

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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This is a continuation of Todd's recounting of his missionary trip to Israel in March 2004 with Robert Cuccia.



Todd Baker



After we left Tiberias, Robert and I drove to Jerusalem. Later, as we left the hotel to go and pick up some more Hebrew New Testaments, Robert and I stopped to witness to the security guard just outside the hotel. Her name was Marina. She had emigrated from Russia to Israel four years ago. Upon learning this about her life, Robert and I explained to her that God had foretold through the prophet Jeremiah that He would bring the Jewish people back from the far north country of Russia to the land of Israel (Jeremiah 16 and 23). Marina said in response to this that she was an atheist. But you could tell that she was not very firm in this conviction.

I gave her my testimony of how long ago I was a strong and militant atheist before Yeshua the Messiah revealed Himself to me when I was desperately searching for the truth to the meaning of life. Robert and I further said to Marina that if she really wants to



Robert explaining how God can reveal Himself to Marina, a self-proclaimed atheist

know the truth about God and His Son Jesus the Messiah all she has to do is seek Him with an honest and open heart and He will convincingly reveal Himself to her. For the Lord promises in Jeremiah 33:3 to all honest inquirers, ***"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know."***

Comforting the People of God (Isaiah 40:1-2)

Part 4

The next day, we graciously resumed our witness with Marina. She said that she read the Jewish Gospel literature we gave her. The nature of this follow up witness focused on the miracle of the Incarnation and how the God of Israel desires to have a personal relationship with her by becoming a flesh and blood human being so that He could reach out to her in the person of Yeshua the Messiah.

† ☆ † ☆ † ☆ †

After we concluded our witness with Marina, we went to pray and share the Messiah at the Western Wall.

Afterward, Robert and I stopped at a restaurant to buy lunch. Two young men came in after us and both were Armenians who lived in the Armenian quarter of the old city of Jerusalem. We began to speak to one

of the men. His name was Puray.

When he discovered we were messengers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Puray candidly admitted to us that he was struggling with a drinking problem. We discussed with him about how our own past, many years ago, thankfully, was riddled

Continued on page 6

In order to fully understand the biblical truth that a person cannot possibly earn God's gracious love and salvation by his own work or merit, we must understand what man is under the Law and what God declares him to be by Saving Grace.

The moment Adam sinned and transgressed against the commandment of God in the Garden of Eden, he rendered all of his descendents, whom he represented as their federal head, flawed, imperfect and unholy with an inherited sin nature (see



Romans 5:18-19). No one

can be saved by perfectly obeying the Law. This is not only true in past history, but is proven daily in a world rife with sinful humanity full of hatred, violence, deceit, injustice, murder, crime, strife, and immorality. The whole world therefore stands guilty before God as transgressors of His Law. Hence, no one can be saved and justified (declared right before the Lord) by the works of the Law (Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16).

If the Law of Moses cannot save, then what purpose does it serve, and why was it given? The question can best be answered by showing what the Law does in the greater context of divine grace.

1 The Law was given to define, inform, and expose sin that indwells every human being. Simply stated, the Law shows us we are sinners by nature. The Bible says in Romans 3:20, *"By the knowledge of the Law is sin."* Sin is the transgression of God's Law (1 John 3:4) The Apostle Paul wrote, *"I would not have known sin, but by the Law. For I had not known covetousness, except the Law had said: You shall not covet"* (Romans 7:7).

**WHAT WE WERE
UNDER THE LAW**

versus

*What We Now
Are Under Grace*

Part 2

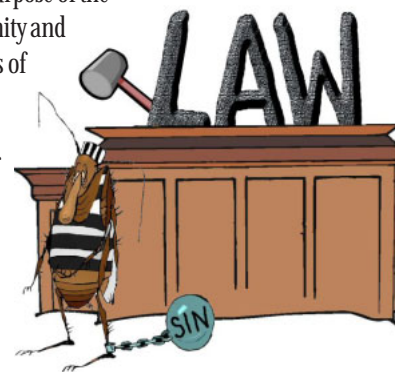
The Doctrine of Divine Grace Part 11

2 Grace reveals who God is and expresses His love and forgiveness towards the sinner. Grace informs us that God loves sinners and sent His one and only unique Son to die for them in their place. *"Hereby we perceive the love of God, because He laid down His life for us"* (1 John 3:16). The ultimate proof and demonstration of God's love was demonstrated by the atoning death of Christ. *"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins"* (1 John 5:9).

The Law says: "You are a sinner."

Grace says: You are a saint."

3 The Law declares the whole world guilty before God (Romans 3:19). The purpose of the Law was not to save humanity and make them acceptable in the eyes of God. The Law demonstrates to mankind what he is by nature—a law-breaking sinner guilty of habitually violating God's Law in thought and deed.



4 Grace pardons the guilty sinner from all offenses (Colossians 2:13-14). Christ has forgiven all our trespasses and sins by His shed blood on the cross by which He paid the eternal penalty for them. Note: the handwriting of ordinances that were against us points to the complete Law of Moses in all its minute detail. In the ancient world of the Roman Empire and the New Testament whenever a punishment for breaking the law was abolished it was publicly nailed to a post in a public square. So too Christ Jesus has removed the penalty of the Law from us when He was nailed it to the cross. Now as born-again believers in Him we are no longer under the Law's curse of eternal death. At the cross Christ vanquished the Law's damning power and gave us gratuitous pardon and eternal life instead.

The Law passes the dreadful sentence of “guilty!”
Grace freely revokes the sentence to “not guilty.”

5 The Law evokes the wrath of God (Romans 4:15). God is obliged to punish all disobedience. This certainly applies to those who break His law. Men by their fallen nature are sinful and are automatically prone to violate God’s law. Therefore, they are immediately subject to His righteous judgment. Since all men have sinned, none then are exempt from divine punishment as a transgressor, “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness*” (Romans 1:18).

6 Grace satisfies and turns away the righteous anger of God against our sins and saves us from wrath (Romans 5:9).

By grace, God’s wrath against sinners has been placed on Christ at the cross. The atoning death of Jesus turns away God’s wrath from those who put their entire trust in the Lord Jesus and accept the redemption price He paid for their sins on the cross (see Romans 3:24-26). Christians no longer need fear the judgment of God since His anger and infinite wrath against sin has been fully satisfied through the shed blood of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:2, 4:10), which cleanses us from all our sins. On the cross Christ the Innocent One took God’s full wrath upon Himself in our place. Because He did this we now stand in a righteous position of total acceptability before the Lord. God can now love and forgive through the atoning death of Jesus Christ on those who put their trust in the Savior.

The Law says to the ungodly: “*Depart from Me you who are cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*”

Grace says to the believer: “*Come blessed of My Father and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*”

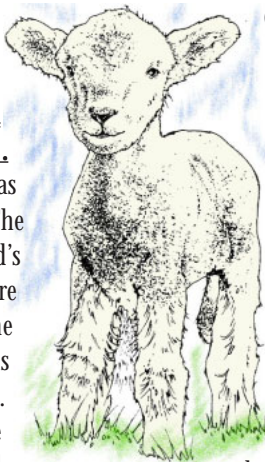
7 The Law was given to plainly show men their need of redemption and point them directly to the Savior Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:24). “*Therefore the Law was our*

schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.” The word “schoolmaster” in the Greek is paidagogos (παιδαγωγος). It stood for a servant appointed to guide and instruct children until they came of age. The Law served as an ethical instructor revealing and teaching us about the holy character of God, and what we are in this revealing light. The law of God is both didactic and diagnostic in function. For it is like a doctor discovering his patient has an incurable and deadly

disease. The good doctor cannot cure the disease; he can only certify that it is incurable by diagnosing the obvious symptoms. The Law of God functions exactly like that. The Law cannot save man. It can only tell him what he is by nature—a guilty condemned sinner. The Law of God is like a mirror. When a person looks into it he sees he is dirty, but the mirror itself is powerless to

remove these filthy blemishes. The Law is a problem indicator that points to the only remedy that can cure, Jesus Christ the Savior. The Law is not able to save the law-breaking sinner. It merely indicates the need for salvation to the sinner.

8 Divine grace is given to heal the problem of sin by saving man from its mortifying power (Matthew 8:17;



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.

1 Peter 2:24). Since the Law could at best only enhance the graphic universal fact men are sinners, grace provided a solution in the priestly and redemptive work of Jesus Christ. By His death and resurrection the power of sin was forever broken and we are healed receiving new life from God. Grace, unlike the Law, is entirely therapeutic in nature. It heals the believer in Christ spiritually, physically, and mentally from the condemnatory diagnosis of the Law that the total depravity of sin in man’s nature produced.

The Law in the role of the disquieting physician declares with bad news the universal diagnosis of fallen humanity: “*The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and putrefying sores. They have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment*” (Isaiah 1:5-6).

Grace in the person of Jesus Christ proclaims the good news to all who believe in Him: “*I am the Lord that heals you, who His own self bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live for righteousness, by whose stripes you were healed*” (Exodus 15:25; 1 Peter 2:24). †

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



Part 9 - the Parable of the Mustard Seed
(Matthew 13:31-32)

Before giving the exposition of this parable, it is necessary to make mention of the symbols used in it. In keeping with the interpretative consistency of Matthew 13, we shall decipher the main symbols of this parable within the proper context of the chapter.

The parable of the mustard seed is the third "mystery" parable of the kingdom of heaven. In the last two "mystery" parables of Matthew 13, we noted that Jesus is the Sower. In the parable of the sower and the seed, He is "the sower who went forth to sow" (verse 3); and in the parable of the wheat and the tares, He is "the man that sowed good seed in his field" (verse 24). From this, it is only logical to conclude that the sower in the opening of this parable is once again none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.



The "field" mentioned in this parable means exactly the same as in the other two parables preceding it. The "field" is the world of mankind (Matthew 13:38) in the present time under the economy of grace.



The mustard seed retains the same meaning from the two parables that came before this third parable. In the first parable of Matthew 13, the seed was depicted as the Gospel, the incorruptible Word of God, sown in the soil of men's hearts that largely produced sparse results. Only a small percentage of the soil sown with the seed of God's Word produced fruitful results. The Lord Jesus announced the field would decrease in productivity as the harvest time draws nearer and nearer, "some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (Matthew 13:23). In the second parable, the seed is



portrayed to be "the children of the kingdom" in whose hearts the Word of God begets fruitful life.

But the Lord discloses to His disciples that the field where the seed was sown became infested and over sown with the tares of the enemy. These malignant tares will continue to flourish in the field until the harvest time, which Christ explained and defined as "the end of the age" (Matthew 13:40). The sobering truth of this firmly proves beyond a doubt that Satan's work will positively thwart any type of complete evangelization of the world, or the global conversion of all nations to Christianity before the return of Christ. Jesus plainly foretold that in this present age, the Gospel of grace would not bring peace, but division between His kingdom and those who oppose it. "Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division" (Luke 12:51).

In light of this divine revelation, it would be egregiously wrong and far removed to change or alter this meaning from the first and second parables to the third. God is the Author of order, not confusion. For those who can read and understand the meanings of the first two kingdom of heaven mystery parables, it can be easily observed and understood that professing Christendom as a whole will have failed to successfully convert and Christianize the entire world. Therefore, the third mystery parable of Matthew 13 is an additional and sorrowful attestation of that fact.

The mustard seed of Matthew 13 is the doctrine and teaching of Jesus Christ. It is the very Word of God Almighty, "the word of faith, which we preach" (Romans 10:8). Jesus likened the

mustard seed to the greatest supernatural ability a small amount of faith in God will do. "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move; and nothing shall be impossible to you" (Matthew 17:20). The mustard seed of faith, though small in the beginning, contains enormous potential for growth and seemingly limitless possibilities; "All things all possible to him that believes" (Mark 9:23). The sowing of this seed of faith in the congenial soil of a believing heart can reap great and miraculous accomplishments removing any mountainous imposition in the way that would seek to impede the child of God from progressing in his walk with Christ.

"Another parable He put forth to them saying: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field,



which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

(Matthew 13:31-32)

The mustard seed is compared to the kingdom of heaven in that it exerts a supreme transforming power from the supernatural realm into the natural realm bringing salvation, healing, dignity, and holiness to the most wretched and ill-deserving of society. Those who have truly experienced the power of God's kingdom will glorify Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. They will wonder and marvel at the goodness and

almighty power of God that is not bound by any known or unknown limitations. "For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

To have the divine faith of God is truly a gift given from the Lord above (Ephesians 2:8) from Whom nothing is too difficult or impossible to believe. The Lord asked the prophet Jeremiah: "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh, is there any thing too hard for Me?" The answer of faith will surely answer: "No, nothing." †

B'rit Hadashah Ministries

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Asking for money is not what this ministry is about. B'rit Hadashah Ministries is a Non-denominational evangelistic and teaching outreach devoted to proclaiming the Gospel to the Jewish people (Romans 1:16) with particular focus on Gospel outreaches to Israel. We seek to explain the Jewish nature of the Christian faith to Gentile and Jewish believers and explore the integral relationship between Israel and the Church. But we need your help in continuing this mission.

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. God bless!

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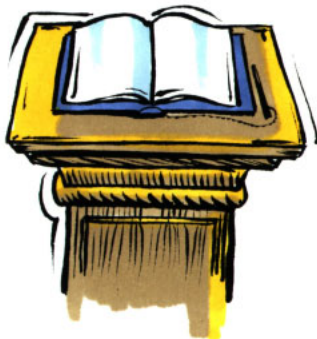
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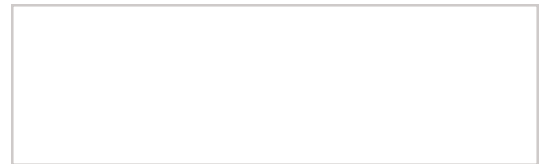


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Comforting... Continued from page 1

with drugs and alcohol. Robert and I were both enslaved by them until the Lord Jesus permanently liberated us from such bondage. I personally told Puray that such a profligate lifestyle nearly destroyed me before I reached the age of 20. We told Puray that the only real and effective answer that can free him from the bondage of addiction is the Messiah who came to set the captives free (Luke 4:18).

I told him my liberation and restored dignity from the ravages of drug addiction came when the Lord Jesus unexpectedly manifested His visible glory to me that forever changed my life for the exceeding good. Puray asked why God did not show him a sign like that. My response was that God does show signs to each of us in different ways—both subtle and obvious,

but we must have eyes to correctly see them as such. Indeed I reminded him that God had spared his life when he foolishly did things that put him in danger of injury or death as a sign of His intervening mercy. Puray readily agree that this was the case several times in his life.

Robert and I went on to share with Puray that every person needs a spiritual rebirth to change, transform, and liberate a person from a life of bondage and sin to the freedom of abundant life in Jesus Christ. Puray said he saw the need for this in his life but was not quite ready to make such a surrender until he bettered himself first.

Robert and I were quick to reply that we are all sinners and must come to God dirty as we are so that He can clean us up. Indeed He invites everyone in the welcoming words of Isaiah 1:18 to ***“Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be white as wool.”***

We left Puray a ministry newsletter and instructed him from the gospel of John chapter 3 about the necessity of the spiritual rebirth through faith in the atoning Messiah. Puray was encouraged by our personal testimony of how Jesus Christ changed our lives from an ignoble condition to a noble calling.

Pray for this young man that he will come to the end of himself and see the bankruptcy of alcoholism and turn to the Savior to find true, permanent freedom and new life. ✚



Robert and Todd with Puray and his friend