

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

John
5:39

A Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries



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December 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.

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



Continuing our Gospel witness on Ben Yehudah Street in Jerusalem, we revisited a jewelry store where I had previously bought a silver Mezuzah. The owner of the shop was a man by the name of Danny. Robert and I shared with him how the

Todd Baker

Todd Baker



Robert with Danny

land of Israel is unlike any other land in the world for the simple fact it is the only piece of land God set apart to give a people, the Jewish people, for an "everlasting possession" (Genesis 17:7-8). The purpose for this was to choose a place

redemption to the whole world through the Jewish Savior.

We then said to Danny that the present regathering of the Jewish people back into the land of Israel was the very thing predicted in the Scriptures to occur before this very Messiah returns. He listened with notable interest; as well he should since such startling but ancient news predicted long ago directly concerns him and his people.

But a person does not have to wait for His return to receive the Messiah. You can look at the evidence for Yeshua being the Messiah of Israel as foretold in the Tenach and fulfilled in the Brit Hadashah and accept Him now into your life.

After pondering on this for a little bit, Danny thanked us and we gave him a Gospel tract showing the evidence for Jesus being the Messiah of Israel and how a Jewish person can accept Him now and be saved.

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After lunch, Robert spotted a guitar store, and being an amateur guitarist, he naturally felt drawn to the store. This personal interest of his proved to be an opportunity to share the good news of the Jewish Messiah. After Robert briefly looked at the guitars, we told the manager of the store, Doron, that we were sent by a prominent Messianic ministry (Zola Levitt)

and congregation (Shalom, Shalom). These ministries seek to educate Gentile Christians in America about the Jewish roots of their faith and educate Jewish people in Israel about the Messiahship of Yeshua and the Jewish authorship of the New Testament. To underscore the latter, we gave Doron and his co-worker Messianic Gospel tracts and literature to read.

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The Lord then led us to a cigar store to talk to the owner, Eli. He was a hard and skeptical person given to sarcasm, which is not an unusual attitude for the modern secular Israeli.

I mentioned that the Bible predicted that the restoration of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland after a long worldwide dispersion would signal the soon return of the Messiah. Eli excitedly, but skeptically replied, "When will He return, and how many more innocent citizens of Israel will be victims of terrorism?" We certainly sympathized with him and listened with concern and compassion.

Eli went on to say he had friends die in some of the terrorist attacks. Robert and I expressed that the perennial hatred for the Jewish people is really satanic in origin because of the adversary; the devil hates and seeks to destroy the objects of God's love. For God chose the Jewish people as a messianic people through whom the Messiah would come to destroy the devil's supernatural grip and hold on mankind (1 John 3:8). The current volatile situation of Israel in the world, which will eventually lead all the nations to mount an assault against this tiny land, will result in the Battle of Armageddon and the return of the Messiah to save Israel from annihilation. This is now beginning to emerge with the global community's hatred (the UN, the EU, etc.,) and rising opposition to the only real democracy in the Middle East.

Sometimes the best ministry to those in Israel who have suffered the violence of terrorism is to listen and comfort them without saying a word, letting them vent, so to speak. And by those caring qualities, they know that the Yeshua we proclaim is a Messiah who loves His people and puts that love in those who truly follow Him. ✠



Doron and co-worker

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

Part 7

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PART 3: THE EVIDENTIAL PROBLEM OF EVIL



Atheists must provide an acceptable criterion that adequately defines things like 'rationality', 'evidence', and 'good reasons', as these concepts apply to the problem of evidential evil in its gratuitous expressions as it relates to the existence of God. From this the atheist must then demonstrate that the amount of evil we experience counts strongly against God's existence by further demonstrating that an omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good God could, in fact, have created an entire world system containing not just significantly less evil but on the whole a much better balance of good over evil than that which exists in the actual world.

Furthermore, the atheologian (one who disputes theological truth claims) must demonstrate that no recent formulation of the traditional arguments and no other form of argumentation furnish positive evidence for God's existence or show that such evidence, if it exists, cannot outweigh the evidence against God's existence.

Christian philosopher David Basinger further states both atheists and theists "may well agree that, in comparison of two possible worlds, the one containing the greatest net balance of good over evil is superior. But how are we to access the quantity of good and evil in each? Let us suppose, for example, that in the mind of a given atheologian, the undeserved suffering of a single individual outweighs any amount of good which might be generated in such a world, while in the mind of a given theist, the intrinsic value of 'human freedom' might entail. How would we determine who is correct? I, for one, have no idea how an objective non-question-begging determination of this sort could be made" (David Basinger, "Evil as Evidence Against God's Existence:

Some clarifications," Modern Schoolman, 58 (1980-81): 184).

It would appear from Basinger's observation that there appears to be a philosophical draw or stalemate between the atheist and believer in God over the difficulty of the evidential problem of evil. True, the atheist can point to the multifarious forms of evil as being entirely pointless—but he cannot conclusively prove that they will in the end serve no good purpose. But a problem the theist must honestly face is that if it is true that God permits evil, insofar as it ultimately serves the greater good, why is it that in the present He is unable to explain or show this in so many specific instances?

This is where the atheologian has thought to have got an upper hand, so to speak, on the theist when it comes to gratuitous

evil simply because "the general run of human experience strongly favors the view that gratuitous evil not only exists but is abundant, and if the theist holds that gratuitous evil is inconsistent with theism, this experience cannot fail to reduce the reasonableness of theistic belief below what it would otherwise be. And so, the theist's venture into the arena of theodicy ends rather unhappily. He began by boldly maintaining strong principles

Search the Scriptures

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"GOD IS DEAD"
- NIETZSCHE
"Nietzsche is DEAD"
- God

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Matthew 13 and the Prophetic Parables About the Present Age



Part 4 - the Parable of the Mustard Seed
(Matthew 13:31-32)

The herb is a vegetable plant whose stems lack woody tissue, developing only flowers and seeds; it dies after every growing season. The herb is a biannual or annual plant requiring constant reseeding. A tree, on the other hand, takes quite a number of years to grow and is a perennial organism. But the herb is a passing flower in this world.

We as Christians are to be herb-like, as the Israelites of old, merely passing through the desolate, moral wilderness of this present world as sojourners and pilgrims. The world is not our permanent home. We are walking through it, neither turning to the right hand nor to the left, but solely keeping our eyes set on walking the narrow path trodden out by the Son of Man that leads to heavenly glory ending at the promised land of eternal life above. The Christian is called to a heavenly calling, and as such, his mind should be attentively fixed on things above, not on things here on earth below (Colossians 3:1-2). The Church is a royal priesthood seated in heavenly places, and thereby as such they are distinguished and called out of the



world as a consecrated people, a holy nation set apart for the purposes of God.

The tree is a permanent resident of the world. The roots of a tree are firmly embedded beneath the earth. Likewise, the world system and its supernatural ruler will always remain the same in their hostility toward God. The visible church, for the most part, has failed to radically change the world for Christ on a massive scale. On the contrary, throughout the centuries, it is the world that has changed the external form of the Church into a pompous and pernicious tree of greed and worldly ambition for popularity, power, and preeminence.

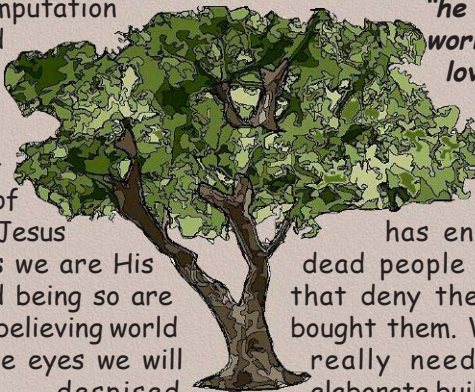
The righteous amputation from the world demanded of us by the Lord in Matthew 5:29-30 is strikingly absent within the majority of the Church today. Jesus repeatedly tells us we are His chosen vessels, and being so are called out of the unbelieving world in whose eyes we will be despised. Christians are to be in the world as soul-winners for Christ, but not of the world. **"If you were of the world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, but because I have chosen you out of**

"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 world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19). In light of this, how is it that many, many churchgoers have in fact no incompatibilities with the world? The specific answer Scripture gives is: **"the world will love its own," and, "he that loves the world (system), the love of the Father is not in him"** (John 15:19; 1 John 2:15).



The Church has enough spiritually dead people playing religion that deny the very Lord who bought them. What the church really needs is not more elaborate building programs or a larger budget to operate on, but more doers of the Word empowered by the Holy Spirit that are crucified together with Jesus as conquerors over the sinful enticements of the present age, dead to its seducing allure and raised up spiritually alive with the abounding power and life of the resurrected Christ.

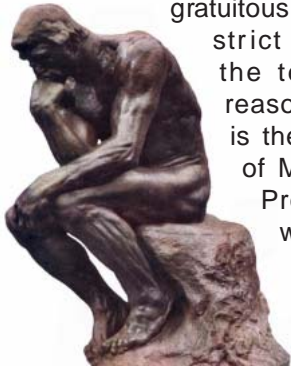
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Join Todd Baker in an enriching evening of teaching the Bible and the Jewish roots of Christianity. The Shalom Shalom Congregation meets each Friday evening at 7:00 at Fellowship Bible Church located at Meadow Road and Central in Dallas, Texas. For more information, visit <http://www.levitt.com/congregation.html> or call (214) 356-2583.

concerning God's providential governance of the world, but he is quickly reduced to a stone-walling mode of defense in which he maintains on a priori grounds a view which runs against the grain of universal experience" (William Hasker, "Must God Do His Best?" International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, 16 (1984): 217).

In order to avoid this dilemma, other Christian thinkers (like Richard Purtill) believe there is no real gratuitous evil, in the strict sense of the term. The reason for this is the doctrine of Meticulous Providence, which basically teaches that no evil is



allowed unless permitted by God to yield good results in the end that will counterweigh the bad. Thus, there is a good reason for every evil to occur regardless the severity, degree, or frequency of them. No senseless or meaningless evil then could exist in a universe totally governed and controlled by God.

There are other Christian thinkers who have insightfully pointed out the shortcomings and problems with this doctrine. First, it seems more

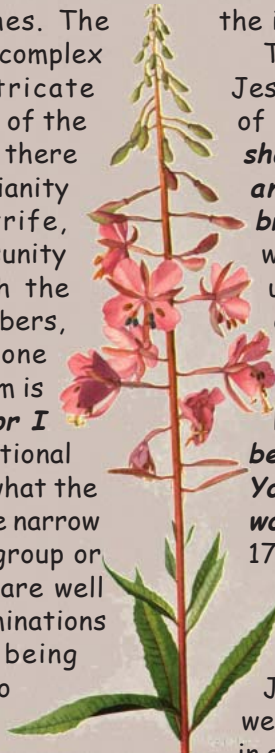
palatable accepting the prima facie existence of gratuitous evil as more in keeping with universal experience than is the view which categorically rejects the reality of gratuitous evil a priori. Secondly, when proponents of Meticulous Providence say God eliminates or prevents gratuitous evil, they are putting possible constraints on human freedom that allows also for praiseworthy efforts at doing and achieving good in the face of very real evil. †

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. †

The Parable of the Mustard Seed.. Continued from page 3

The herbal plant produces leaves only, whereas the tree produces a network of branches. The branches, of course, accurately depict the complex network of denominations in their intricate branches and subdivisions so characteristic of the Church abroad. According to some sources, there are about 25,000 denominations in Christianity today! Denominationalism engenders strife, discord, and sectarian bigotry bringing disunity and weakness to the body of Christ with the myriad of warring factions, dissenting members, and emulous sects biting and devouring one another. The mentality of denominationalism is equivalent with saying, **"I am of Apollos, or I am of Paul"** (1 Corinthians 3:4). Denominational favoritism in the Church revealingly shows what the true nature of sectarian religion really is: the narrow bias of man preferring a certain religious group or leader above Christ and His Word. There are well over 2 billion people in the numerous denominations of Christendom today that profess to being "Christian" with a large bulk of them who have sadly never experienced the spiritual rebirth of John chapter three, thus, leaving only a small portion of them being real born-again believers of Christ randomly scattered throughout



the many denominational branches growing out from the immense tree of Christendom.

The day is soon coming, however, when the Lord Jesus Christ will eliminate the entangled branches of man-made denominations. For it is written: **"He shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning knives, and remove and cut away the spreading branches"** (Isaiah 18:5). Then, and only after this, will the true Church of Jesus Christ be one in union, purpose, and objective. Only by the effectual work of the Holy Spirit will this be accomplished. This perfect and permanent unanimity will be the answer fulfilling the High Priestly prayer of Christ **"That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that you have sent Me"** (John 17:21). God will perfectly unify His people when

He shall come for them in the day of the glorious Rapture. When this divine union of oneness takes place between the Bridegroom Jesus and His beloved Bride the Church, then we shall all dwell together as the children of God in one blissful, uninterrupted accord with the Lord and with each other forever without division or separation as we see today in the Christian world. †

B'rit Hadashah Ministries

needs your support

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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If you have access to the internet and the world wide web, would you consider receiving our newsletter via your e-mail rather than through the postal system? The money you would be saving our ministry in printing and postage cost by doing this would be a big help to us. Thank you to those of you who have already done this!

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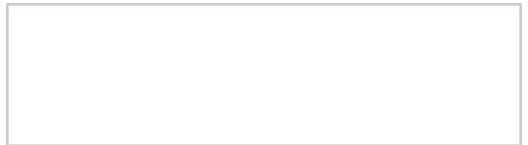


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*You Search the Scriptures
for in them you think
you have eternal life,
and these are they
which testify of Me.
John 5:39*

