

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

John
5:39

A Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries



Volume 3, Number 1

January 2005

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.

REACHING OUT to the LOST SHEEP of the HOUSE of ISRAEL

(Part 1 by Robert Cuccia)



Thank you supporters of B'rit Hadashah and Zola Levitt Ministries for your generous donations enabling us to bring the Gospel to the Jewish People in Israel. This past November, you sent Byron Zahm and Robert Cuccia (myself) to Israel. Here is just one of the stories from that outreach.

While in Jerusalem, I wanted to check on Joseph, a man that Todd and I had witnessed to on two previous outreaches. It was obvious that Joseph was up late the night before because he was awakened by my ringing the doorbell... (it was mid morning). After speaking with him, we discovered that he had a prostitute there until early that morning. At this news, we were naturally disappointed in him and I was wondering if the seed (gospel) had fallen on rocky ground.



Joseph, from
our previous
witness

An hour into the meeting, along comes the woman (I assume) who had left earlier. For our purposes, we shall call her Mary. (The picture of Byron, Mary and myself that accompanies this article is blurry, but perhaps that is best because God does not want to shame any of us for no reason, so her identity shall remain confidential). She was to take Joseph to pick up his government disability check, and I surmise to be paid herself. We offered to take them both there and back, which gave us an opportunity to witness to them. Mary was immediately hostile to Christians, Republicans, President Bush, the West, and just about any organizations ever known to man. We had our work cut out for us to say the least. But it isn't **OUR** work, is it? It is the **Holy Spirit's** work.

Joseph seemed disinterested so we focused our efforts on Mary. We witnessed to her for about two hours (briefly interrupted by an Orthodox

anti-missionary neighbor) constantly calling her attention to God and His plan for salvation, instead of man's vision, governments, evil deeds, etc. Around and around we went, not quite breaking through the cacophony of lies that covered her mind like a wet blanket. Finally, we resolved to end the conversation hoping that somehow just a little truth got through to her. We gave her a ride home and said our goodbyes.

Now it was the **Holy Spirit's** turn. She turned around, came back to the car and asked us who owned the large garden next to her apartment complex. She somehow thought we might know because she thought it was a convent or something and associated it with Christians. We said we did not know, "but let's go find out together." So our unlikely gang rounded the corner, rang the bell and waited. Out came a Nun (or what looked like one to me) who could not speak English, but then fetched the "Head Nun" who we discovered spoke German (Byron's first language), English, and fluent Hebrew. We also learned it was a very evangelical Lutheran sisterhood and the garden was part of their ministry to Jewish Holocaust victims. The Sisters brought out tea, cakes, and pie. What a welcome from perfect strangers who have just met! The Elder sister witnessed to Mary with us, for another two hours, translating as needed and giving her own testimony as well. Think of this: **God had just the right person to witness to Mary living next door to her, but sent two men from the other side of the planet to introduce them. Wow.**

Mary was deeply touched and heard the plan of Salvation in her native tongue. All parties involved recognized this as a Divine appointment. Mary was no longer hostile. The seed was planted deep inside her heart. Her whole demeanor changed. She now considers us friends and has a faithful witness living next door to her. Please pray that the Kingdom of God will take root and grow in her heart. **Pray that Mary will be saved.** †



Robert Cuccia



Byron and Robert with "Mary" in
the Holocaust Victims' Garden

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Matthew 13 and the Prophetic Parables About the Present Age



Part 5 - the Parable of the Mustard Seed
(Matthew 13:31-32)

The root of an herb plant reaches a total length of two to four inches, and is planted beneath the shallow surface of the soil. However, the root of a tree is twice the size of its own trunk, and is firmly and deeply grounded within the profound inner recesses of the earth. Likewise in the kingdom of heaven today, that which is glitzy, entertaining, popular, worldly, and appeals to fleshly whims of the carnal nature runs long and deep throughout the world of Christendom and is made to conspicuously stand out in the visible church, while that which is self-sacrificial, pure, holy, righteous, heavenly, and glorifies Christ alone is carefully swept aside, ignored, and by-passed.

Let us now focus our attention on the meaning of the tree. The interpretation of the mysterious tree in this parable is best found in the Holy Scriptures. In Daniel 4:10-12, the symbolic description of King Nebuchadnezzar and his great kingdom of Babylon is compared to a large growing tree:

"I was looking, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew and became strong; its height reached to the heavens, and it could be seen to the ends of all the earth. Its leaves were lovely, its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it. The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it."

In these verses of Scripture describing the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, the central meaning of the tree in the parable of the mustard seed is found. In Daniel 4:20-22, the divine interpretation of the vision as God gave it to the prophet Daniel is revealed:

"The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which could be seen

"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)

by all the earth.... it is you O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth."

The tree in these passages is emblematic of a great political military empire having absolute dominion over the civilized world with a sole autocratic ruler presiding over it. In Ezekiel 31:3-6, the same symbol of the tree is used of the Assyrian Empire.

"Indeed Assyria was a cedar in Lebanon, with fine branches that shaded the forest, and of high stature; and its tops was among the boughs. The waters made it grow; underground waters gave it height, with their rivers running around the place where it was planted, and send out rivulets to all the trees of the field.

Therefore its height was exalted above all the trees of the field; its boughs were multiplied, and its branches became long because of the abundance of water, as it sent them out. All the birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs; under its branches all the beasts

of the field brought forth their young; and in its shadow all great nations made their home."

In light of these illuminating passages from the Old Testament Scriptures, the tree is a symbol that consistently pictures a political empire wielding tremendous earthly power offering provision and protection for all subservient subjects who abide by its sovereign laws. The tree of the mustard seed parable thus speaks of an ecclesiastical empire that is geo-political in scope, reigning over the nations of the world whose imperial branches extend in every direction. This began to take definitive shape and became a historical reality in the church around the early fourth century after Christ and became more and more pronounced as the long centuries passed; although, during the embryonic stages of the early church of the apostolic era, it was much different. Here in the dawning day of the newborn church, we inspiringly learn of the brave and courageous men that hazarded their lives daily to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to a dark, hopeless, and dying world lost in sin. They endured great reproach and chastisement of the mind and body at the hands of cruel, callous, and unjust men. Never once did they venture to even think of compromising their stance for the gospel at the slightest opportunity of gaining worldly position, power, and esteem among men. Nor were most of these ardent apostles of Jesus Christ well trained among the academicians of their time, but nay, were social outcasts, spiritual pilgrims, and strangers on earth desiring a better and heavenly country, whom God the Father in His infinite pleasure has prepared for them.

Their united passionate desire was not to build a political kingdom for God on earth but to bring others to the heavenly kingdom above. God in His effectual grace called and sanctified these apostles as His honorable vessels of gold and silver for the preaching of the cross by the strength and power of the Holy Spirit. Through them the Lord did choose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak and lowly things of the world to confound the high and mighty so that no flesh should glory in His presence (see 1 Corinthians 1:26-29). †



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.



PART 4: THE EVIDENTIAL PROBLEM OF EVIL



Todd Baker

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 sophisticated and clever denial of gratuitous evil by some Christian thinkers does not satisfy the average skeptical thinker, who still maintains that such a denial of gratuitous evil as being subsumed by meticulous providence still, in the words of noted Oxford Christian philosopher Richard Swinburne,

"...in a round about way makes God responsible for evil in the end. But Scripture repeatedly tells us that evil was introduced and is perpetuated by bad choices made on the part of human kind. Romans the fifth chapter is a classic illustration of this. The fact that an individual or individuals can make bad choices can indeed set in motion a host of evil effects and harmful consequences that mushroom and become graphic, gratuitous, and excessive in their influence and impact. The Holocaust is a prime example of how the misuse of free will by man can indeed result in a senseless superfluity of evil defies explanation or reasonable meaning.

The suffering and deaths of the Jewish victims of the Nazi concentration camps were the result of a web of bad choices stretching over centuries and continents. So many humans spread false rumors about Jews, developed anti-Semitic propaganda without considering counter-arguments, limited the employment and educational possibilities for Jews, confined the Jews to Ghettos, and so on, until Hitler was able to issue orders to exterminate Jews which had some prospect of being carried out"

(*Providence and the Problem of Evil* by Richard Swinburne, p 151).

The above quotation graphically illustrates the fact that the use of human free choice has more distant effects than we realize. The Bible in Romans 5 says this very thing concerning the federal head of the human race—Adam. In this pivotal chapter, it is affirmed that in some way Adam's sin against God has negatively affected the human race. As a consequence, every person born into the world has inherited a sin nature (that is, a natural propensity toward doing evil and wrong) and so lives a life of constant sin terminated by death. The continuing effect of Adam's sin on his posterity is clearly evident because death has been passed on to all humanity. But, as in any theodicy (a theodicy is an attempt to justify the ways of God before man), one must be careful here not to place too much of a central emphasis on the Fall since there are other goods served by our sufferings than just Adam's responsibility for the fall. But to debate if gratuitous evil exists or is not really justified to exist because God controls it still begs the question of why should God allow evil at all if He is good and all-powerful? Generally, Christian apologists (those who defend the Christian faith against attacks from unbelievers and skeptics) have offered three different theodicies to answer this objection. Theologians and philosophers have classified them as:

- (1) the natural law theodicy,
- (2) the soul-making theodicy, and
- (3) the free will theodicy.

The natural law theodicy states that God created the universe according to order and law with regularity so that certain divine objections could be achieved. God has placed rational free moral human agents in this ordered universe. For moral freedom to exist, a natural order must exist as a necessary condition. F. R. Tennant shows why when he writes,

"Without such regularity in the universe in physical phenomena there could be no probability to guide us: no prediction, no prudence, no accumulation of ordered experience, no pursuit of premeditated ends, no formation of habit, no possibility of character of culture (Philosophical Theology, volume 2, pages 199-200).

A natural order is therefore needed for free moral creatures to act and operate in. The Predictability inherent within the natural order makes it possible as a necessary condition for free action, whether good or evil.

*The same water which sustains and refreshes can also drown; the same drug which relieves suffering can cause crippling psychological addiction; the same sun which gives light and life can parch fields and bring famine; the same neural arrangements which transmit intense pleasure and ecstasy can also bring extreme pain and agony" (Michael L. Peterson, *Evil and the Christian God*, page 111). †*

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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other ways you can help...

If you would like to help this ministry but can't afford a financial commitment, suggest to your church pastor that Todd Baker come speak to your congregation about his work in Israel. Todd is available for speaking engagements in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area, and can be reached via e-mail (toddbus@yahoo.com) or phone (214-356-2583) for scheduling information.

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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B'rit Hadashah Ministries

P.O. Box 796127

Dallas, Texas 75379-6127

e-mail: toddbus@yahoo.com



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:

Zola and Mark Levitt
Nancy Baker
Don and Elisa Retzlaff
Greg Hartwig

For more information about our ministry, or to be added to our subscription list, you may contact Todd Baker by mail:

B'rit Hadashah Ministries
P.O. Box 796127
Dallas, Texas 75379-6127

or by E-mail: toddbus@yahoo.com

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Published by Elisa Retzlaff using
Adobe PageMaker and Jasc PaintShop Pro

Dear readers,

Our newest Gospel outreach to Israel is planned for **March 13-29** of this year. Our team, this time consisting of Paul Colley 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 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). †