

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

John
5:39

A Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries



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November 2005

As always, 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.



Part 6: "Behold, I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel"

Near the end of our stay in Tiberias, we revisited a Jewish woman named Katrina. This was the third year in a row that this ministry has ministered to her. Such repeated visits are naturally necessary to build on our continual Gospel witness



Todd Baker

to her about Yeshua the Messiah. I had met and shared the Gospel with Katrina a year and a half earlier at the tourist center where she works. This time, when I returned to Israel, Paul Colley helped in this follow-up visit.

Katrina seemed to be more open to the message of the Gospel on this visit.

But this time her face was long and sad. Katrina said she was down because, in her estimate, conditions in Israel have become more hopeless and desperate with the future being more uncertain. Katrina also added that the world also seemed to her to be increasingly insensitive, materialistic, cold, and more and more hateful in general and particularly of the Chosen People. The expression of a world-weary disposition

**Special Announcement:
New Mission Trip to Israel
Leaves November 6!!
See page 6 for Prayer
Request List**

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Search the Scriptures

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Zola Levitt - 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:

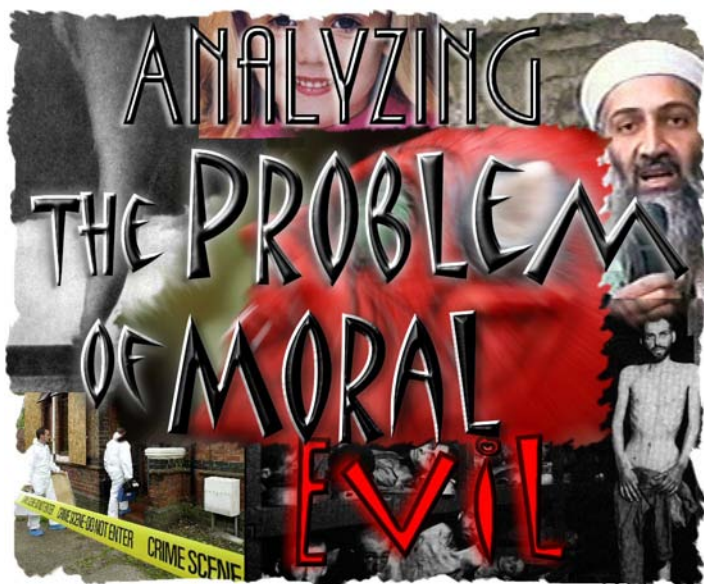
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PART 3

Logical necessity dictates that for a person to be significantly free from the outset, he or she must possess the actual capacity to choose right from wrong—to refrain from evil and do good, or to commit evil and not do good. Evil naturally resulted from the wrong choice of free will resulting in the condition of “transworld depravity.” But the main objection to this proposition by the atheist is that God could have very well created a world where men did only that which is good but still have the freedom to choose wrong, but do no wrong since God so designed things that only good would be done. The chief proponent of this objection comes from atheist philosopher J.L. Mackie who cleverly writes:

“If God has made men such that in their free choices they sometimes prefer what is good and sometimes what is evil, why could he not have made men such that they always freely chose the good? If there is no logical impossibility in a man’s freely choosing the good on one, or on several occasions, there cannot be a logical impossibility in his freely choosing the good on every occasion. God was not, then, faced with a choice between making innocent automata and making beings who, in acting freely, would some times go wrong; there was open to him the obviously better possibility of making beings who would act freely but always go right. Clearly, his failure to avail himself of this possibility is inconsistent with his being omnipotent and wholly good” (J.L. Mackie in *The Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 100-101).

But, as Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga rightly maintains, for God to do what Mackie proposes in the above quotation would indeed violate the very nature of free will that must logically allow for the actual ability to do wrong and for the existence of evil if humans are to be truly free. Taken into formal and logical consideration, the free will defense coherently demonstrates that it is consistent that God could have created a world containing no moral evil but only by creating one without significantly free persons (this is a possible world God could not create then). So He did create a

world containing moral good that allows for evil because man is significantly free to either do good or evil. Hence, on these grounds, God being omniscient, all-powerful, and totally good is consistent with the existence of evil because man has been created with free will.

A second sufficient theodicy to answer the moral problem of evil is “the best way” solution that combines the “the best of all possible worlds” idea of philosopher Gottfried Leibniz mixed, modified, and refined with Christian apologist Norman Geisler’s concept of “the greatest good produced,” which combined together I call “the best way to the best of all possible worlds” theodicy. Taken together they would formulate the two-part proposition to answer the problem of moral evil by affirming the following:

- 1) God would not produce a world where free beings will always do evil if it were possible to produce one where they will nevermore do evil.
- 2) This is a world where free beings do evil.
- 3) Therefore, this world is not God’s final production (there will be a better one where free beings will nevermore do evil).

The first set of positions joined with the following second set of propositions make a composite theodicy (the best way to the best of all possible worlds) expressed in this manner:

- a) It is morally better for God to create the morally best possible world (to do less than his best is evil for God).
- b) A world with higher moral virtues is a morally better world.
- c) A world where humans are permitted to sin as a precondition to a better world is better than one where they are not.
- d) This present world is better than one where they are not.
- e) Therefore, this present world is better than a world where humans never sin.

In the next issue we will analyze this proposition more closely and what critics of it might say. †

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

The Parable
of the Leaven
Part 6
(Matthew 13:33)



The two negative ingredients found in leaven are **putrefaction** and **corruption**. Leaven dissolves, crumbles, and defiles

The Pharisees were ultra orthodox when it came to the formalities of the Mosaic Law. They were devout religious externalists, who over-diligently observed every insignificant detail of the oral law, while blindly omitting the weightier matters of the higher law of God such as justice, mercy, and faith. "Legalism" is the carry over of the leaven of the Pharisees in the church today.

*Today, in large circles of the Church,
this supercilious type of leaven is
commonly known as having
"a holier-than-thou attitude"...*

everything it comes in contact with. Christ always used the word leaven in an evil sense. He never once used it to mean something good. All throughout the Gospel narratives, Jesus explicitly speaks of leaven in a figurative sense to denote the propagation of heresy, false doctrine, and immoral conduct.

In Matthew 16:6, 11-12, Jesus warns His disciples about the corrupt and unsound doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees:

"Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Since Jesus always applied negative tendencies to the word leaven, he would not have intentionally confused His disciples by using it as a figure of good in Matthew 13. The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees is so prevalent today in many churches and seminaries that it beggars description.

The leaven or doctrine of the Pharisees is religious hypocrisy.

"Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1).

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and

"The Kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened."

- Matthew 13:33



**mercy
a n d
faith.
These
y o u
ought
to have
done,
without
leaving
t h e
others**



undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" (Matthew 23:23-24).

The leaven of the Pharisees is a religion of selfish gain, having the form of being godly, but denying the power thereof; ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 2: 5,7). The Pharisees were quick to judge and ever ready to pass the sentence of condemnation on those who took the liberty to righteously disagree with them. The mind of the Pharisee is expertly trained to rigidly point out and expose the faults of others so that he may exalt himself to a superior position over those whom he critically burdened without giving them the means of relief.

"For they bind heavy burdens hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matthew 23:4).

The religion of the Pharisees is religious inconsistency:

"For they say and do not" (Matthew 23:3).

Continued on page 4

on Katrina's part allowed Paul and me to share with her that such moral conditions were foretold by Yeshua and the Apostle Paul in Matthew 24 and 1 Timothy 3:1-6, respectively. Indeed, it was here that I pointed out to Katrina that the ancient rabbis of the first century also taught that the world of humanity would universally grow more and more evil and immoral right before the Messiah comes.

The rabbis coined a Hebrew phrase for this time period of great moral declension and apostasy from the one true God. They called it "Chevlei HaMeshiach" (which translated into English means, "the birth pangs of the Messiah"). Katrina said that as a Jew she was familiar with this idea. We said to her, furthermore, that Yeshua described and foretold the same event under the same term of "birth pangs" in Matthew 24:8; yet we were quick to add there is real hope and deliverance from a moral slide into hopelessness, hate, and despair and that answer is in Yeshua's personal promise of a better world to come when He returns at the Rapture for his bride, the church, and takes



Paul points out important passages for Katrina to write down and study later - what progress from our first visit with her years ago!!

them home to God the Father's glorious house in heaven. We then showed her that wonderful promise the Messiah made to His own in John 14:1-6.

Katrina then said after this that the problem with the world has always been the fact that hatred for one another has eclipsed and replaced love. Paul and I basically agreed with this simple but sobering assessment and further added that love for God and loving your neighbor as yourself is the warp and woof of God's law. Thus the only way a person can possibly achieve these two fundamental acts is by having God's law of love inscribed in the heart and lived out by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

To confirm this from the Jewish Scriptures, Paul took the initiative to show Katrina that the God of Israel prophesied this very

thing as a part and parcel of the New covenant. He promised to give Israel in Jeremiah 31:31-33—

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

This can only become a reality by a living trust and indwelling of the One who came and ratified this New Covenant—Yeshua of Nazareth as the inspired writer of the New Testament book Hebrews formally testifies to the Jewish believers in Hebrews 9-10. Katrina read both these passages in Jeremiah and Hebrews and wrote them down in her notebook for further study. I was encouraged by the fact that Katrina is gradually realizing that the answer for the problem of evil does not lie in humanity for the simple fact man is flawed and inherently sinful. She is now open to the possibility that this Messiah we have extensively talked to her about during the last three visits to Israel is the only real and lasting answer for life and death! ☆

A graphic with a dark blue background. On the left, there is a circular inset showing two lit candles in silver holders. To the right of the candles, white text reads: "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."

Matthew 13...Continued from page 3

The leaven of the Pharisees is sanctimonious religion, which presents itself in a showy display of feigned righteousness and external piety, that they may receive admiration from men.

"But all their works they do to be seen of men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the marketplaces

and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi'" (Matthew 23:5-7).

Today, in large circles of the Church, this supercilious type of leaven is commonly known as having "a holier-than-thou attitude" that says,

"Stand by yourself, do not come near to me, for I am holier than thou" (Isaiah 65:5).

In the same passage, the Lord delivers a scathing rebuke upon those who are pharisaical in heart. They are a constant irritant to Him.

"These are a smoke in My nose, a fire that burns all the day long."

The leaven of the Pharisees is a false doctrine of exclusive sectarianism breeding arrogance, alienation, and religious snobbery in the church. Evidently, from the countless divisions in Christendom, the leaven of the Pharisees seems to be doing well in its corrupting influence within the visible church of the world.†

B'rit Hadashah Ministries

Growth in any ministry is a very important thing to happen, says Todd Baker, founder of B'rit Hadashah Ministries. For the first two years, we have greatly been supported by fewer than anticipated supporters whose donations, combined, average less than \$1500 per month which is far short of the \$7000 monthly budget needed to go full time. However, we do see growth, which is very important. In this age of "the prosperity gospel," we dislike having to ask for financial support, but the reality is that it is a necessity.

Presently, B'rit Hadashah Ministries is comprised of all volunteer staff so the majority of funds received goes straight to ministry newsletters, mission trips, Tanachs and other materials needed for the mission field. Even Todd Baker himself does not receive compensation at this point, but instead chooses to continue to work as a chaplain at a local Dallas hospital while nearing completion of his Doctorate degree.

One thing for sure though, God is working through this Ministry in Israel. One of the ministry's faithful supporters is none other than Zola Levitt as well as others who give their financial support, as well as time and talent like Eric Oler and Elisa Retzlaff. These two are indeed sowing good seeds in heaven.

Most importantly, says Todd, we are very thankful to all who can support the ministry and are encouraging members of the ministry to take the challenge and sign up for any automatic contribution they can afford. Even with as little as \$15 per month, contributions from many supporters can make the difference we need to make our budget goal and increase the mission trips to Israel. We are undertaking a great mission with a greater reward.

May God Bless each of you as you give and may it be on a consistent basis.

Checks and money orders can be made out to:

B'rit Hadashah Ministries.

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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, 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 made the switch!

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. Or go to our updated web site (www.searchthescrituresonline.org) and you can make the change yourself! It's that simple!



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Dear readers,

Our newest Gospel outreach to Israel is scheduled for **November 6-20** - that's **this month!** Our team, this time consisting of **Robert Cuccia** and **Byron Zahm**, 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 them, 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 this outreach. A full report of how things go over there will be given in future newsletters.

Your servant in the Messiah,
Todd Baker

- ☆ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6).
- ☆ Pray that they have the Father's wisdom and guidance in everything they 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 they 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). †