

# SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

John  
5:39



A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries

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## Bringing the Gospel to Jew and Arab in Haifa

While we were ministering in Haifa, Kevin Mead felt led by the Spirit of God to go into this shop. This was a divine appointment to water a Gospel seed in the heart of Aviv who was working at the store. We laughed at Aviv's comment that the Dallas Cowboys are awful once we told him we were from Dallas, Texas. Aviv was not only a big fan of the NFL but also American College football. He told us that he plays in the Israel Football League for semi-pro football team in Haifa called the Haifa Underdogs.



by  
Todd Baker



Aviv learned from us that we come to Israel to re-introduce the Word of Yeshua Ha Mashiach in the Brit Hadashah to the Jewish people within the Messianic context of the Tenach. Learning this, Aviv was happy to tell us his coach was an Israeli believer in Yeshua the Messiah and had attended a Baptist Church. The coach had already shared the Gospel with Aviv. So now God providentially placed Kevin and me in Aviv's path to water Gospel seed. We went through some of the Messianic prophecies in the Tenach and where Yeshua fulfilled them in the New Covenant Scriptures. Aviv really could see the Messianic connection. We were able to give him a Bible with a list of the major Messianic prophecies Jesus the Messiah fulfilled at His first coming. We exhorted Aviv to ask his coach to help him study the Scriptures so he could fully understand who and what Yeshua did in the role of Israel's Messiah. Aviv said he would certainly do this. He also invited us to see him play football in the fall when we return to Israel. And here is where we need your financial help so we can return and do follow up ministry with Aviv who is close to receiving Yeshua. There are many more Israelis like him waiting to hear and receive the Gospel.

The Lord then led us to an Arab Christian lady. Her name was Walaa. She was genuinely excited we came to the Land to give God's Word out to both Jews and Arabs living in Israel. She was another Arab citizen of Israel who was grateful to live in the Jewish State with equal rights and the same opportunities as Jewish citizens. She laughed at the stupid and slanderous notion Israel discriminates against its Arab citizens. This is especially ludicrous

in light of the fact Walaa confirmed for us that the Supreme Court of Israel has an Arab member on it! Walla thanked God in our presence for her home in Israel. She did have an Arab Bible but wanted a Hebrew Bible from



us. She fluently speaks four languages—Arabic, English, Hebrew and Italian. Walaa jumped at the chance to accept an Arabic Gospel tract we had to give out that explains the Gospel by retelling the life of Jesus the Messiah. She was intrigued to learn from the Scriptures how they prove and point to Jesus alone being the Messiah who came to save both Jews and Arabs equally. Walla told us she was so happy to meet us and she plans on keeping in touch with us over the truths we shared in God's Word concerning Jesus the Messiah.

The next day of ministry in Haifa we were happy to meet Tomer.



He was selling various cheeses in the shopping mall on erev Shabbat. He was a cheese connoisseur. Tomer allowed us to eat the various delectable cheeses. We told him we were not tourists that our

business in Israel is to humbly educate and reintroduce Yeshua back to the Jewish people. To best facilitate this, we offered both God's Word in Hebrew in both the Tenach and Brit Hadashah where Messiah Jesus is foretold and found! Tomer answered our offer to him with total affirmation saying "Absolutely." Tomer welcomed our giving him a free copy of God's Word to learn and discover who this Jesus is, and what He has done for Israel and the world. Tomer learned from us that God has a great plan for Israel as His "everlasting people" (Isaiah 44:7) under the rule of Yeshua the Messiah. America, Brazil, Sweden and all other nations have their beginning and end—but God assuredly promises in Jeremiah 30:11 that Israel will remain a nation before Him forever! Tomer accepted the Scriptures and Messianic reading material where he can discover Yeshua the Messiah in the Jewish Bible. ✨🕊️

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.

# STATISTICAL STUDIES SHOW THE SEXUAL SIN OF FORNICATION IS NOW RAMPANT WITHIN THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH!

Statistical reports are now disturbingly saying that fornication, or sex before marriage, is being commonly practiced among 60 to 63 percent of evangelical Christians within the Christian church! Two articles from the *Christian Post* and *Charisma* magazine documenting this can be accessed and read by clicking on these two links on the Internet: [www.brit-hadashah.org/christianpost.html](http://www.brit-hadashah.org/christianpost.html) & [www.brit-hadashah.org/charismamag.html](http://www.brit-hadashah.org/charismamag.html).

The disturbing and factual articles only confirm what the Apostles of Jesus predicted would occur in the last days within the Church—a mass falling away from the faith into sexual sin with many falling into it as “lovers of themselves” (2 Timothy 3:1-7; Jude 1:4; 2 Peter 2:14, et al). The fact a majority of Christians, who call themselves evangelical, admit this—the most conservative and Bible-based Christians supposedly in all of Christendom—should come as no shock to the conscientious, biblically-aware celibate, and unmarried Christian—especially when we are not even including the Bible-denying liberal sects and apostate mainline denominations, who see nothing wrong with homosexuality and fornication! God’s Word is quite clear on this subject; and neither the ignorance nor premeditated rebellion from the majority of born-again ‘Christians’ who are committing the sin of fornication will clear them on the Day of Judgment if they do not repent. But, **“be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man**

**sows, that shall he also reap. For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting life”** (Galatians 6:7-8). The unrepentant fornicating ‘Christian’ will



also not inherit the kingdom of God (see 1 Corinthians 9-10)!

Though the term “sexual atheist” used in the article from *Charisma* magazine is interesting, the Bible calls those who have sex outside of marriage “fornicators.” The perils of playing with this sin, though pleasurable for a season (Hebrews 11:25), are so many and quite horrible to say the least: damnation of the soul, guilt, shame, carnal bondage, feelings of moral degradation and defilement, loss of fellowship with God, the searing of the moral conscience the more a person indulges in this sin, etc, etc. The real problem why so many single Christian men and women are continually fornicating is because the leaders in the Church are not universally and repeatedly preaching against this sin! Moreover, those who love this sin have no real and palpable fear of God before them. For **“the fear of God is to depart from evil”** (Proverbs 16:6)—and fornication is evil in the eyes of the Lord! God takes this sin so seriously that He destroyed 23,000 fornicators from among the people of Israel in the desert for committing this defiant act of sexual immorality. God does not play games with those who foolishly gamble their lives on the sin of fornication! **“Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day twenty three thousand.”** (1 Corinthians 10:8). Another big reason for this pandemic explosion of fornication in the Church comes from not really believing God can give you the ongoing power to resist falling prey to sexual temptation all the time and remain chaste until married. Translation—it’s pure unbelief on display here for a variety of lame excuses—“I

don’t want to be alone”, or “We are all human” or “We really love each other” and the worst of all—“If I do fornicate, I know God will forgive me afterwards.” I answer back from the Word of God these inexcusable excuses offered from the fornicator in the Church:

- You are not alone. God says, **“I will never leave you, nor forsake you”** (Hebrews 13:5).

- Yes, we are fallen human beings but remember when Christ Jesus lives in us **“Greater is He that is in you, than he who is in the world”** (1 John 4:4). And with the sexual temptation of fornication, like other temptations to sin, God will always make a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

- True love comes from God and will not lead you to sin, but leads you to keep Jesus’ holy commandments—and sexual purity is one of them (John 14:15). **“For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from fornication; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor”** (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5). You are sinning and dishonoring the Lord when you fornicate with a man or a woman who is not your spouse and joining the member of the Body of Christ (the Church) to spiritual and physical harlotry and thereby defiling the temple of God— which you are if you have the Holy Spirit living inside of you! When you fornicate you are also sinning against your own body and the body of another! **“Do you not know that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid. What? Do you not know that he, which is joined to a harlot, is one body? For two, says he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication! Every sin that a man does is outside the body; but he that commits fornication sins against his own body. What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s”** (1 Corinthians 6:15-20).

- If you are using the excuse of God’s grace to forgive (Continued on page 5)

## Search the Scriptures

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[bhm@brit-hadashah.org](mailto:bhm@brit-hadashah.org)

or by mail at:

B’rit Hadashah Ministries  
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# Was Luke a Gentile?

by Thomas S. McCall, Th.D.



*Old Testament scholar Dr. Tom McCall makes a compelling and convincing case for why Luke was Jewish instead of Gentile as Church tradition has long held. Dr. McCall gives good biblical evidence why Christians and theologians should give thoughtful reconsideration about this topic. Enjoy this classic article originally printed in the Levitt Letter of Zola Levitt Ministries.*

## Introduction

As we speak and teach the Word, we often mention that the whole Bible is a Jewish book, and that all the writers of the Bible, Old and New Testaments, were Jews. Frequently, someone asks the question, “What about Luke, wasn’t he a Gentile?” This has been taught throughout church history for so long and so consistently, that it is assumed without question it must be true. However, when you study how this conclusion was reached by biblical commentators, you realize how slender their evidence is. The idea that Luke was a Gentile seems to be based more on tradition than any strong biblical evidence.

## Importance of the Question

It may not seem important whether or not Luke was a Gentile, but when you think about the magnitude of his work, the issue becomes truly significant. By counting the pages written by Luke in both his Gospel and Acts, it is clear that Luke wrote more pages of the New Testament than any other writer, including Paul and John. If Luke was a Gentile, then the Lord entrusted more pages of New Testament revelation to a Gentile than to any other writer. This would be remarkable, to say the least.

Personally, as a Gentile Christian, I would love to have one of “our guys” as a writer in the canon of Scripture, so I am naturally reluctant to find otherwise. However, the evidence appears overwhelming to me that Luke was, in fact, a Jew. The matter cannot be settled conclusively, because the Scriptures never specifically tell us Luke’s background, but the arguments for his being a Jew appear to far outweigh those for his being a Gentile.

## Arguments for Luke Being A Gentile

Usually, biblical commentators simply assert that Luke was a Gentile, without offering any proof at all, as it is so universally believed. Some commentaries, though, present arguments for sustaining the concept of the Gentile background of Luke. Chief among these arguments are the lists from the Epistle to the Colossians.

### The Lists in Colossians

In Colossians 4, the Apostle Paul closes his letter by listing the various people who are with him as he writes the epistle, and some of those who are addressed. In these lists Paul

makes mention of some who are of “the circumcision” (Col. 4:10–11), and are, therefore, Jews. Although it is not perfectly clear which men are referred to, they are presumably the previous three: Aristarchus, Mark and Jesus called Justus. Paul apparently does not include Tychicus and Onesimus, mentioned before in verses 7–9, as being in the circumcision group.

Later in this same chapter, in verse 14, Paul refers to Luke, the beloved physician. The argument is made that, as Luke is not mentioned in the list of those of “the circumcision”, he therefore must not be a Jew. However, this is very slim evidence, indeed. In the above reference, Paul is speaking of his fellow workers in the preaching ministry. However, Luke was not ever described as being actively involved in the work of preaching, but was rather Paul’s personal physician and historian. It would not be appropriate to put Luke in the list with those who were active in the preaching ministry, regardless of background.

Thus, there are reasons other than background why Luke would not be included in the list of “the circumcision.” It is risky to build a concept on evidence which is so weak, and this is the strongest evidence in the Bible that those who believe Luke was a Gentile use to prove their point.

### The Name and Profession Arguments

Proponents have also argued that the name Luke (Lucas) is, in itself, evidence that he was a Gentile. However, the very names mentioned in Col. 4 as being in “the circumcision” are Gentile names: Aristarchus, Marcus and Justus. Paul’s name itself is a Roman name, which he used throughout his ministry among the Gentiles, instead of his Hebrew name, Saul. In the same way Peter’s Hebrew name was Simon. The fact of the matter is that most Jews who lived in the Diaspora used two names: one, a Jewish name, which was used in the synagogue, and the other, a Gentile name, which was used in business. So Luke could well be the public name of a Jew who lived among the Gentiles.

Others have actually claimed that Luke’s profession as a physician would be evidence that he was a Gentile. This would assume that there were no Jewish doctors in the Roman world. Such an idea is preposterous. Christ referred to physicians in Israel on several occasions:

“Physician, heal thyself...” (Luke 4:23)

“They that are sick have need of a physician...” (Matt. 9:12)

*Continued on page 4*

There is as much reason to believe that Jews were in the medical profession in ancient times as they are today.

Thus, none of the arguments supporting the idea that Luke was a Gentile are strong. It is helpful, then, to turn to the arguments that Luke was a Jew.

## Arguments for Luke Being a Jew

There are several arguments that support the idea that Luke was a Jew. As has already been stated, there are no specific statements as to the background of Dr. Luke. Therefore, the only way we can know anything about Luke's background is from inferences in the Scriptures.

### The Rule: Oracles Given to Jews

After showing the sinful condition of the Jewish people, explaining how the Jews are just as much subject to sin as are the Gentiles, Paul asks the question, "What advantage has the Jew?" His answer was "Much every way, chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:1–2). The main advantage that Paul recognizes in the Jewish people was that when God gave revelation to the human race, He gave it to and through the Jews. He did not utilize the Gentile people for this purpose. This was the rule: that Jews were the vehicle for revelation. If Luke was an exception, the burden of proof is on those who would claim that he is an exception.

Thus, one has to prove conclusively that Luke was a Gentile before one should abandon the clear rule about the Jewish writing of Scripture. We must assume that Luke is a Jew unless the evidence is so overwhelming that we must conclude he is a Gentile. As we have seen above, the evidence from the lists in Colossians is so weak that it does not meet that criterion. Gentiles are blessed in many ways, especially during this Church Age, but God has never indicated that He has changed His rule of using only Jews to record His revelation.

### Trophimus, Not Luke, the Cause of Paul's Arrest

Dr. Luke was a constant companion of the Apostle Paul from the time that he joined the missionary apostle when he sailed from Troas to Europe. Luke accompanied Paul on his fateful last return trip to Jerusalem, and was an eyewitness to the arrest of Paul in the Temple in Acts 21. The crowd was greatly agitated by the presence of Paul in the Temple, and charged him with bringing Gentiles into the Temple precincts. This was a crime punishable by death. Luke explains that Paul never did bring

any Gentiles into the Temple, but he was seen on the streets of Jerusalem with "Trophimus an Ephesian." Apparently, Paul brought Trophimus with him to Jerusalem so that the apostles and the mother church there could see first-hand the fruits of his labor among the Gentiles. Even though the charge was false, they were able to spread the rumor among the people, and cause a near riot against Paul on the Temple Mount, and for this reason he was arrested.

The point is that, when the Jewish people wanted to accuse Paul of bringing a Gentile into the Temple, they chose Trophimus. Why didn't they choose Luke, who was also with Paul, and was an eyewitness to these events? If Luke were a Gentile, it would have been far easier, and far more believable, to accuse Paul of bringing Luke with him into the Temple, rather than Trophimus. The fact that Luke was not mentioned in the accusation is a strong indication that he was not a Gentile. Luke was with Paul on several occasions when they made the various trips to Jerusalem in order to report on their missionary efforts to the apostolic church. The issue was never raised about Luke being a Gentile, although he was there in Jerusalem with Paul.

As Luke was not controversial when he travelled with Paul to Jerusalem and the Temple, our assumption must be that he was also a Jew. Thus, there was no mention of Luke as a problem when Paul was arrested.

### Luke's Intimate Knowledge of the Temple

Another argument for the idea that Luke was a Jew is that he showed such an intimate knowledge of the Temple, more than any other of the Gospel writers. When he described the announcement to Zacharias concerning the birth of John the Baptist, Luke went into considerable detail to describe the rotating selection of the Levitical priests for service according to their families. He further described the position of the priest before the altar of incense, where the angel appeared to Zacharias (Luke 1:8–20).

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שלום

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### Fornication in the Church... Continued from page 2

sin as permission to sin then you are not saved to begin with! The new nature does not want to sin (Romans 7:14-25). Indeed, the saved person will seek to use the grace of God not to sin! **"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we who have died to sin live any longer in it?"** (Romans 6:1-2)! When you truly receive the saving grace of God, it teaches and empowers you **"that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age"** (Titus 2:12). Those whose lives here are evinced by continual fornication show by their rotten fruit no evidence of transformative salvation here, and will not see or inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

Christians who do fall into this nasty sin should repent, receive forgiveness, and the power of Christ's shed blood to cleanse will then enable them to walk in total freedom and purity from the sin of fornication as God gives him or her the power of the Holy Spirit to do so! These are the only real God-given solutions from the Word of God quickened by the Holy Spirit to curing the epidemic sin of fornication that is pervasively plaguing and polluting the Church today. If you know any 'brother' or 'sister' who calls themselves Christians, yet, at the same time, deliberately engages in a lifestyle of premarital sex, they should be excommunicated from the Church and a believer in good standing with the Lord should not so much as eat with them (1 Corinthians 5:11). Rebuke them sharply with the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16; Titus 1:13) so, if perchance, they repent and are restored to God and fellowship with the Church. If this unrepentant 'brother' or 'sister' continues in the sin of fornication without repentance and a decisive turning away from this sin, they clearly manifest themselves to not be truly saved, born-again, or belonging to the sanctified Body of Christ,

**"Flee Fornication!"**

**1 Cor. 6:9-18**

which is the true Church (see 1 John 2:19)! For **"let everyone that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."** Knowing this **"that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them"** (2 Timothy 2:19; Ephesians 5:5-7)! †

### 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. †





## B'rit Hadashah Ministries

P.O. Box 796127  
Dallas, Texas 75379-6127  
e-mail: [todd@brit-hadashah.org](mailto:todd@brit-hadashah.org)

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#### Was Luke a Gentile? Continued from page 4

The fact that Luke alone of the four Gospel writers gives this account, and he does so with such vivid detail, argues for his being a Jew, familiar with the Temple procedures. One could even speculate that Luke might have been a Levite as well, as he knew so much about how the Temple operated. Is it logical to assume, without question, that Luke was a Gentile, when he had such a clear understanding of the most intimate workings of the Temple, where no Gentile was allowed to go?

### Luke's Intimate Acquaintance with Mary

Yet another argument is the striking intimacy that Luke had with the mother of Jesus, Mary. He relates the story of the birth of Jesus primarily from Mary's point of view, and then said that she hid these things "in her heart" (Luke 2:19, 51). How did Luke, of all the Gospel writers, get so close to Mary that he was able to find out what she had hidden in her heart? As close-knit as the Jerusalem church was, and as difficult as it must have been for Gentiles to have gotten to the "inner circle" of the apostolic leadership, it seems highly unlikely that Luke could have gotten that close to Mary if he were a Gentile.

Actually, it appears that Luke might have served Mary for a time as her personal physician. This is speculation, but how else could he have had such a close relationship with her, so that he could draw from her the details she had hidden in her heart, and had discussed with few others? Luke

would have had the opportunity to consult with Mary on the occasions when Paul made his reporting trips to Jerusalem, and especially while Paul was in prison in Caesarea for two years. Such access would have been quite understandable if Luke were a Jew, but would have been most unlikely if he were a Gentile.

### Conclusion

My conclusion is, then, that we must infer that Luke was a Jew. The idea that he was a Gentile appears to be based on nothing more than wishful thinking and tradition. The biblical evidence strongly supports the position that Luke was a Jew, and we should always believe the Scriptures over tradition, when there is a conflict between the two. ✠

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