

# SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

John  
5:39

A Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries



Volume 3, Number 12

December 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 7:

## “The Grace of God that Brings Salvation...”



Our Gospel witness continued in Tiberias when Paul and I went to a grocery store to purchase some necessities. I felt led to give a Jewish Gospel tract in Hebrew to the security guard who checked our belongings at the entrance (for this is



Todd Baker

The guard's name was **Yoav**. He wanted to argue that the rabbis like Rabbi Menachem Schneersohn were worthy of more honor and attention. But Paul and I explained to Yoav that Jesus of Nazareth was the only one qualified to receive honor and belief as the Messiah because He alone fulfilled those particular Messianic prophecies that were foretold by Moses and the Prophets of Israel in the Jewish Scriptures.

Yoav firmly stated that the New Testament was not worthy of the same esteem and belief as the Old Testament due to the New Testament writer's recurring declaration that the Messiah of Israel has come in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth. This to Yoav, and especially Orthodox which he was, is a great offense and a stumbling stone—as it has been to most of Israel since the time of Jesus.

We then challenged Yoav on this by saying to him that if he was a follower of Moses and the Torah, he would have believed in the Messiah Jesus, of whom Moses clearly wrote about in the Torah (see Genesis 3:15; Deuteronomy 18:15-19). Yoav responded to this by reiterating the common belief of Orthodox Judaism that there will be two messiahs to come—the suffering Messiah who is called “Messiah,

Son of Joseph and the king Messiah, called “Messiah, Son of David” who will conquer and rule when He comes.

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***When we left the store, the security guard had already read the booklet we gave him.***

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Paul and I attempted to explain to him that the rabbis' theory here was biblically erroneous and that the Scriptures actually speak of one Messiah. The Tanach speaks of this same

Person as vicariously suffering for the sins of Israel in Isaiah 53 and later returning in power and great glory to reign over all the earth (see Isaiah 63). The Brit Hadashah (New Testament) historically records this to be fulfilled in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Although Yoav adamantly refused to receive a free copy of the New Testament in Hebrew due to the rabbis' paranoid prohibition and disinformation traditionally spread about it, which he sadly but blindly followed, he did read what we gave him in the form of a Gospel tract that prompted our conversation with Yoav and planted a gospel seed in his spirit and mind.

† ☆ † ☆ † ☆ † ☆ †

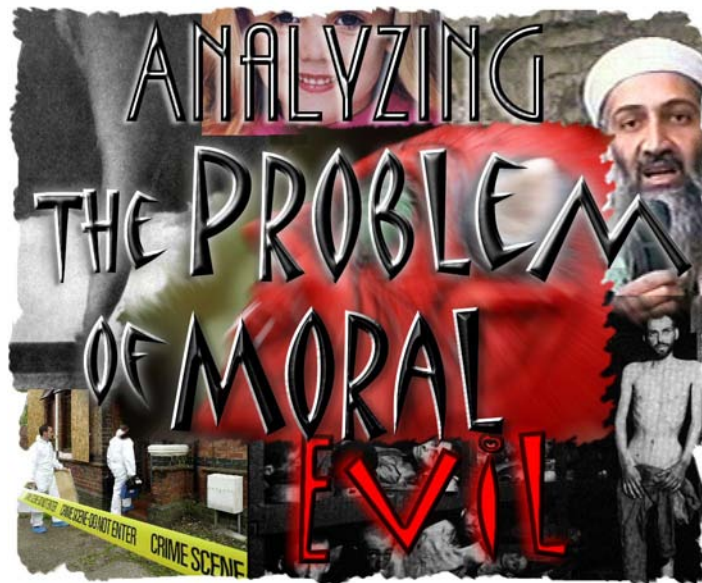
Paul and I returned to our hotel that evening. Before going up to our room, we stopped in the lounge

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Todd shares Yeshua the Messiah with Yoav.

standard procedure for those in Israel fighting to prevent terrorism). When we left the store, the security guard had already read the booklet we gave him. He asked us about our belief in Yeshua being the Messiah, for the tract Paul and I gave him argued the case from Scripture that Jesus is the Messiah of the Jewish people.



## PART 4

Critics of the “best way to the best of all possible worlds” proposition would say that God could have easily created a world that was already morally perfect without the unwarranted superfluity of evil and suffering. Why didn’t God simply make the best world from the outset without the ruinous process of evil interfering and save the seeming waste and destruction evil has brought? Anyone can see that this would be better than what has transpired up until now.

The answer from the Christian theist is that, for true moral development to take place, human experience dictates that certain ends can only be achieved by certain ways. The instilling of moral virtues, via a soul-making process, can only come about by testing, adversity, temptation, and patience.

Tiger Woods became the number one golfer in the world by first practicing and patiently learning the game of golf for many years before becoming the excellent professional he is today. Through the trial and error experience of success and failure, he learned what good golf is as opposed to what bad golf is. Even the God-Man Jesus Christ who was perfect and sinless became complete and perfected through the things that He suffered during His passion (Hebrews 5: 8-9).

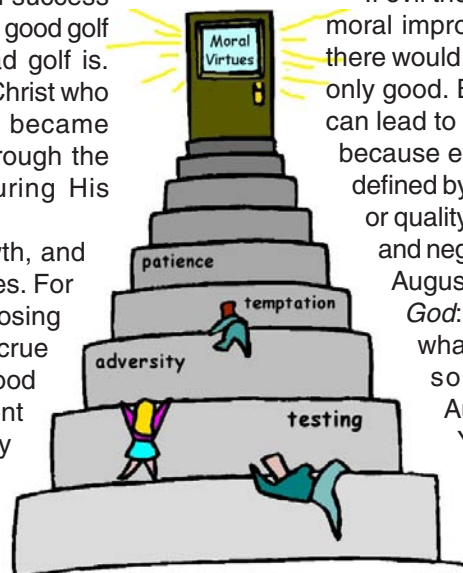
Human beings are creatures of process, growth, and development both in the moral and physical spheres. For them to be truly free and learn the value of choosing good over evil and the beneficial merits that can accrue now and in the life to come, they must encounter good vis-à-vis evil to make a proper choice and judgment which naturally and logically involves the possibility of evil if they refuse the good.

The conclusion upon serious reflection over these matters is that what seems incompatible here (the existence of evil) actually turns out to

be quite compatible in the end. Though evil of itself cannot automatically induce a moral action since free moral agents can choose to do wrong, it nevertheless must be seriously present so that a real opportunity can arise to do good so that virtuous acts and moral character are defined and developed.

The rejoinder (usually from a pantheist or monist mindset) to this has been to ask that if good can only come about by the person being exposed to an evil situation or a temptation to do what is morally wrong then evil is really good and beneficial since it produces good results like the formation of moral character, and if so, why not then adopt a “let us do evil that good may come” mentality?

If evil then as a whole were salutary to the moral improvement of the human character, there would be no evil, per se, as we know it—only good. But not *every* evil, only *some* evil, can lead to a good act or outcome in the end because evil by its very nature, as correctly defined by Augustine and Aquinas, is a state or quality of depravation that is the decided and negative opposite of the positive good. Augustine concisely wrote in *The City of God*: “For evil has no positive nature; what we call evil is merely the lack of something that is good” (Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, New York: Image, 1958, page 217). Likewise, Aquinas goes on to further elaborate from this that:



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# Matthew 13 and the Prophetic Parables About the Present Age

The Parable  
of the Leaven  
Part 7  
(Matthew 13:33)



**T**he leaven, or doctrine, of the Sadducees is skepticism, rationalism, and liberalism. The sadduceean school of thought in

Jesus' day utterly denied the supernatural, and the resurrection of the body. They presumptuously claimed that angels and spirits did not exist. The Sadducees were religious materialists. They only accepted man and his physical environment in the present state as being real and substantial. And in so doing this, they proudly ***"professed themselves wise, yet became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, like to birds, four-footed***



***beasts, and creeping things"*** (Romans 1:22-23).

The Sadducees, today, are none other than the religious humanists, modernists, liberals, materialists, and evolutionists. It is to these self-assured, haughty, foolish crowd of imbecilic infidels, who walk in the darkness of unbelief, that Christ severely pronounces, ***"the same shall receive greater damnation"*** (Matthew 23:14). The chief agents of the devil are not necessarily always found in the red-light districts of our cities, or in the drinking bars, or in other places of debauchery. But we find the workers of iniquity, for the most

***"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



## Analyzing Moral Evil... Continued from page 2

"Evil, which is universally contrary to good, is necessarily also contrary to existing. And what is contrary to existing cannot be an entity. And so I say evil is not an entity, but the subject that evil befalls is, since evil is only the privation of a particular good" (Thomas Aquinas, *On Evil*, New York: Oxford, 2003, page 59).

For indeed, the very nature of intrinsic evil is the opposite of good and inherently included in that evil, that makes it contrary to good, is the fact good is utterly absent from it, things or events that are morally neutral notwithstanding. By the logic of it, not every evil can produce good but only some evil, when responded to in a contrary way that is good, can concomitantly bring morally good results from what was an originally evil encounter. Thus evil may give the occasion for the good thing done opposing it, but it is not the source from whence the good came, otherwise evil would be good—a morally logical impossibility! †

part, seeded in our churches, seminaries, colleges, and universities leavening the truth of Christ with their numerous pharisaical false doctrines and pseudo-intellectual sadduceean heresies of men inspired by

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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.

to have a Cappuccino. The waitress who served us was a young lady whose name was **Anat**. When engaging in conversation with her, I pointed out the broad bay window in front of us and said to her that much of Yeshua the Messiah's ministry was done in and around the lake of Galilee. She mistook the name of Yeshua to be the Joshua of Moses' time. But I corrected her by saying that it was Yeshua of Nazareth I was talking about. Anat was genuinely surprised and exclaimed she had never thought about that.

Paul and I then shared with her about the importance of the life of Yeshua for Israel and the world. Indeed we said to her that He was the One that put an unquenchable love for the Jewish people in our hearts. This occurred



*Anat was open to the Gospel witness of Todd and Paul*

after He saved us and replaced our hatred and bitterness with His love. She replied that she believed in Elohim, and Yeshua was only good for us. Paul and I then said that to trust in the Messiah is the same as believing in God Himself and that all of us need the Lord's "hesed" (Hebrew for divine grace) to live and be forgiven of sin. She saw the need for this. This grace was supremely given when the God of Israel sent us His Son—Jesus of Nazareth. Paul and I then offered Anat an opportunity to find this saving grace by reading about the life of Jesus in the New Testament where so many of the events occurred in the region of Galilee where she lived! Anat was moved by our Gospel witness and accepted a Hebrew copy of the New Testament Scriptures. She thanked us for sharing this love to the Jewish people. ✡

Matthew 13...Continued from page 3

the powers of darkness. Such anti-Christ monopolists as the Pharisees and Sadducees (i.e., the self-righteous and the "intellectual" skeptics) are fully defined in Matthew 23:1-24 and Luke 11: 37-54. If they refuse to repent and turn in child-like faith to Jesus Christ, how shall any of these religious and intellectual counterfeits, who change the truth of God into a lie with the leaven of falsehood and heresy, escape the damnation of hell, since they neglect so great a salvation for the doctrines and commandments of men making of non-effect the Word of God?

There is also the leaven of Herod. ***"And He charged them saying, take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of Herod"*** (Mark 8:15). The leaven of Herod is, essentially, hedonism and materialism, which constitutes worldliness. Eating from the leaven of Herod causes one to depart from the living God and pursue the gratification of the flesh and the sinful nature. The whole of this narcissistic philosophy consists in the immoderate indulgence of sensual pleasure to the point of self-destruction.

The insane pursuit for selfish pleasure and political power on a universal level in the present day undoubtedly indicates a definite sign we are living in the "last days." Pleasure seeking and rampant partying (what the Scripture condemns as reveling) is unquestionably the most commonplace sin of nations and men and women today. This ravenous world, full of lust and greed, incessantly continues to gorge themselves on the leaven of Herod still hungry for more. The results of eating from such polluted bread are worldliness, sensuality, spiritual emptiness, and moral degeneracy. Soon the avenging Lord will arise to

execute swift judgment on these unrepentant souls whose glutinous hearts have lavishly nourished themselves from unjust gain and profit by oppressing the poor, weak, and naive both in the Church and the world. To these the Word of God declares:

***"Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter."*** ✡

### ***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. ✡



# 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.

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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](mailto:toddbus@yahoo.com)) or phone (214-356-2583) for scheduling information.

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## 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 Levitt - Mark Levitt - Nancy Baker - Don and Elisa Retzlaff - Greg Hartwig

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# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

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