

# SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

John  
5:39

A Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries



Volume 2, Number 4

April 2004

Special thanks go out to Zola Levitt Ministries/To The Jew First Ministry for their ongoing funding contributions to B'rit Hadashah Ministries, helping to make these mission trips to Israel possible.

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## Search the Scriptures

This publication 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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Pat and Claudia Rutherford

Don and Elisa Retzlaff

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Published using Adobe PageMaker  
and Jasc PaintShop Pro  
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## Sharing "Good tidings" to Zion ISAIAH 40:9-10

### PART 4: THEY SHALL COME FROM THE NORTH

As our witness to Israel in November of 2003 continued in Tiberias, we stopped at a small grocery store and started talking to the owner, whose name was Yacov (Jacob). We talked about the fact that Bible believers and followers of Yeshua are indebted to the Jewish people for their obedience in being used by God to bring us our Biblical heritage, the Christian faith once delivered unto the saints, and the Messiah through Whom all this came about. Upon hearing this, Yacov expressed a genuine interest in the claim the B'rit Hadashah makes in affirming that Jesus is the Messiah based upon the specific prophecies about the Messiah made in the Tenach centuries before the birth of Jesus.

We offered Yacov the New Testament Scriptures in Hebrew and he took it and opened it to the Gospel of Matthew. When he read the first lines about the genealogy of Jesus, he commented to us that the opening of this Gospel was similar to the book of Genesis — both use the same Hebrew word for "beginning" in the genealogies of Adam (Genesis 5:11) and Jesus the Messiah (Matthew 1:1).



Yacov, friend, and Robert

In the former, we have the beginning of the universe and man. In the latter, we have the beginning of the human descent of the Messiah. This astute observation by Yacov was all the more amazing when you consider that, as he admitted to us, he did not regularly read the Jewish Scriptures. But right away he recognized the continuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Yacov gratefully accepted the Hebrew New Testament and said he would read it further after having already discovered for himself that it is a Jewish book in concert with the Bible of Judaism.



Todd Baker

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Our witness in Tel Aviv started slow, but ended gloriously the first day there. All throughout the afternoon and evening, we stopped at a few places and passed out Messianic Jewish Gospel tracts. At every place there seemed to be a lack of interest and an indifference to our message — some days are like that in this type of ministry to Israel.

Somewhat discouraged, Robert and I decided to head back to the hotel. On our way back, we spotted a young man sitting in a parking attendant booth. We felt especially led by God's Spirit to go over to him and share the Gospel of Yeshua with him. He told us his name was Vladimir. The young man was a Russian Jew that had emigrated from the Ukraine region to Israel. This fact led us to reveal to Vladimir that the prophet Jeremiah predicted that

Continued on page 4

# THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

## PART 1 OF 2

BY AARON LEVITT



Aaron Levitt

I recently saw Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ". The film affected me beyond any adequate description, and I plan to see it again soon. Despite the film's straightforward and openly-admitted purpose – to recreate the week of events leading to Christ's crucifixion – the film has received a large amount of unusual criticism from many directions. The "controversial" aspect of the film, some say, makes the violence it contains too intense for the silver screen. Another argument made is that this film is inherently anti-Semitic, since it reflects Jewish people demanding that Jesus be executed. Still others warn us that we must protect our kids from seeing the movie. All these objections come from people in the media business. But the third objection is I think the most surprising, coming from those who have long remained silent about other equally violent films over the years. In this article, I will focus mainly upon these common objections to Gibson's new and self-financed production.



Many in the media, and Jews whom the media have handpicked for interviews, have claimed that "The Passion of the Christ" is anti-Semitic because of the way it portrays Jews. Some Jews have even claimed that the film could not possibly have represented the Jewish people any worse than it did. Upon hearing this, I immediately waited in expectation for those making this serious claim to verify it, by citing history showing that a group of Jewish leaders *did not* accuse Jesus of

blasphemy, turn him over to the Romans, and demand that he be crucified. But, to my surprise, this is where their nationally televised arguments stopped.

None who said the movie made Jews look bad even suggested that those specific Jewish leaders did not do the things they were portrayed in the movie to have done, nor did they cite any historical evidence. Basically, what I heard from

these interviews was that some people were and still are upset by the way it, apparently, makes Jews everywhere look bad. The accusers of the film didn't seem to realize that those Jews who demanded Jesus' death were in fact a minority in the Jewish community, and that many Jews, thousands in fact (Matt 14: 13-21), liked Jesus and listened to Him gladly. And, just as Jesus' persecutors were a minority of the Jewish people, so were His followers; the majority of the Jews of that time was simply unsure about Jesus, or in any case did not display extreme opinions about Him.

Even the Jewish historian Josephus recorded that a group of Jewish leaders, led by Caiaphas the high priest, turned Jesus over to the Romans to be crucified. So, even if these claimants of the film's anti-Semitism

are suggesting that the Bible is wrong about Jesus' crucifixion, they still have to explain the extra-Biblical

historical records, which verify this and other events of Christ's life on Earth.

So then, to say that Gibson's movie puts Jews at large in a bad light because it shows a small group of them opposing Jesus two thousand years ago is simply absurd. Jesus Himself was a Jew, born and raised in

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*Jesus and His disciples ... were just as Jewish at the end of their lives as they were at the beginning. So, the "good guys" in the "Passion" movie were all Jewish!*

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Jewish tradition. The scriptures He read were the Tenach (what most Christians call the "Old Testament"), which He revered and obeyed faithfully throughout His life. His disciples were Jewish, and were raised in the same way. Neither He nor his disciples once cast off their Jewishness either verbally or ceremonially.

That Christianity, as defined exclusively by the B'rit Hadashah (what most Christians call the "New Testament"), contradicts Judaism, as defined exclusively by the Tenach,



Continued on page 6



# Matthew 13 and the Prophetic Parables About the Present Age

Part 4 - the Parable of the  
Wheat and the Tares  
(Matthew 13:24-30; 37-43)

The fact we see the tares and wheat simultaneously growing together with the same appearance until the harvest sadly implies an intimate association between the two, the light consorting with darkness. As a consequence of this, the discerning of spirits (1 Corinthians 12:10), instrumental in preserving the soundness of the wheat from the intrusion of deception, is quenched out by the spirit of slumber and sleep (Isaiah 29:10; Romans 11:8) with the wheat being mistakenly associated with the tares. This breed of confusion is the work of "the enemy" (the devil) in the Church. The children of the kingdom are not to have intimate fellowship with the children of the wicked one, but rather are to expose their ungodly activities for what they really are in the light of God's Word (Ephesians 5:11). To do, or sanction, otherwise restricts the consecrating influence of sanctification in a believer's life and risks allowing him to be wrongly influenced by the immoral conduct of a false believer inclined in the opposite direction. **"Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners"** (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Chaste Christians are admonished not to interact and closely mingle with the world system of unbelievers, especially more so regarding "false brethren" touting a different Gospel that is unscriptural at any point (see 2 Corinthians 11:2-4). False christs, false apostles, false prophets, false brethren, and false believers are perfect representations of a tare. By Satan's subtle infiltration, they are stealthily planted in the field of the Church for divisive purposes. A tare is renowned for sowing discord among true brethren of the faith (Proverbs 6:19). He creates friction and divisions in the body of Christ. This is popularly seen in the factious reality of denominationalism. The very disciples of Christ were infected with it (Luke 9:49). The church at Corinth in Paul's day was rife with it (1 Corinthians 3:4). Unholy division is still one of the greatest sins of the Church. Satan sows tares within the Church with the logistical plan to divide and conquer, despite the fact Jesus promised that all the mustered power and authority of hell itself will not be able to prevail against His Church of chosen believers (Matthew 16:18).

The Law of Moses in Deuteronomy 22:9 warned the farmer not to sow his field with different

seeds. **"You shall not sow your vineyard with different seeds, lest the fruit of your seed which you have sown, and the fruit of your vineyard, be defiled."** Hidden behind this passage of Scripture is a basic spiritual truth applicable for the Christian today. The child of God is to give his entire heart to the Word of God without hesitation. He is not to mix his heart with any other belief system that goes contrary to the infallible teaching of Scripture. If he does, there

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will be vacillation, doubt, confusion, and uncertainty in his heart. The end result of sowing the incorruptible seed with corruptible seed is a defiled heart. Without a sanctified heart of faith totally committed to God's Word expressed through holy living, the individual will fail to really obtain salvation in Jesus Christ. There are no exceptions. **"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"** (Hebrews 12:14).

The true wheat will always be at spiritual enmity with the tares. This was prophetically foretold immediately after the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3:15, God said: **"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed, He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."** God predicted that His seed, the Messiah Jesus of Nazareth, would come through the lineal descent of the woman, Eve, ultimately crushing the devil

and his seed. Abel was God's restorative choice after the fall of Adam to preserve the Messianic lineage of the divine seed down through the ages until the final germination culminated in the God-Man Jesus Christ. Cain, Abel's brother, was the exact opposite. He was from the evil seed, spiritually speaking, which slew his brother out of envious contempt. 1 John 3:12 says Cain was he **"who was of that wicked one."** Jesus refers to the tares as being **"children of the wicked one"** (Matthew 13:38).

Both Cain and the tares are from the same spiritual source. They are both from the wicked one, Satan, and therefore belong to the same spiritual family. The tares' paternal archetype in the flesh is Cain whose spiritual father is the devil and all **"who have gone the way of Cain"** (Jude 1:11). The unbelieving Jews of Christ's day were of the corruptible seed of Cain, and were essentially unknown to them, the children of the devil. Jesus revealed this disturbing truth to them in John 8:44 when saying: **"You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do."** Therefore it can rightly be concluded that the spiritual father of all unbelievers in the Church and the world is none other than the devil himself, **"the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience"** (Ephesians 2:2).

All tares symbolize Satan's evil seed, whose final fruit will ripen in the Anti-Christ who will be the final culmination of the devil's spiritual seed. But at the end of the present age, the Lord Jesus Christ shall return from heaven to destroy the spiritual seed of the serpent and the destructive offspring that it produces, **"a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters"** (Isaiah 1:4; 11:4). †



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.

### Sharing Good Tidings...Continued from page 1

in the last days, immediately before the return of the Messiah, God would gather the Jewish exiles from the far north country (Jeremiah 16:14-15; 23:7-8). If one were to look at a map, the one major country directly north of Israel is Russia. Jeremiah predicted that the exodus of Jews from Russia to Israel



Vladimir

would exceed in number that of Israel from Egypt. Vladimir's return to Israel, we pointed out to him, was a fulfillment of this prophecy on a smaller scale. The Holy Spirit led us to tell Vladimir that the Messiah came to Israel once before. And right before His return to the Jewish nation, He will restore them back into the land (Jeremiah 13:14-15). Many people claiming to be the Messiah have come and gone, we said to him, so how can one know the real Messiah when He comes?

We told Vladimir that God has given us certain marks that would identify the true Messiah when He comes. These marks that identify the true Messiah are found in the many prophecies given in the Jewish Bible. We proceeded to show Vladimir from the Tenach how Yeshua could have been the only one to fulfill them all.

Robert and I went over the plan of salvation with him from the Scriptures and how that the Messiah came the first time to suffer and die so that He could atone for the sins of mankind (we read Isaiah 53 to him at this point in our witness). He readily acknowledged that he was a sinner and needed God's forgiveness. He understood from Scripture that Yeshua was the prophesied Messiah and why He came — to walk with him and work out the great plan He has for Vladimir's life. When Robert and I asked him if he wanted to receive Yeshua in his life and trust Him for salvation, he said, "absolutely." Vladimir then prayed with us and asked Yeshua to come into his heart and take control of his life.

Robert and I were awed and joyful at such a demonstration of such simple childlike faith. Vladimir is now a child of God, a Jewish believer born anew to begin a new life with the Savior Who died for him and rose again from the dead so that Vladimir could spend the rest of eternity with the very God who created him for Himself. We left Vladimir with discipleship materials and two copies of the Bible in Hebrew and Russian. Later, we e-mailed contacts of places where he could go for fellowship and worship with other believers in Tel Aviv.



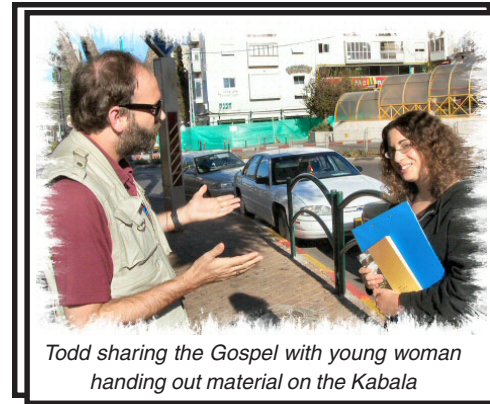
After spending two days in Tel Aviv, we went to Haifa and did some productive street witnessing there. Once in Haifa, we prayed for God's leading as we walked the streets. While walking at the end of a particular street, a young woman approached us to offer us free literature about the medieval occult writings of the Kabala. This encounter afforded an excellent opportunity to share the Gospel with her.

The Kabala, as she accurately said, teaches that God has made Himself known through a secretive process of calculating the numeric value of the Hebrew letters in the words of the Tenach (the Old Testament text). One therefore has to learn the complicated and esoteric method of decoding what God's message is through the Kabala before he can understand Who God is. In other words, God does not plainly make Himself known through His Word so that any honest and inquiring person can know what He says.

Robert and I countered this erroneous claim by suggesting to her that God in fact created us with reasonable minds so that we could understand what He has done for us through the Messiah He sent to Israel and the world. The problem is that sin stands in the way between a holy God and imperfect man. The only way

God can be merciful and just is to have someone who can obey His law perfectly and at the same time pay the penalty for Man's transgressions — that Person was Yeshua Who is the God-man that bridges the gap between the God of Israel and us. Yeshua can perfectly do this because He is both human and divine. She listened attentively but could not give us a counter answer of any other practical way to resolve the problem of sin and death which confronts every human being which God has decisively answered by the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah.

The fact of the matter is man can never reach God by the irrational mode of



Todd sharing the Gospel with young woman  
handing out material on the Kabala

mystic contemplation as Kabalistic teaching asserts, but by God reaching down to us when He became a man Himself in Jesus Christ. This alone is what makes Christianity stand head and shoulders above all the other numerous world religions, including

the dead-end mystical meanderings of the Kabala. We offered this young Israeli woman the New Testament in the Hebrew language and reading material about evidence for Jesus being the Messiah of Israel. She readily accepted both after our powerful witness to her about the Messiah. She said in closing that she would read the materials we gave her and give serious thought about the claims of Yeshua. Pray her search for the truth will end with finding the One who says, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father, but by Me"** (John 14:6). †



### **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.†



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Your financial donations go directly to help our outreach and operational costs only. That means they go either into the production of this newsletter, into the expenses of traveling to and around Israel speaking to those to whom God leads us, or into the tracts and Bibles which we distribute in Israel. Please help us in our mission as much as you feel led to contribute. And remember, donations are tax deductible as you give to this Non-profit ministry.

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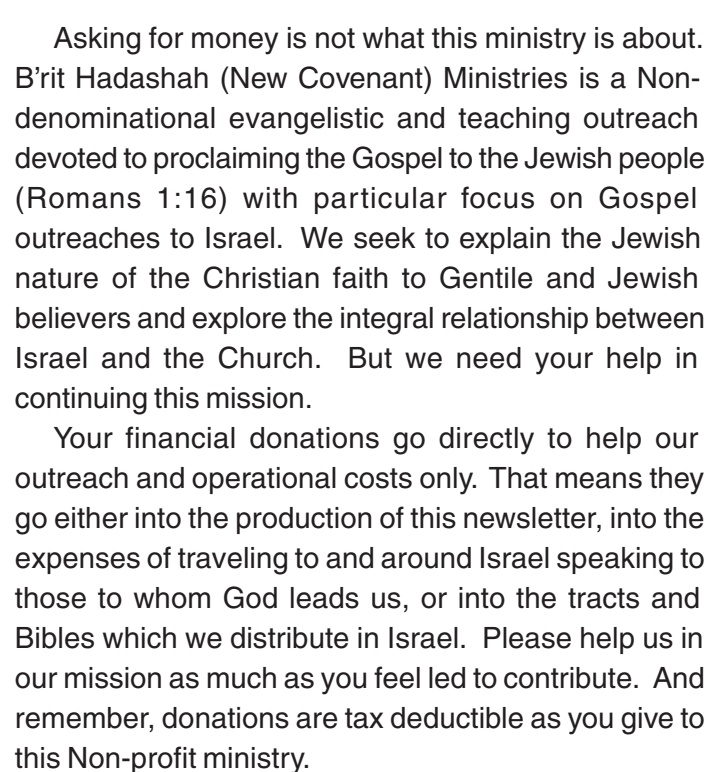


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### The Passion... Continued from page 2

is one of Satan's biggest and most successful lies, which simply has no factual basis at all (quite the contrary). It is only a number of commentaries written on the Tenach

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*...I waited in expectation for those  
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citing history showing that a group of  
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and demand that he be crucified.*

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and the B'rit Hadashah, respectively, which stray from the truth, when they deny that true Judaism and true Christianity are, in fact, one and the same. When one studies – even just reads – the B'rit Hadashah, one notices its numerous references to “Scripture”, the Tenach. Therefore, Jesus and His disciples, many of the latter having



written parts of the B'rit Hadashah, were just as Jewish at the end of their lives as they were at the beginning. So, the “good guys” in the “Passion” movie were all Jewish! How can one say, then, that the movie puts Jews in a bad light!? Who were the ones beating Jesus with reeds, then scourging Him and almost killing Him in the process (going beyond their orders), and laughing at Jesus the whole time? These Romans were portrayed far worse than the Jews who accused Him. When the Romans beat Him, an insanity of demonic enjoyment is plainly and deliberately portrayed on their faces. Who were the ones who nailed Jesus to the cross? Physically, it was the Romans, but spiritually and in all truth, it was each and every one of us. Our sins made it necessary for Him to be crucified, to suffer, and to die; He did this for us of His own free will, in order to save us from the spiritual death which lasts for all eternity. We deserve that suffering, not He, and we earn it daily.

In part 2 of this article, I'll continue with my review of this movie from the perspective of a Jewish Christian. I'll comment on the violence as well as the authenticity of Mel Gibson's portrayal of both Jews and Romans of the time period, in my opinion. †