

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

John
5:39

A Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries



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Search the Scriptures

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Sharing "Good tidings" to Zion ISAIAH 40:9-10

PART 3: A CARPENTER'S CARPENTER

As we continued our witness for Jesus the Messiah in Jerusalem, we came upon a carpenter's shop and looked at some of the custom doors made there. Robert is a carpenter and took a natural interest in what was in the store. The carpenter's name was Galley, and he was open to our witness about the most famous carpenter in the world who we told him was none other than Jesus of Nazareth. We said to him that God inspired the Jewish prophets and men to communicate His revealed word to the world, not only in the Tenach but also equally with the Brit Hadashah (The New Testament). Robert and I emphasized this especially because the Jewish world has been mistakenly led to believe that only the Tenach is the accepted Word of God. The Brit Hadashah cannot be accepted because it unabashedly proclaims Yeshua is the Messiah. We said to Galley that if he would simply study the many prophecies made about the Messiah in the Tenach and then read where they have been fulfilled by Yeshua in the Brit Hadashah, he would plainly see that the man born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, crucified and risen in Jerusalem, is none other than Israel's Messiah.



Todd Baker



Todd and Galley

Galley was genuinely grateful that we gave him a Hebrew New Testament and a tract listing the major Messianic prophecies. He replied that he would read it to gain knowledge about this very important subject and further said that he did not want to be ignorant about such things but wanted to know it was true for himself.



The next day we departed for Jerusalem, for Tiberias and the region of Galilee where Jesus began His three years of ministry in Israel. Half way between Tiberias and Tel Aviv, we stopped to eat lunch at a pizzeria. After we finished eating we left, but right before we got to the car, Robert realized we forgot to get our receipts for reimbursement. So Robert went back to retrieve them while I pulled the car around to meet him back there.

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The Dispensation of Grace

(Ephesians 3:2)

The New Testament teaches that the present time that exists between the cross and the return of Christ is called “the dispensation of grace.” The NT Greek word for dispensation is *OIKONOMIA*.

It means stewardship, household economy, or service rendered at a certain time (see 1 Corinthians 9:17; Ephesians 1:10; 3:2; Colossians 1:25 where the word “dispensation” is found). Thus a dispensation is a particular period of time allotted by God to mankind. In a dispensation, God appoints a stewardship to humanity that requires and tests the ability of man’s obedience to a particular aspect of God’s will revealed to mankind that characterizes that specific age or dispensation (see Charles Ryrie’s book *Dispensationalism Today* for a detailed study of this topic).

The idea of dispensations within the revealed plan of God is the essence of a system of biblical interpretation and particular theology called Dispensationalism. This system is known for its literal interpretation of Scripture within responsible grammatical and historical limits that makes a clear distinction between national Israel and the Church. It also looks forward to the return of Christ to establish a literal 1,000 year kingdom over all the earth.

The Dispensation of Grace period began at the cross and extends to the second coming of Jesus. During this present age, God is dealing with individual hearts according to His saving grace as revealed in the Gospel and therefore commands all people everywhere to repent of their unbelief and place their sole trust in the Savior Jesus Christ for salvation (see Acts 17:30). Those who turn from sin and submit to the Savior and Lord Jesus Christ by faith will receive eternal salvation, the forgiveness of sins, and the eternal fellowship with God the Father through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are two other terms theologians use for the Dispensation of Grace: (1) the Church age and (2) the parenthetical dispensation. Concerning the Church age, Jesus Christ is gathering out an elect body of believers from all the nations of the world to form His body, the Church (see Acts 15:14). Christ is the pioneer builder of this great universal assembly. Jesus told Peter in Matthew 16:18, “*I will build My Church.*”

The Church is a New Testament reality and was not revealed during the Old Testament period. The Apostle Paul said it was a “mystery” hid in past ages not revealed to the sons of men (see Ephesians 3:3-6). This was hid in God from the beginning of the world until Jesus and the Apostles disclosed it in the present age that has lasted for almost 2,000 years. The mystery does not consist in the fact that Gentiles would be saved, for the Old Testament offers several examples of Gentile believers in the one true God (Rahab, Naaman, etc.), but that both Jew and Gentile were to be united together as one community by God to form the living Church of Jesus Christ. For both saved Jews and Gentiles compose the body of Christ, His Church.

The present age is also called parenthetical because it falls between the

first and second comings of Jesus Christ. It also comes between the dispersion and temporary abeyance of unbelieving Israel and their subsequent regathering and reclamation by God as His Chosen People.

This will happen when Messiah Jesus returns to earth at the end of the present age (see Romans 11).

The purpose for the age of grace is to take a people out of all nations and gather them into the body of Christ. God deals with the Church on the basis of love, kindness, righteousness, and acceptance through Jesus Christ. As His Church we are now under His saving grace no longer condemned as sinners under the punitive judgment of the broken law. Christ’s redemption of us should produce in us, according to the power of divine grace, a loving willingness to obey Him and live morally upright lives for the glory of God and to wait for His Son from heaven.

God does give both the believer and unbeliever several biblical warnings against the misuse, abuse, and neglect of His grace. In the coming issues, we will look at each of these warnings and admonitions concerning the grace of God to help us examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith or not (2 Corinthians 13:5). †

The Doctrine of Divine Grace

Part 6

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

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.†

Matthew 13 and the Prophetic Parables About the Present Age

Bogus ministers, who are tares, intermingle with the true believers in the Christian Church, portrayed as wheat, to preach a false Gospel that emphasizes salvation by faith plus human efforts of religious works. Satan carefully plants these dangerous tares among the wheat to create an imitation church mimicking the true with the false. The truth of God's redeeming grace is replaced with the damnable falsehood of human works as the means for appropriating the salvation Christ freely offers.

This fact is easily seen today. One has only to casually glance at the many religious cults and -isms that have permeated society and Christendom. They are attracting many followers by their superficial resemblance to Biblical Christianity while having a virulent effect upon the true faith. Romanism, Liberal Protestantism, Mormonism, Christian Science, The Watchtower Society, The Unification Church, Free Masonry, and The International Churches of Christ are just some of the many venomous distorters of the truth. They enjoy an ever-increasing success of gaining members by the multiplied millions each year. All these assorted groups of course claim to exclusively own Christ and dictate the terms of salvation manufactured within their own doctrinal borders—outside of which there is no salvation or assurance of heaven.

But if one closely examines their belief system using the Word of God as the absolute and final criterion for determining what is true and false, it becomes quite evident that these so called aforementioned 'Christian' organizations are preaching another

Gospel, proclaiming another Christ, empowered by another spirit other than the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, this obviously means that such deviant groups that teach in this deceiving manner act contrary to the Gospel Jesus Christ taught, and the inspired Apostles recorded later for many to read and understand in the one and only inerrant Word of God, the Holy Bible.

God brings His divine curse down on all those who blasphemously presume to fabricate another Gospel of their own liking (see Galatians 1:8-9). All throughout the history of the Church, from the days of the Apostles to the present, there have been numerous tares sown within the Church that have attempted to pervert the Gospel of Christ. In



Joseph Smith - Mormonism

Paul's time, it was the legalistic Judaizers of Galatia; less than a century later it was the Gnostics. In the second century of the Church, the Arians surfaced. Centuries following, many more came afterward such as the Eutychians, the Ebionites, the Nestorians, the Papists, the Antinomians, the Socinians, the Rationalists, and the Secular Humanists. Such heretical groups were raised up, established, and inspired by the Devil to invade the Church with their noxious influence. They historically have taught various errors that either denied the Triune God, refused to affirm the humanity and deity of Jesus Christ, added works as an extra requirement for salvation claiming God's grace is not sufficient alone to save the soul

Part 2 - 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."*

completely, and proudly renounced the sole sufficiency and supreme authority of Scripture alone as the final authority for the Christian believer.

The tares' work is always one of heresy. The tares are **"certain men crept in unawares, ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Jude 4) by what they say and do. They are oppressive wolves dressed in sheep's clothing that enter in among the Church, not sparing the flock (Acts 20:29). In verse twenty-five of Matthew 13, we discover that Satan's most effective time of success in his subversive activity occurs when men

Continued on page 4

When I walked into the restaurant again, I found Robert had struck up a conversation with a Jewish family of three. The names of the father and mother were Eric and Na'it. Eric asked us why we came to Israel. Robert and I answered with gentleness and respect that we came to proclaim that God's plan for Israel centrally involves the first and second comings of the Messiah whom the Jewish Scriptures clearly identify as Yeshua of Nazareth. At this point,



Eric, Na'it, and Todd

Eric told us that his wife was a high school teacher. I asked Na'it what she taught and to my surprise she said "Old Testament history!" Upon hearing this, I immediately knew then that this so called "accidental encounter" was not a mere coincidence, but a divine appointment of God's providence so that they could know that all the prophets and the Law find their completion and fulfillment in the New Testament.

Na'it did not even own a copy of the New Testament (Brit Hadashah in Hebrew), a book written by Jews from cover to cover about a Jewish Messiah living in a Jewish land. It is astounding to me that many Jewish people like Na'it never read the most famous part of the Bible written 2,000 years ago. But through our discussion, she did see the logic in studying the New Testament from the Jewish perspective in which it was written. I then showed her a list of the major prophecies about Messiah in the Hebrew Tenach and where they are fulfilled in the Brit Hadashah. I told her that I happened to have a free copy to give to her, which she gladly accepted. We then related to her that the prophecies about the Messiah found in the Tenach are defined, clarified, and fulfilled in the greatest Jew who ever lived and is alive today (Luke 24:27). He is the cohesive bond that ties and unites both the Old and New Testaments together as garment is weaved together by an unbreakable fabric. ***"For in Him (Jesus Christ) all things bold together"*** (Colossians 1:17).

✠ ✨ ✠ ✨ ✠ ✨ ✠

The following day was Shabbat (Sabbath). That morning after prayer, Robert and I drove into the city of Tiberias to witness to some people as we encountered them on the streets. The Sabbath day in Israel is usually quiet since people are at home resting on the seventh day, leaving many of the stores closed for business. But we felt compelled by the Spirit of God to walk along the promenade next to Lake Galilee (more famously known as "The sea of Galilee" in the Gospels).

As we passed by one store, a man came out of his shop to tell us he was open for business. Tourism has greatly declined in Israel since the Palestinian Intifada occurred three years ago. Israeli retailers are desperate to sell their various items that have been popular with tourists traveling to Israel. The man told us his name was Eli, which in Hebrew means "My God" (see Psalm 22:1). Immediately I felt led by God's Spirit to impress on Eli that Messiah has come and is soon to return to Israel. He knew I was talking about Yeshua (Jesus). Robert and I then went on to say from this that God gave the proof of this claim through the many messianic prophecies contained in the Jewish Bible. Furthermore, we said that God has given the world another sign in Scripture that will indicate that the Messiah's return is soon—that would be the regathering of the Jewish people



Eli and Todd

back into the land God gave to them forever (Genesis 13:15; 17:7-8). Thus Isaiah 11:11-12 is in process of fulfillment in this regard. We further said to Eli that the Messiah Jesus came to bring us forgiveness, love, joy, peace, and abundant life.

Eli indicated that several other believers in Yeshua, both Jew and Gentile, in Israel and from abroad, came into his shop and also shared the Gospel with him. Robert and I then asked him if he was ready to personally trust in Yeshua as Lord and Messiah. He answered that he was not ready yet. So we then asked him if we could pray for him.

He said yes. We prayed that the God of Israel would move on Eli's heart and mind to enable him to be willing to accept Jesus as his Messiah. No doubt when we return to Israel in March, we will water this seed of the Gospel we have planted when we visit Eli again. Pray, dear readers, that Eli will be willing in the day of the Lord's power to trust Jesus as God and Messiah (Psalm 110:3). ✠

Matthew 13... Continued from page 3

are morally indifferent and spiritually asleep. For it was "while men slept" the enemy was allowed the unhindered opportunity to sow his tares. This part of the parable has been fulfilled in the course of the present age as particularly seen in the annals of Church history.

There was a specific point in time when the Church generally fell into a long and terrible period of uninterrupted sleep, stretching over a thousand years in duration, lasting from the sixth century to the sixteenth century. Historians have universally called it "the Dark Ages;" a period in Christendom characterized by unfounded superstition, abysmal ignorance, poverty, illiteracy, theological tyranny, unchecked heresy, intellectual stagnation, and gross ecclesiastical abuse. The Scriptures were in the select hands of the clergy and were not made accessible to the common people. The ruling ecclesiastical hierarchy, under pain of excommunication, forbade translation of the Scriptures in the native languages. It was in this vacuum of spiritual darkness Satan took full advantage of this slumbering time for the destruction of the souls of men through the corrupting influence of the tares among the wheat. History repeatedly testifies that the best opportune time for evil to flourish without restraint is when good men passively sit back and do nothing. Truly, if the real Church had actively wielded the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, in conjunction with operating in the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, the deceiving work of the tares could have been significantly curtailed. ✠

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A PART OF B'RIT HADASHAH'S MISSION AND MINISTRY?

YOU CAN BE ...

... by making a financial donation to help send the news and love of Yeshua to God's chosen people, the Jews. Your donations will be used to help our outreach and operational costs. Even the smallest of offerings are appreciated and put to work. Just fill out this form and mail it to the return address on the other side of this form along with your check or money-order made out to *B'rit Hadashah Ministries*. Or fill in the credit card information you would like to use. God bless you!

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Dear readers,

Our newest Gospel outreach to Israel is planned for **March 14-31** of this year. Our team, again consisting of Robert Cuccia and myself, will conduct a witnessing campaign sharing the Gospel of Yeshua with His people. It is because of your prayers and God's will that each mission has been so amazingly successful.

Please pray for us, and pledge what financial support you can afford 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

Comments? Suggestions?

☐ Check this box if your address is different from that on the other side of this form and make corrections there.



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- 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). †



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.

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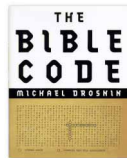
**NOW THAT'S
A GOOD
QUESTION!!**



Is there any legitimacy to the Bible codes as especially popularized in Michael Drosnin's "The Bible Code"?



Michael Drosnin is an admitted secularist (unbeliever) and the premise of his book, "The Bible Code" is nothing new.



He purports to show that hidden prophecies of the present time can be deciphered by the parallel arrangements of the Hebrew letters in the Jewish Bible combined with the mathematical values of these letters. This esoteric method of Bible interpretation is straight out of the occult Jewish philosophy of Cabalism. Furthermore, Jews and Muslims use the same method of dubious interpretation to claim the Bible proves Jesus was not the Messiah or divine.

God has made His message clear in Scripture. We do not need to crack some secret code to interpret what Scripture means. Instead, we have the Holy Spirit and the proven science of Biblical hermeneutics to help us understand the Bible. For an excellent logical and biblical critique of the Bible codes, see John Weldon's book: *Decoding the Bible Code*.



Can a person who is anti-Semitic be a genuine Christian?



The answer to this question is an emphatic "no!" Regrettably, many so-called "Christians" have persecuted and killed Jews down through the centuries, from the Crusades to the Holocaust. But these were not true Bible-believing Christians. Genuine Christians don't murder other people, especially the Chosen People. "Christian" anti-Semites in Germany, Russia, Rome, and Spain, who have done so, while claiming to be Christians, simply lie; they are not Christian. You cannot persecute and murder the Jews and be a follower of Jesus Christ.



The Bible is crystal clear on this, **"Every one who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him"** (1 John 3:15). Those who curse Israel are cursed by God (Genesis 12:3). The "god" of these anti-Semitic "Christians" is not the God of the Bible, nor the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, or the God of a Bible-believing Christian. The God of a Bible-believing Christian is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the same exact God who loves Israel with an unconditional, everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3).

True Christians, like Corrie Ten Boom, will lay their life down for the Chosen People for the sake of the Jewish Messiah. Biblical Christianity is centered on the Jewish (human) and divine Person of the Messiah around which the faith of historic Judaism places its hope for redemption.

The very first Christians were all Jews and Israelites. Israel is the birthplace of Christianity, not Rome or Greece. The Church was born in Jerusalem. Paul, the Jewish Apostle of Jesus, retained his Jewish identity and worship after he became a Christian. He loved Israel so much he was willing to suffer God's wrath on their behalf so that they might be saved by Jesus their Messiah (see Romans 9:1-3; 10:1). Jesus, Paul, and all informed Bible believers love the Jewish people and will not tolerate counterfeit Christians who persecute and hate them.

The words of an anonymous poem are apropos here:

How odd of God

To choose the Jews.

But odder still

To choose the Jewish God

And shun the Jews.

