

# SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

John  
5:39

A Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries



Volume 3, Number 2

February 2005

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Part 2, by Byron Zahm

**A**fter sixteen days of outreach in Israel, I'm back safe and sound. No, I wasn't worried about my welfare, in fact I never felt endangered.

First, and foremost I was confident in that it was God who sent me. Questions about my safety or security were the inevitable comments of so many that I've spoken with both before the mission and since my return. Many of you might recall that within a week of our arrival in Israel, Arafat's burial and the accompanying pandemonium occurred in Ramallah just a half hour away from our hotel in Jerusalem.

Robert, my partner, along with his experience of three other missions, had assured me of our safety. Of course, his confidence in the Palestinian areas was not nearly so high. Needless to say we did not venture into those areas. Driving within a stones-throw of the security fence as it curved back and forth along the north south artery of Hwy 6 was as close as we ever got to potential trouble.

So when well-intentioned people asked me "aren't you worried about terrorists?" or "weren't you scared?" I could honestly say "No", to those and similar questions of concern for my safety. If they had experienced El Al security as we did then perhaps they would have felt as comfortable as I. And, in fact, if there were any doubts about safety, they were certainly alleviated by the very apparent security we experienced wherever we traveled. In short order, I routinely yielded to security checks at any public building, restaurant, mall etc. They passed over my body with the wand and I opened my daypack for inspection. Every time my daypack loaded with a heavenly arsenal of the Scriptures and tracts was waved through as harmless literature.

Daily, Robert and I scouted the streets, markets and byways for anyone with whom we could share our

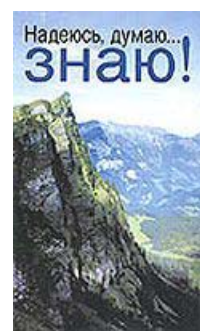
message. As we did so, a common sight was the on or off-duty Israeli soldier with an M-4 or M-16 slung over his shoulder. We knew that at a moments notice he would be ready to be called into action. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—his goal is to accomplish the mission given to him by his commanding officer. (II Timothy 2:4) As for us, we too were on a mission. We were ready and loaded. Only in this case the weapons of our warfare were not carnal (Ephesians 6:12).

## Operation Tel Aviv

Our first operation began just hours after our arrival in Tel Aviv. We had set out down the street from our hotel and came across a security guard who was protecting a local seaside dinner and dance club. We engaged him in conversation and learned that his name was **Sergei** and that his family had emigrated from the Ukraine just a few years earlier. Sergei considered his family "Christian" even though the idea of a personal God was foreign to him. For over thirty minutes we witnessed of the living and loving God to him. With a Russian tract in his pocket, we parted ways.

That night, under the streetlamps of Tel Aviv, we made our way to the famous King David Hotel. Our request to view their rooms was obliged by the Bellboy, **Ronen**. As impressive as the rooms were, one hour later he was more impressed with the message we bore. We gave him both barrels - Robert unleashed the Old Testament scriptures such as Jeremiah 31:33 while I prayed in the Spirit. But how long could he stand there and listen to us before his job duties called him? Well he did get back to work, but he was thinking thoughts he never thought of before. Now, he too was armed with the Scriptures in his native tongue. With an apparent and genuine hunger in his heart, he too would be able to search the Scriptures and find the living God. He obliged us with a picture and we left him in the hands of the Holy Ghost.

Out through the revolving door we went, down towards the street where we greeted another security guard, this one named **Dema**. He too was a fairly recent immigrant from eastern Russia. His English was not much better than our Russian, so after a courteous Privyet and Shalom, we gave him the best we could; a Russian/Hebrew tract. So ended our first night's mission. On the morrow, we would do it again. This time in Tiberias, an ancient seaside fortress.

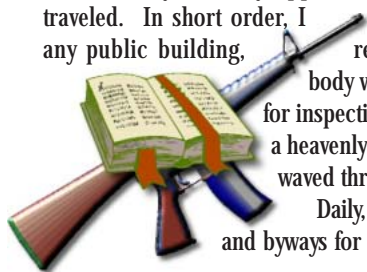


a Russian tract

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# PART 5: THE EVIDENTIAL PROBLEM OF EVIL

was originally made in a pristine and perfect state. But the fall of man threw the creation into a state of decay that is subject to bondage and frustration (see Romans 8:20-21). This disorder is not one of permanency. At the eschaton, God will recreate the world back into an Edenic and perfect state free of evil or any other blemish—a world and universe wherein only righteousness will dwell (see 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21). The soul-making theodicy teaches that God allows things like pain and suffering so as to mature the souls of human individuals into the perfect moral image of Christ. Chief advocate of the soul-making theodicy, John Hick, explains:

**The world is not intended to be a paradise, but rather the scene of a history in which human personality may be formed towards the pattern of Christ. Men are not to be thought of on the analogy of animal pets, whose life is to be made as agreeable as possible, but rather on the analogy of human children, who are to grow to adulthood in an environment whose primary and overriding purpose is not immediate pleasure but the realizing of the most valuable potentialities of human personality (John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, page 258).**

A common objection raised against the soul-making theodicy is that it does not sufficiently deal with the reality that much evil seems to conquer its victims and subsequently fails to instill moral virtue or improvement of character. Indeed, it can produce the opposite effect—hatred, resentment, bitterness, and abandonment of



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## 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. †



Todd Baker

**T**wo basic objections have been raised against the natural law theodicy (a theodicy is an attempt to justify the ways of God before man). The first asks,

*“Why doesn’t God miraculously intervene every time the occurrence of evil happens in the natural order of things so as to prevent these evils from wreaking havoc as they do?”*

If God is capable of doing miracles, as theists believe He can do, why does He refrain most of the time when evil seems to occur without hindrance or restraint? The answer of the theist is that God could will each occurrence of evil that it be removed. But with that, moral qualities would no longer have any point of value in an evil free world. In such a world you could not benefit anyone from lack of danger. For it is logically necessary that if a person is going to develop courage, they must confront fearful situations.

Furthermore, if God were to remove every lack, evil, danger, and fearful situation in the world because of His own constant intervention, then the development of moral virtues, like courage and integrity, in us would be ontologically and logically impossible because something logically necessary for the development of courage and integrity would not be present (i.e., fearful and dangerous situations).

The second objection to the natural theodicy posed again in the form of a question asks,

*“Why didn’t God create a world with a different state of affairs governed by different laws that would have not included the existence of natural and moral evils that harm and destroy mankind?”*

Could not “the Deity” who is supposed to be omniscient have created a world wherein there is only good? The counter response from the Christian would be that the world



# Matthew 13 and the Prophetic Parables About the Present Age



## Part 6 - the Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)

**T**hose who faithfully bear the name of Jesus Christ are a despised and spurned people, who by the world's standards are esteemed unimportant, uneducated, and treated contemptuously without serious consideration. They are tolerated only when completely ignored. For it is only when they become an affront to the intellectual egotism of the unregenerate, natural man do they pose a legitimate threat to be contended with by "the god of this world" and the forces of darkness arrayed with him.

Satan, in the first parable of Matthew 13, sought to disrupt and destroy the church from without. The enemy directed his attack through the active implementation of "the birds of the air" in the attempt to snatch away the dynamic and redeeming abilities of God's word seed.

In the second parable of Matthew 13, the devil's assault was directed from within. He sowed his tares among the wheat for the express purpose of intermingling both together to fabricate counterfeit Christians.

In the third parable Christ shows us the resultant crop—a fallacious brand of Christianity that is drastically altered from its original nature and form.

The next stratagem of the devil was to cunningly place his "birds of the air" into top key positions of the Church to establish a ruling hierarchy over the people as a base of operations for demonic powers. No longer was Jesus Christ the Supreme Head of the universal Church and all believers one equal community under Him alone. The divine headship of Christ over His people was replaced with a visible, human leadership **"as being lords over God's heritage"** (1 Peter 5:3). This is exactly what the Lord Jesus Christ alluded to, when He spoke of "the birds of the air" that perched at the highest

parts of the branches of the great political-religious entity of Christendom seen in this parable as a towering, lofty tree.

Satan placed Machiavellian men of renown and charismatic personalities

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

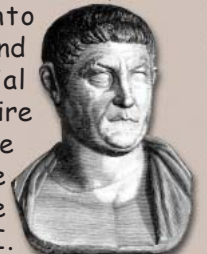


***his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."***  
(Matthew 13:31-32)

hungry for power and selfish gain to acquire high-ranking membership within Christendom to rule from the individual churches of Europe and Asia Minor with increasing dominance that went dangerously unchecked. Thus, the birds of the air atop the branches of the mustard tree, denote an ecclesiastical Caesarism with individual leaders exercising rule from high places of authority under the one religious imperial head dominate in the civilized world.

This became a definite historical reality at the outset of the 4<sup>th</sup> century coronation of the Roman Emperor Constantine and the subsequent advent of the "Holy Roman Empire" under his

accepted form of Christianity. That later evolved into Roman Catholicism and became the official religion of the empire by 800 A.D. with the crowning of the Emperor Charlemagne by Pope Leo III. Immediately after the ascension of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which ushered in the church age, and for over three hundred years, Satan attempted to exterminate the Christian Church at all costs. With fierce and cruel antipathy, he continually sought to obliterate the name of Jesus Christ clear off the face of the earth. Without abatement and in ceaseless toil, this plan of the devil was murderously executed against the Christian Church at all costs. He used every weapon at his ruthless disposal. He manipulated the emperors of Rome and others under their authority to pronounce savage and inhuman edicts and decrees upon Christians to abort the movement of Christianity on all levels. The property of Christians was confiscated and they were afterwards tortured, imprisoned, and killed in the most bloody and barbaric ways. Thousands upon thousands were martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ.



Constantine

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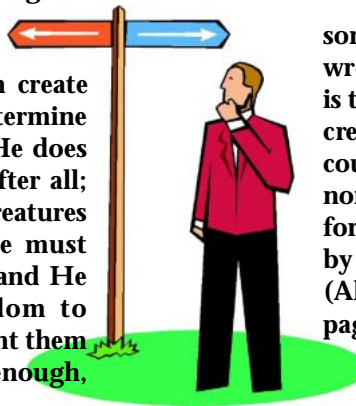


Join Todd Baker in an enriching evening of teaching the Bible and the Jewish roots of Christianity. The Shalom Shalom Congregation meets each Friday evening at 7:00 at Fellowship Bible Church located at Meadow Road and Central in Dallas, Texas. For more information, visit <http://www.levitt.com/congregation.html>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

faith in God. This leads to a second objection here which says that many humans have failed to come through the intensity of pain and suffering victoriously. The answer to these objections is that there is no other possible or viable soul-making world "from which we exclude all risk of severe injury and hardship because only in a world like this could humans have the free capacity to begin their development and growth into the children of God" (Ibid, 375, 378-379).

The free-will theodicy takes the approach that much of the evil in the world is due to the fact God has endowed human beings with the capacity of moral freedom—to choose either right or wrong. God permits this in order to bring about a greater good in the end. Love for God and others can only truly exist where moral freedom is allowed. Pioneer and major proponent of the free-will theodicy Alvin Plantinga affirms that,

**A world containing creatures who are significantly free (and freely perform more good than evil actions) is more valuable, all else being equal, than a world containing no free creatures at all. Now God can create free creatures, but He can't cause or determine them to do only what is right. For if He does so, then they aren't significantly free after all; they do what is right freely. To create creatures capable of moral good, therefore, He must create creatures capable of moral evil; and He can't give these creatures the freedom to perform evil and at the same time prevent them from doing so. As it turned out, sadly enough,**



Ironically enough, the intense persecution of God's people provided an excellent stimulus for the widespread advancement of Christianity. The enemy's plan of destruction for the Christian Church from without backfired on him completely. The roaring lion became a toothless, disarmed cub. Christians were growing by the hundreds of thousands, and the converted were multiplying at an exponential rate. Realizing this plan was a total failure, and largely inefficient in accomplishing his aim of absolute destruction, the devil chose to use a more subtle and craftier method for his plan of attack against the kingdom of heaven. Satan knew that the only way he could effectively counteract and defeat the phenomenal success of Christianity was to create his own corrupt version of a Christian church with a counterfeit Christian religion indoctrinating the practices of paganism within its religious sphere of influence. †

**some of the free creatures God created went wrong in the exercise of their freedom; this is the source of moral evil. The fact that free creatures sometimes go wrong, however, counts neither against God's omnipotence nor against His goodness, for He could have forestalled the occurrence of moral evil only by removing the possibility of moral good (Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil*, page 30). †**

## Tiberias Operation

The Galilee Experience, a Messianic bookstore and more, was a major resupply point for Robert and me. From here we would secure many of the Scriptures, books and tracts to be distributed. Here we could find the Tanach and B'rit Hadashah in the many languages that we would encounter in the seas of humanity walking the streets and marketplaces. We loaded up on at least two occasions, but just after the first, we didn't get much further than the end of the block.

Under the evening streetlamp, Robert and I quickly strategized. Immediately to our left we surveyed five young men imbibing the local spirits. Without a wasted moment, we made our approach and engaged them in friendly dialogue. Robert, particularly adept at casual conversation, quickly won us their acceptance. We declined their spirits, but eagerly poured ours upon them at the opportune time. A half-hour into our conversation, I asked these five soldiers, who were on weekend leave, to what they attributed Israel's miraculous and amazing war time victories.

With familiar stoicism, Udi of stubborn German descent credited the Israelis with the determined resolve of their people in a do-or-die situation. While no doubt this characteristic accounted for much, I postulated that it was the God of the Scriptures who secured their victories. It was El Elyon, El Shaddai who promised to bring His people back, who would protect them and fight for them. It was He who would bring them certain victory. Udi's spiritual cynicism raised its head now and then, but Robert and I, with unrelenting conviction began speaking of the covenant-keeping God with great boldness. We spoke of the sin problem and its power in every human heart. We boldly proclaimed God's promise of a deliverer for salvation according to Genesis 3:15. We spoke of Abraham and Isaac, Moses and the prophets all looking ahead to God's Deliverer.

The brothers Shmuel and Yosef often told Udi to "shut up and listen" as the reality of our message rung true and clear in their hearts. Slowly Udi's boisterous contentions subsided while my

passion and conviction grew. The Scriptures came alive, the presence of the Holy Spirit was with us and their eyes and ears were on us like glue.

Meanwhile the other brothers, Gal and Yanir, listened intently with great inquisitiveness. Three hours later with the message having been delivered and invitation extended, the night closed for us all. Before we parted, they gladly received the Scriptures with prayer, requested photos and embraced us both with genuine appreciation.

Most assuredly, they had met fellow soldiers, going about their masters business. The difference—we were serving not under the constraint of a draft, but as willing bond-servants bearing a message with a real history, a real future and a power for living now! Wherever Shmuel, Yosef, Gal, Udi & Yanir find themselves now, they no doubt will remember with amazement that unusual night on the coast of the Kinneret, south of Kefar Nahum when a prophet taught them as one who had authority and not as the teachers of the law. †





# 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!

*Checks and money orders can be made out to:*

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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!

You will be able to see the newsletter in its full color form! And you will of course be able to print the newsletter at any time if you so desire. You will also have access to past editions. All you need is Adobe Acrobat reader (which is free).

Just send an e-mail to Todd at toddbus@yahoo.com and tell him to remove your postal address (include it in your note) and add your e-mail address. It's that simple!



## thank you for your support

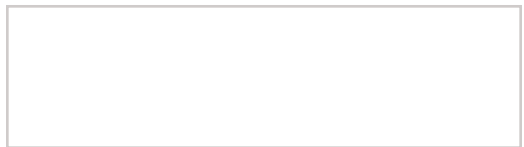


## B'rit Hadashah Ministries

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### 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). †

### *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  
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Greg Hartwig

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