in reality it is totally counterfeit within. Chronologically speaking, the first parable in Matthew chapter 13 serves as a foundation on which a prophetic perspective and historical framework is built for the remaining parables of the chapter. The parable of the sower and the seed portrayed the preliminary advancement of the kingdom of heaven beginning with the divine proclamation of the gospel by the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why the parable of the sower and the seed, unlike the seven parables following it, has no analogous introduction, "The kingdom of heaven is like..."

The phrase "the kingdom of heaven is like" is a statement of comparison linked with the historical unfolding of the kingdom of heaven in mystery form until its consummation with the return of Jesus Christ. The first parable is thus preparatory to the following seven that prophetically detail the events that are to take place in the present age. Here again, as with the first parable of Matthew 13, the second parable of the same chapter opens with the spiritual sowing of God's Word by Jesus Christ, the divine sower who went forth to sow. In the first and second parables of Matthew 13 Jesus identifies Himself by His favorite Messianic title the "Son of Man,"

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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.†



Ministerin
in 2003...

g to Israel

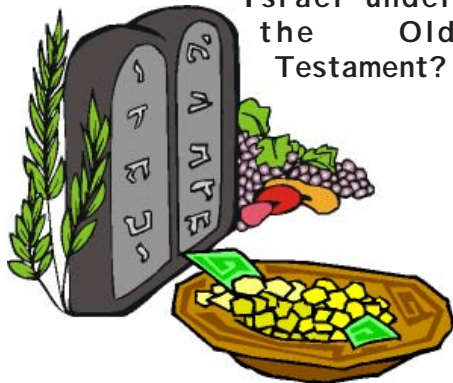




**NOW THAT'S
A GOOD
QUESTION!!**



Are Christians required to tithe today, as it was mandatory for Israel under the Old Testament?



Mandatory tithing was part of the Law of Moses under the legal economy of Israel. It does not apply to the New Testament Church today since we are under Grace and not under the Mosaic Law (Romans 6:14; 10:4). Therefore we are obligated to give our bodies and souls first as living sacrifices in reasonable service to God (Romans 12:1-2).

The New Testament teaches the principle of proportional giving according to the principles of divine grace. Christians are to give willingly according to what they have, not what they do not have (2 Corinthians 8:13). If we can only give 5%, 10%, or 13 % as the Lord leads, so be it. It is not how much you give that matters to God, but the attitude and motive you are giving from. This is the concern of the New Testament with regard to giving rather than the numerical amount. Second Corinthians 8-9 lays out the New Testament principles of grace giving.



Does the Bible teach that the anti-Christ will be Jewish?



The Bible does not teach that the anti-Christ will be Jewish. The Bible is clear that the anti-Christ will be a Gentile of Roman (Italian) origin both in typology and prophecy. The book of Daniel portrays the Syrian Gentile, Antiochus Ephiphanes, as a type of the anti-Christ (Daniel 8:9-14; 11:1-35).

Another argument for the Gentile origin of the anti-Christ comes from Biblical imagery. Whenever the word "sea" is symbolically used in Scripture, especially in the book of Revelation, it is a symbol of the Gentile nations (Revelation 17:15). Since the "Beast" (the anti-Christ) of Revelation 13:1-10 arises out of the sea, and since the sea represents Gentile nations (Rev. 17:15), this points to the anti-Christ being of Gentile origin. Daniel 9:26-27 makes it certain the anti-Christ will be of Gentile Roman origin. The "he" in verse 27 of Daniel 9 is the same one who is "the prince that shall come" in verse 26. Both are one and the same person. The anti-Christ is of the same nationality as the people who destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple according to this prophecy of Daniel 9. We know from history that it was the Romans who destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70. The anti-Christ will therefore be of Roman (Italian) Gentile origin, not Jewish.

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Matthew... Continued from page 3

who sowed good seed in His field. The good seed dispersed by the Lord Jesus Christ is of course the incorruptible seed of God's Word that in turn produces the children of the kingdom. This meaning is entirely correct when compared to the statement of 1 Peter 1:23: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever." From this perfect, incorruptible implantation is conceived a born-again Christian into the family of God and a citizen of His heavenly kingdom. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13). The Greek word for seed in Matthew 13 is sperma. It is from this word we derive the English word sperm from. This divine seed or sperm can be compared to the human sperm of the male in that both seeds help create a living being. Humans procreate fellow human beings, and the Spirit of God produces a spiritually reborn person.

The Word of God applied through the power of the Holy Spirit creates a regenerated soul. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," Jesus told Nicodemus (John 3:6). When the human seed of the male is received into the female womb, the conception of such will bring forth a human infant some nine months later. The divine seed, or sperm, which is the Word of God, is much greater in all its creative

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capabilities than the human seed. The new birth creates the life of Jesus Christ in the believer by the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The seed of man is corruptible; subsequently the nature of man is sinful. The seed of God is incorruptible; the new birth is spiritual, subsequently, the new nature is sinless. "Whoever is born of God does not (habitually) commit sin, for His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin (habitually), because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9).

In next month's issue, we will continue our study of the parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13. †

Divine Grace ... Continued from page 2

Grace is offered through the Gospel that Christ and the Apostles preached and the Church preaches today. In Acts 20:24, the saving grace of God is called "**the Gospel of the grace of God.**" Gospel simply means good news. The good news is that Jesus Christ died in our place on the cross for our salvation that we should not perish in the lake of fire, but have eternal life with Him. The source of the Gospel of grace is God's love for sinners; the object is Christ Who died so that many could live; its subject is the sinner bringing God's love, peace, joy, and life to him or her. It is by the preaching of the Gospel of grace that believing it we are saved. But those who disbelieve it are perishing in their sins even as they presently live. "**For the preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.... for it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe**" (1 Corinthians 1:18, 21). †

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Special One Year Anniversary Issue

Zion... Continued from page 1

days before His return would be people or their followers coming in His name falsely claiming to be the Messiah (see Matthew 24:5, 23-24). This erroneous belief allowed Robert and me to engage in a conversation with them about the true identity of the Messiah as laid out in the series of Messianic prophecies revealed in the Tenach (The Old Testament). We said to them that the person who fulfilled these prophecies would then be the one true and real Messiah excluding all others, and there was only one Person in Jewish history that has literally fulfilled them to the letter-Yeshua min Nazarit (Jesus of Nazareth), not Rabbi Schneersohn of Brooklyn, New York.

One obvious prophecy that clearly identifies who this Messiah would be is the prophecy of how He would die and innocently suffer to atone for the sins of Israel and the world and would be physically "pierced" through in the process. We quoted Isaiah 53:5 and Psalm 22:16 to them as proof texts. We

further pointed out that for this reason and many, many others, Schneerson could in no way be the Messiah simply because He did not experience a death caused by piercing that would atone for man's sins, nor did he live a perfect life; all of which Jesus had and did when He walked in Israel some 2,000 years ago. David then made an allusion to Zechariah 14:4 that when the Messiah comes it will be at the Mount of Olives just east of Jerusalem. We affirmed that was indeed correct

but further showed him and Moses from the same book in Zechariah 12:10 the prediction that when the Messiah returns to Jerusalem at the Mount of

Olives, the Jewish people living at that time will see that this returning Messiah was pierced in His physical body and that indubitably points to the fact the Messiah came in the person of Jesus who was pierced in crucifixion and will return with these same marks on the body. Again we quoted to them another amazing prophecy in Zechariah where Israel will recognize the Messiah's pierced wounds in His hands (see Zechariah 13:6-7). David and Moses listened and pondered what we said. They blessed us in Hebrew and we were able to give them literature on the other Messianic prophecies found in Scripture and how Jesus alone uniquely fulfilled them by His birth, life, death, and resurrection; something Rebbe Schneersohn did not and could never do in his rabbinical life. 🕎



Schneerson



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) 356-2583 during normal business hours.