## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries



Volume 11, Number 3 May/June 2013

#### FOUND IN TRANSLATION!

n this 26<sup>th</sup> glorious Gospel outreach to Israel, conducted from March 3<sup>rd</sup> to March 19<sup>th</sup>, Eric Oler joined me — he proved to be a most effective witness with me for Messiah to His ancient people.



In Tiberias we met Matti—a young Israeli by working in a sports store in the center of Tiberias. He Todd Baker told us he was moving to Tucson, Arizona, in a couple of weeks to begin a new job renting apartments and rental properties. I remarked to him that his Hebrew name was the same name for Matthew, the writer of one of the Gospels in the B'rit Hadashah (the New Testament). Matti had never heard or read this—a common and ironic tragedy in Israel!

The store sold a variety of fishing poles. We pointed out that around Lake Kinneret (the Sea of Galilee) was a major area where Yeshua did so much of His ministry on earth, and chose most of His talmidim (disciples) from fishermen along that lake. The Bible has a lot to say not only about Messiah but the future of Israel. Matti was willing at this point to receive a Hebrew Bible that included the whole New Testament to learn about a major part of Israel's history and the life of Jesus, which is the most important part of Jewish history. We left speaking a blessing on Matti and Yacov, the owner of the store,



Todd with Yacov and Matti in their sports store in Tiberias

who also gladly heard the good news of Yeshua the Messiah and even told us as we departed from the store that we were "good men for doing this in Israel!"

Walking on another street in Tiberias, I was thinking about Yael and Moshe—two food vendors we had shared the Gospel with in October of 2012. Just then Eric told me a man was waving at us from across the street and sure enough it was Yael! I wanted to revisit them because I gave Yael a copy of the Scriptures but not the owner, Moshe, because I had run out of copies the last time. But this time,



we made sure we had enough Scriptures to distribute. Moshe also remembered we had given Yael a copy of the Hebrew Bible. He was thrilled we had retuned to complete our Gospel witness by now giving him his own copy of the Tenach and B'rit Hadashah. Moshe, smiling wide, thanked us for our love for Israel and thumbed through the pages of Holy Writ reading the New Testament for the very first time!

On our way from Tiberias to Jerusalem, Eric Oler and I picked up a Jewish hitchhiker. His name was Oriel. He could not speak English at all, and we were not able to converse with him in Hebrew. Eric and I were



Moshe was very pleased to receive his own copy of the complete Hebrew Bible.

in a quandary—wanting to share the Gospel of Yeshua but not being well versed enough in Hebrew to do so. This problem was quickly resolved, thank God, because Oriel had a translation device on his I-Phone. Eric quickly downloaded a translation app to his I-Phone as well so we could effectively communicate with Oriel. Using this device, Oriel asked us if we were tourists in Israel. We answered that we were sent by Yeshua the Messiah to share His Gospel message with His people. Oriel typed back his response stating he was glad to hear this. Oriel asked if Eric and I were Jewish; our answer was to say, "Yes, in our hearts and souls, we have become spiritual Jews through faith in Yeshua the Messiah who came forth from Israel to die for man's sins and rise from the dead three days later so that all who believe in Him may receive the forgiveness of sins in His name and receive eternal life from the One who has risen from the dead—to the Jew first and then to the Gentile" (Acts 10:43; Romans 1:16). We then showed Oriel how the Tenach in Jeremiah 31:31 teaches the

Special thanks go out to Zola Levitt Ministries / To The Jew First Ministry for their ongoing funding contributions, helping to make these mission trips to Israel possible. Also, special thanks to Andy Ball of The Bible Society of Israel for supplying us with Hebrew Bibles.

An excellent article below on why Marriage, as God ordained it from the beginning (Genesis 2), is only between a man and a woman and why redefining marriage to include the sin of homosexuality is simply wrong, egregiously sinful, harmful and dangerous to normative marriage! If the Supreme Court is arrogant enough to redefine marriage from what it has always been, then the judgment of Romans 1:18-32 will assuredly go into full effect on America and will be the point of no return for this apostate nation! God will not be mocked by the abominable and unbiblical invention of "Gay Marriage." Judgment will fall from Him just as Jesus foretold in Luke 17:28-30 would happen to the Sodomite revolution of the last days which will immediately occur before His 2nd coming to earth in great power and glory to punish all wicked unbelievers and establish His holy and righteous kingdom where no abominable and lawless practice or sin will be allowed (Matthew 13:37-43; 2Thessalonians 1:7-10)! Beloved, we are on the threshold of these very things. Bo Adonai Yeshua! -Todd

## Defining Marriage—What Harm Would It Do to Redefine Marriage? Part 1

#### by Peter Sprigg

March 25, 2013

On March 26 and 27, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in two cases challenging the definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. In Hollingsworth v. Perry, they will consider the constitutionality of the definition as enshrined in the California state constitution by voters in that state when they adopted "Proposition 8" in 2008 (effectively reversing the decision of the California Supreme Court to impose same-sex "marriage" earlier that year). In Windsor v. United States, they will consider the constitutionality of the same definition of marriage being adopted for all purposes under federal law through the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

In anticipation of those oral arguments, I am running a series of blog posts with questions and answers related to the issue. Today I look at what is perhaps at the crux of the debate—the question of what harm marriage redefinition would do.

#### Q-What harm would it do to the institution of marriage if we redefine it to include same-sex couples?

At the outset, it is worth noting that this question is often framed in a rather misleading way: "What harm would a same-sex couple getting married do to *your* opposite-sex marriage?" The issue, however, is not how any *one* couple's marriage would affect any other specific couple's marriage—the issue is how changing the *definition* of marriage under the law would change the social *institution* of marriage.

Giving unique privileges and a unique status to the only type of relationship that can ever result in the natural creation of another human being sends an important message to society. Contrary to the charges of those who would redefine marriage, that message has nothing to do with "sexual orientation" as such. It simply sends the message that relationships of a type which can result in natural reproduction are unique, and are uniquely valuable to society; and it further sends the message that children benefit uniquely from being raised by their own mother and father (as well as the message that a man and woman should take responsibility for children produced by their union).

If "marriage" is redefined to include same-sex couples, it will of course not abolish civil marriage as an institution, or prevent opposite-sex couples from marrying and having children. However, it will effectively negate—and indeed, reverse—the social message that privileging "marriage" over other relationships would send.

Instead of sending the message that potentially procreative relationships are uniquely valuable and that children being raised by their mother and father is uniquely valuable, the message to society will be the exact opposite. Since same-sex relationships, which are *intrinsically* infertile and can *never* result in natural procreation, would be treated as *identical* under the law to opposite-sex relationships which are the *only*type that can *ever* result in natural procreation, the explicit message to society would be that there is *nothing* uniquely valuable about the very reproduction of the human race. This would be a shocking denial of a reality that is literally fundamental to human existence.

By the same token, same-sex couples *never* provide a child with a home that includes the care of both their mother and father, and on the contrary *deliberately* and permanently deny a child such a home. Treating such couples—which are *deliberately motherless*—in a way *identical* to couples that provide both a mother and father would send the message to society that there is *nothing* uniquely valuable about a child being raised by his or her own mother and father.

Sending these messages—officially denying, as a matter of public policy, the unique value and importance of reproduction, and of mothers and fathers—would inevitably have an impact on the behavior of people in society.

The following harms would be the predictable results (these are adapted and updated from my 2010 Family Research Council booklet, *The Top Ten Harms of Same-Sex "Marriage*):

#### • Fewer children would be raised by a married mother and father.

The greatest tragedy resulting from the legalization of homosexual marriage would not be its effect on adults, but its effect on children. For the first time in history, society would be placing its highest stamp of official government approval on the *deliberate* creation of *permanently* motherless or fatherless households for children.

There simply cannot be any serious debate, based on the mass of scholarly literature available to us, about the ideal family form for children. It consists of a mother and father who are committed to one another in marriage. Children raised by their married mother and father experience lower rates of many social pathologies, including:

- premarital childbearing;[i]
- illicit drug use;[ii]
- arrest;[iii]
- health, emotional, or behavioral problems;[iv]
- poverty;[v]
- or school failure or expulsion.[vi]

These benefits are then passed on to future generations as well, because children raised by their married mother and father are themselves less likely to cohabit or to divorce as adults. [vii]

In a perfect world, every child would have that kind of household provided by his or her own loving and capable biological parents (and every husband and wife who wanted children would be able to conceive them together). Of course, we don't live in a perfect world.

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#### Search the Scriptures

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Elisa by e-mail at:

#### bhm@brit-hadashah.org

or by mail at:

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

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# The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:23-35)

Part 10



<sup>23</sup>"Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup>And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup>But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. <sup>26</sup>The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' <sup>27</sup>Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' <sup>29</sup>So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' <sup>30</sup>And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. <sup>32</sup>Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'you wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' <sup>34</sup>And his master was angry, and delivered him to the tormentors until he should pay all that was due to him. <sup>35</sup>So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

he servant, likewise, came to acknowledge his utter inability and put his confidence in his lord's forgiving mercy—and was justified and acquitted from debt. The Law condemns the unrighteous, disobedient to death. Ah, but we read in verse 27 of the lord's grace on the servant to the extent the servant was liberated from debt. The Law brought the punishment of death on the disobedience of all men and accounted them blameworthy of rank rebellion. The work of God's grace acquits and accepts the sinner. Grace brought the "obedience of God in Christ Jesus" to disobedient men thus insuring payment and freedom, which reverses the sentence of death already passed justifying us righteous without blame before the throne of His grace. Only the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ enables the unrighteous sinner to become the righteous saint, the disobedient rebel to become the obedient servant, the ungodly wretch to become the godly reformed convert; and in keeping with the attitude of this parable, the indebted to become immeasurably wealthy "that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7).

Earlier in this exposition, we discovered that the servant in debt was in fact a graphic portrayal of fallen humanity dead in Adam. We observed the servant was a true representation of all Adamic sinners required to pay their massive debt in perfect, unflinching obedience to the Holy requirements of God. Yet, seemingly, the irredeemable situation remains—man being thoroughly corrupt cannot possibly meet the impeccable demands given by the Perfect, righteous Lord "who reigns over all." The deliverance from the misery of sin and the debt it incurred is found only by the complete obedience of Jesus Christ who is the second Adam, "the Lord from heaven." The origin of

human sin was birthed by the disobedience of Adam. But in Christ's absolute obedience to God fulfilled on Calvary, the monstrous debt of compliance to the Law was paid in full rendering us truly righteous delivering us from death to eternal life in the sight of God. "For as by one man's disobedience (Adam) many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One (Jesus Christ), shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19). In concluding the first part of our parable, the distinct workings of God's grace are briefly typified. First, God's grace is sovereign in divine operation. The lord chose "one" of his servants and promptly released him by virtue of forgiveness and compassion. It was from the throne where sovereignty is best epitomized, where the lord exercised his grace to forgive the indebted servant. The saints are encouraged as well: "Let us come boldly before the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). Second, the grace of God is discriminatory, selective and particular. It chooses some and passes others by. Thus the Lord declared: "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious" (Exodus 33:19). It was distinguishing grace that allowed Saul of Tarsus to hear the voice of the Lord on the Damascus Road, while his traveling companions remained imperceptive of Christ. Third, grace is freely given and cannot be earned or purchased. The Bible asserts the same in the book of Romans. "Being freely justified by His grace" (Romans 3:24). Sinners cannot merit God's forgiveness, but only hell fire. It is God alone who grants pardon by His free grace. The servant of this parable was also freely given forgiveness. He could not have bought or deserved it, seeing he was in tremendous debt himself.

The servant was deprived of everything, but was released and reinstated independently based on his lord's merciful inclination to

forgive and nothing else. Fourth, God's grace is eternal love and is able to grant life everlasting. "The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying, yes I have loved you with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3). "For His anger endures but a moment; in His favor (divine grace) is life" (Psalm 30:5). The inexhaustible mercies of the Lord cannot be quenched by the eternal repercussions of sin; but it is only by His unlimited grace that the sinner can be saved from bearing the eternal penalty of sin. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20). Praise His most blessed name for "the goodness of God endures continually" (Psalm 52:1), and the salvation of God inseparably coupled with grace is unending. "But My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will not be abolished" (Isaiah 51:6). The debt of the servant was enormously huge. The abundance of the king's compassion must of necessity far excel the immense sum owed. The innumerable, gracious thoughts of our forgiving Redeemer far remove the horrible enormity of our sins. "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:11-12). Blessed it is to know that God is ever ready to eradicate perpetuated sin by His unceasing mercy and unbounded forgiveness. For His mercy is great, far outnumbering 10 thousand talents times 10,000 times 10,000 over and over again, so on and so forth. Who can say of such countless, inexplicable love but "How precious also are Your thoughts to me O God. How great is the sum of them. If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand" (Psalm 139:17).

Lastly, grace is God's undeserved favor demonstrated where there is positive unworthiness Continued on page 4

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#### **Defining Marriage...** Continued from page 2

But the parent who says, "I'm gay" is telling his or her child that he or she has no intention of providing a parent of both sexes for that child. And a homosexual who "marries" someone of the same sex is declaring that this deprivation is to be permanent—and with the blessing of the state.

Homosexual activists argue that research on homosexual parenting has shown no differences among the children raised by homosexuals and those raised by heterosexuals. Even leading professional organizations such as the AmericanAcademyof Pediatrics, under the influence of homosexual activists, have issued policy statements making such claims. [viii]

A close examination of the actual research, however, shows that such claims are unsupportable. The truth is that most research on "homosexual parents" thus far has been marred by serious methodological problems. [ix] However, even pro-homosexual sociologists Judith Stacey and Timothy Biblarz report that the actual data from key studies show the "no differences" claim to be false.

Surveying the research (primarily regarding lesbians) in an *American Sociological Review* article in 2001, they found that:

- Children of lesbians are less likely to conform to traditional gender norms.
- Children of lesbians are more likely to engage in homosexual behavior.
- Daughters of lesbians are "more sexually adventurous and less chaste."
- Lesbian "co-parent relationships" are more likely to break up than heterosexual marriages.[x]

The most comprehensive study of children raised by parents who had homosexual relationships, conducted by University of Texas sociologist Mark Regnerus and published in 2012, showed that such children suffered numerous disadvantages—relative to children raised in an "intact biological family," but also in comparison to other family forms. [xi]

Critics of the Regnerus study questioned its relevance to the marriage debate, because some of the children of homosexual parents never lived with that parent and a partner, and almost none were raised by a same-sex couple from birth. (This illustrates, in part, how rare such "stable" same-sex households are in the real world). However, a 1996 study by an Australian sociologist compared children raised by heterosexual married couples, heterosexual cohabiting couples, and homosexual cohabiting couples. It found that the children of heterosexual married couples did the best, and children of homosexual couples the worst, in nine of the thirteen academic and social categories measured. [xii]

As scholar Stanley Kurtz says,

If, as in Norway, gay marriage were imposed here by a socially liberal cultural elite, it would likely speed us on the way toward the classic Nordic pattern of less frequent marriage, more frequent out-of-wedlock birth, and skyrocketing family dissolution. In the American context, this would be a disaster. [xiii] To be continued in our next issue.

- [i] Kristin A. Moore, "Nonmarital School-Age Motherhood: Family, Individual, and School Characteristics," *Journal of Adolescent Research* 13, October 1998: 433-457.
- [iii] John P. Hoffman and Robert A. Johnson, "A National Portrait of Family Structure and Adolescent Drug Use," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60, August 1998: 633-645.
- [iii] Chris Coughlin and Samuel Vucinich, "Family Experience in Preadolescence and the Development of Male Delinquency," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 58, May 1996: 491-501.
- [iv] Debra L. Blackwell, "Family structure and children's health in the United States: Findings from the National Health Interview Survey, 2001–2007," *Vital and Health Statistics*, Series 10, No. 246 (Hyattsville,MD: National Center for Health Statistics, December 2010). Online at:http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr 10/sr10 246.pdf
- [v] Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, *America's Children: Key Indicators of Well-Being 2001*, Washington, D.C., p. 14.
- [vi] Deborah A. Dawson, "Family Structure and Children's Health and Well-Being: Data from the 1988 National Health Interview Survey on Child Health," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 53, August 1991: 573-584.
- **[vii]** Paul R. Amato and Alan Booth, *A Generation at Risk: Growing Up in an Era of Family Upheaval*,Cambridge,Massachusetts:HarvardUniversity Press, 1997, pp. 111-115.
- [viii] Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, American Academy of Pediatrics, "Policy Statement: Promoting the Well-Being of Children Whose Parents Are Gay or Lesbian," *Pediatrics* Vol. 31, No. 4, April 2013, pp. 827-830 (Reaffirmed May 2009; online at:http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2013/03/18/peds.2013-0376.full.pdf+html
- [ix] Loren Marks, "Same-sex parenting and children's outcomes: A closer examination of the American Psychological Association's brief on lesbian and gay parenting," *Social Science Research* Vol 41, Issue 4 (July 2012), pp. 735-751; online at:http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0049089X12000580
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- [xii] Sotirios Sarantakos, "Children in three contexts: Family, education and social development," *Children Australia* 21, No. 3 (1996): 23-31.
- [xiii] Stanley Kurtz, "The End of Marriage in Scandinavia: The 'conservative case' for same-sex marriage collapses," *The Weekly Standard* 9, No. 20 (February 2, 2004): 26-33.

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#### Matthew 18... Continued from page 3

in the one receiving it. The lord in this parable did not deal with his mendicant servant accordingly, but rather bestowed unmerited grace upon him and treated him according to the tender mercies given. Every sinner saved by grace actually deserves the unending torment of God's eternal punishment. But thanks be unto God through our Lord Jesus we have found grace " in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). It is because of the pure, unconditional grace of God, the redeemed of the Lord testify in union with all forgiven sinners of past generations that: "He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103:10). The servant was in a state of deep privation. He squandered the great amount of money lent to him by his lord. But instead of rightly paying what he did not have, the servant was forgiven and was replenished all he owed. The grace of God is dependent only upon His sovereign will. God's sovereign mercy says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Romans 9:15). Therefore "it is not of him who wills, nor of him that runs, but of God who shows mercy" (Romans 9:16).

Nor is God's saving grace won by religious or philanthropic achievements. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5). Nothing irks the proud flesh of the religionist more than the fact that God's

way of redeeming acceptance is based entirely on His own choosing apart from all humanitarian and religious exercise conducted in the strength of the flesh! The finished result of God's grace produces the unequivocal forgiveness of sin. The far removal of such enables the forgiven to be innocent and not guilty, as if he had never sinned! In verse 24 the Lord states the exact figure the indebted servant owed. He owed approximately 10,000 talents—an immense amount for that day! We found, however, that the momentous sum, illustrative of the immeasurable extent of sin, was summarily dismissed and superseded by God's unquenchable forgiveness. The magnitude of sin seems infinitely great, but when measured with the infinite supply of God's mercy, it is instantly vanguished into nothing. To forgive essentially is also to forget. When God has forgiven sin, in a manner of speaking, he also forgets it entirely, casting it into the sea of oblivion never to be remembered again. "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more...And You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Jeremiah 31:34; Micah 7:19). When the lord of this parable decided to pardon his servant for the large misappropriation of funds taken, he forthrightly chose to forgive, which in turn allowed the servant to walk away free—a new man, unencumbered from penalizing debt; but still responsible as a servant no longer in debt but a forgiven servant who now must forgive in return his fellow servants of their debts to him. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). 🕸

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## B'rit Hadashah Ministries

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aving been to the Holy Land over 20 times, I can assure you that Israelis deeply hunger and thirst for the Word of God and appreciate the believers in America who support ministries devoted to bringing the Word of God to the Jews. We need your support to help us continue to take the Gospel to the land from whence it came.

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lease begin praying with us for our 27th mission trip to the Holy Land. On this outreach, Todd will be joined by David Newton, and we ask that you please be praying for them before and during the trip. The outreach will be June 16 - July 3, 2013. Check our website for a full prayer list.

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## **26th Outreach** Continued from page 1

B'rit Hadashah is for the nation of Israel. We cross-referenced the passage in Jeremiah with Matthew 26:26-28 and John 3:16 to demonstrate Yeshua the Messiah was the One God sent to ratify this New Covenant by His shed



Oriel with Todd after learning to communicate with translation apps on their phones

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blood on the tree of Calvary. We discussed several other salvation truths revealed and prophesied in the Tenach and how they carry over and are completed in the Person of Yeshua revealed in the New Testament.

We further explained through our translation app on the I-Phone that we had both the Tenach and B'rit Hadashah Bible so the Jewish people in Israel can read and see this for themselves. So we gave Oriel a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures to read these things for himself. Oriel was very open and moved by the Spirit of God and gratefully accepted a complete Jewish Bible. This young Israeli man was almost in tears. Even though we had no ability to communicate with him in the native Hebrew tongue, and that most Israelis speak English fluently, the grace of our Lord Jesus was palpably present as we were able to download a translator to translate the love of God revealed in Yeshua the Messiah for this hungry soul. And ironically, it was in this translation, Oriel found Yeshua from us! \*\*

#### About the Author

Dr. Todd Baker is president of B'rit Hadashah Ministries and Pastor of Shalom, Shalom Messianic Congregation in Dallas, Texas. He was a chaplain at Medical City Hospital for 16 years. Todd holds a Bachelor of Science degree in biblical studies, a Master of Theology Degree from Dallas Theological Seminary, a Ph.D. in Philosophy and Apologetics from Trinity Seminary under the auspices of Liverpool University at Liverpool, England, and is a Fellow of the International Academy of Apologetics, Evangelism & Human Rights in Strasbourg, France. He is a theological consultant and writer for Zola Levitt Ministries and has appeared on Zola Levitt Presents. With his extensive experience in Jewish evangelism, he has led many Gospel outreaches to Israel. T