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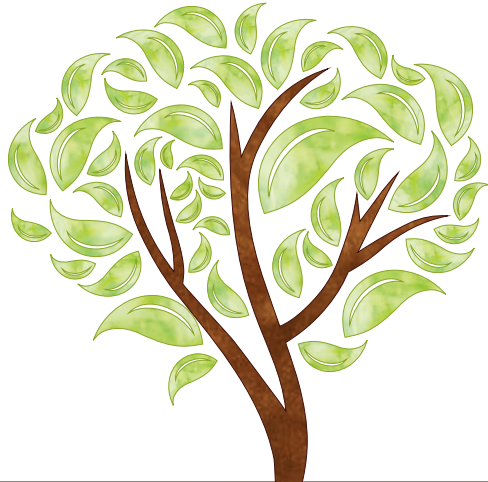
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A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries

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The Greater Son of David

By: Todd Baker

The following chronicle was from the 40th Gospel outreach to Israel from January 19th to February 2nd, 2017. On this outreach accompanying me was Evangelist August Rosado. In Jerusalem, walking on Ben Yehudah Street, we stepped into an X-Ray sunglasses shop and bore witness about Yeshua the Messiah with Nathaniel, whose name means, “gift of God.” Using this meaning, August and I shared with him how Yeshua the Messiah is God’s great gift to Israel and the



August & Nathaniel

world, bringing salvation to all who believe in Him. Giving him a complete Bible in Hebrew, we told Nathaniel this is a gift of God’s Word so he can encounter and learn about

Yeshua the Messiah. From there, the Lord led us to go visit the Valley of Elah – where David slew Goliath (1 Samuel 17). It had rained all day and the historic valley was very muddy. There, on the northern hill, overlooking the valley where King Saul, his Israeli armies, and David the shepherd boy stood 3,000 years ago, stands today a Pez gas station where we met Noah – a female employee there. She was intrigued to learn for the first time, from us, that David the shepherd boy and King of Israel was



Noah & Todd

given an eternal, unconditional covenant by God, promising David that one of his male descendants would reign on his earthly throne forever over Israel and the world (see 2 Samuel 7:12-16).

We informed Noah that this regal descendant is the Messiah – Yeshua of Nazareth (Matthew 1:1), of whom the angel Gabriel told his Virgin Mother Miriam that “the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:32-33). August and I shared with Noah that this same Davidic King and Messiah died to give her eternal life. All of this can be read and known in the Word of God, which Noah accepted in the place where it all began for King David. †

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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, is a Fellow of the International Academy of Apologetics, Evangelism & Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, and is currently a Doctor of Ministry candidate at Liberty University. 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. †



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.

"For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."
- 2 Timothy 4:3-4

This article originally appeared at www.piratechristian.com on January 9th, 2016

Defusing Demonic Dirty Bombs Part 1

By: Steven Kozar

These ideas, catch phrases and concepts have infiltrated the church and have laid a false foundation. They're a "set-up." Because many Christians believe these things, false teachings are slipping into the church all over the place. These are the type of comments that Chris that Bible "discerning Christians" hear over and over again. Yes, there might be some truth in some of these ideas, but taken as a whole, they have replaced authentic, Bible-based Christianity and are allowing "another gospel" to take its place.

1. "You're just being negative and critical! Don't you have anything good to say? I can't believe you're criticizing (insert famous/popular Christian leader)! At least they're trying to help-at least they're doing something! Why can't you be more positive? I only listen to positive Christians-not haters!" Christianity is a specific set of beliefs that is based on one holy book: The Bible. "Sola Scriptura" is the Latin phrase meaning "Scripture Alone." This principle was first established in the first three centuries of the church, and then further established during the Protestant Reformation in contrast to the Roman Catholic Church, which claimed that church authority (basically, the Pope) was equal to scripture. Because we believe the Bible is God's Word, we *must* also believe that some ideas are incompatible with the Bible and *must* be rejected as false. While it's true that Christians should *not* be primarily negative and critical people, we should be willing to say negative and critical things about false teachings, because bad doctrine is very harmful-it leads people away from God. The painful reality is that false teachers are great manipulators and they know exactly what to say in order to keep your trust (and keep their money pouring in), so sometimes it's necessary to say negative and critical things to confront them and their teachings. The Old Testament prophets, Jesus and all the Apostles did this. A lot. We should not be primarily thinking "positive versus negative;" instead, we should be thinking, "true versus false." The Bible is not always a "positive" book because it contains the truth that we need to hear. We humans are like disobedient children who need correction from our Heavenly Father, who loves us enough to tell us the truth. **In Matthew 23:27 Jesus says "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness."** Gee whiz, Jesus, that's not very nice; at least the Pharisees were trying to do something...

2. "But he's really famous (he has written popular books, has a huge church, has a TV show, etc.), he must know what he's talking about!" "That many people can't be wrong!" This exposes the common belief that "the group is always right" (my group!); which is like saying "consensus equals truth." Christians say that they believe the Bible, but too often what they *really* believe is whatever their "guy" (local pastor, TV preacher, famous author/speaker, etc.) says about the Bible. On top of that, if a local pastor is actually doing a good job of faithfully preaching God's Word, he's often being over-ridden by the surrounding culture. We have millions of Christians watching 10, 20 or even 30 hours of television per week, yet they "don't have time" to read and study the Bible. But when the latest guru comes along with a new method of "hearing from God" they drop everything to "learn the secret;" yet, they've neglected God's Word-the actual words from God. The situation should be seen as utterly absurd, yet since almost everyone behaves and believes this way, it's been normalized. As a result, false teachers have free reign and a limitless customer base to promote their weird ideas and enrich themselves. **In Mark 7:7 Jesus says to the Pharisees (quoting Isaiah): "in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."** **In Matthew 7:13-14 He says: "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and**

the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." Jesus is warning us not to follow the teachings of men (even if it's a NY Times Best-seller!), and *not* to "go with the group." **Psalm 118:8 "It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man."**

3. "Judge not, lest you be judged." (Similar to: "Who are we to judge?") Whenever a false teacher/prophet is exposed (because of unbiblical teachings, blatant sin, corruption/greed, prophesies that don't come true, etc.) they can often maintain the unquestioning support of their followers by the using this verse (Matthew 7:1) taken out of context, of course. This verse is *not* saying: "don't ever judge anyone ever!" In reading the whole passage, it's easy to see that this verse is warning against unjust, hypocritical judgment in our personal dealings with others. It's *not* about evaluating the *teachings* that are being *taught* by a *teacher*. Christians have been systematically programmed to ignore all scripture about the accountability of leaders... because their leaders said so. Ironically, the false teacher ends up *judging* his theological critic who is (supposedly) guilty of being judgmental. *In Paul's letter to Titus (chapter 1) he rebukes false teachers saying: "For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach-and that for the sake of dishonest gain. Rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny Him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good."* Wow Apostle Paul, judge much??

4. "Don't have a religious spirit!" "That guy has a religious spirit; he's always quoting bible verses and talking about theology and doctrine-what a Pharisee!" This is a pretty vague concept that really helps empower "super-spiritual" false teachers. Want to refute someone who is promoting sound, Biblical doctrine? Just accuse them of having a religious spirit. It's much easier than searching the scriptures and seeking the truth. After all, "God doesn't care about our doctrine, He cares about our heart." That sounds really good, but it's just another catch phrase, too. Doctrine *is* important! Doctrine is just another word for "instruction" or "teaching," and it tells us who God *really* is, and who we *really* are. The Pharisees were guilty of unbelief and elevating man-made laws over God's Word, they were *not* guilty of being too focused on the Bible. The idea that focusing too much on the Bible will somehow cause us to "miss" God or the Holy Spirit is just crazy. This line of thinking is very similar to...

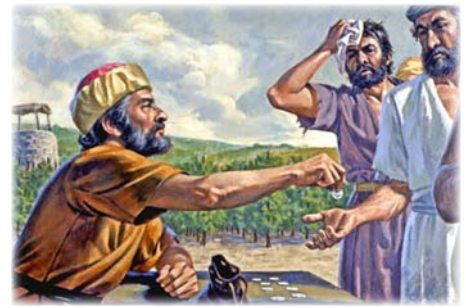
5. "An experience is better than any doctrine!" "I don't care about theology-I just love Jesus!" "It's one thing to know the bible; it's another thing to know the author!" While it's true that some people have very real and emotional experiences with God, this should *not* be where we establish our belief system - God's Word does that. God has graciously given us the safe parameters within which we can understand Him - in His Word. But if a person depends on experiences they can easily become dependent on *more* experiences, which will usually escalate into an emotional train wreck. Just ask anyone who has left a Charismatic/Pentecostal church in a state of confusion, never to return. Saying "I don't care about theology - I just love Jesus" is a theological statement. It's just a very weak one. We don't see anything in the bible about "just loving Jesus" (as if our emotional feelings about Him were the key), but we do see *many* exhortations to have good, sound doctrine and teaching. Theology is a word that simply means "the study of God." All Christians *are* theologians, whether they admit it or not. A solid theological understanding of God's amazing grace is much better than any emotional experience anyway-because it never changes (unlike our emotions)! By the way, theology is much, much more than a Calvinist and an Arminian arguing back and forth while confusing and/or aggravating everyone else. Good theology helps us to gain a correct and deeper understanding of the Good News of Jesus Christ. After His resurrection, Jesus met two of His followers on the road to Emmaus and didn't reveal himself; He first asked them a series of questions to see what they knew and believed about Him. When they said that they basically

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The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

(Matthew 20:1-16)

Part 11



“For the Kingdom of heaven is like to a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into the vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said to them, “You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.” And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, “Why do you stand here all day idle”? They said to him, “Because no man has hired us.” He said to them, “You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you shall receive.” So when evening had come, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward, “Call the laborers, and give them their wages, beginning from the last to the first.” And when those came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they had supposed they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the Goodman of the house, saying, “These last have labored but one hour; and you have made them equal to us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day”. But he answered one of them, and said, “Friend, I do you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a penny? Take what is yours, and go your way. I will give to the last, even as I gave to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is your eye evil, because I am good?” So the last shall be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.”

“But he answered one of them, and said, “Friend, I do you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a penny? Take what is yours, and go your way. I will give to the last, even as I gave to you” (Verses 13-14).

The householder mildly upbraids the servants for their petty bickering and reasserts his equitable dealings of payment to all and defends His sovereignty in such affairs. Striving against the inscrutable purposes of divine sovereignty is ever a true earmark of sinful man. To have a contentious, hostile attitude towards God as these early hour servants did with the householder, is rank rebellion. Striving or questioning the goodness of God in an argumentative fashion is dangerous; it ultimately leads to spiritual ruination if not checked in time. *“Woe to him that strives with His maker. But indeed O man, who are you that replies against God? Will the thing formed say to Him that formed it, “Why have you made me like this?” Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?”* (Isaiah 45:9; Romans 9:20-21). The householder had plainly made it known beforehand, by way of covenant, how much pay the early hour workers would receive. They agreed for a penny and received exactly that. The householder sincerely stuck to the covenant agreed upon. Unlike fallen man, God’s faithfulness is never failing to us who believe He has promised to reward the laboring saints all that is promised in the eternal covenant of Jesus Christ. The benefits of which are in the process of being fulfilled. *“My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my mouth”* (Psalm 89:34). God in the role of Householder has revealed His will and eternal purpose to man through His Son Jesus Christ. Yet in unashamed rebellion, many find excuses to reject and find fault with the Gospel of Christ and the Bible as a whole. After the householder painfully reminded the early hour workers of the contract stipulating a denarius for a day’s worth of work, they realized the householder followed a correct course and were thus left speechless.

When the justice of God is thoroughly revealed

on the Day of Judgment toward every unsaved man for his ultimate rejection of Christ, none of the judged will be able to verbally protest the irreversible decisions of the Great Judge of the universe since the Heavenly Householder is preeminent in all His ways. He also claims the exclusive right to do whatever He chooses with His own redeemed “elect” servants. The elect saints of Christ are secure in the hospitable care of the divine Householder. They need not fear the futile attempts of others trying to steal or begrudge them of rewards given for faithful work done in Christ. For, “who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. *“For if God be for us, who then can be against us”* (Romans 8:33, 31). The laborers were not selected from the marketplace because of unique ability, but of the householder’s discriminatory election. The rewards of Christian labor promised of God are not according to our potential performance but according to the sovereign, predetermined counsel of God in determining the motive and intent of the heart when the work is done, *“that the purpose of God according to election might stand not of works, but of Him that calls”* (Romans 9:11). Hence, the Lord can say, “Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with My own?”

The upright householder did not short change the early hour laborers but gave them “whatsoever was right”, which in turn was plenteously sufficient for daily survival; yet their unhealthy response was one of base ingratitude at not receiving more than the late hour workers. God’s judicial kindness is irrespectively rendered on both the good and evil. *“For He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil”* (Luke 6:35). The early morning servants were certainly unthankful and trampled underfoot the bounty offered by the employer of the vineyard. This is exactly the case with the ingratitude of the world-system! Without a supernatural revelation on the part of God, the daily morsels of divine favor given to sustain mankind’s existence is taken for granted by this world of unthankful wretches. In almost every instance, the merciful generousities of God are entirely overlooked and remain unseen to the

blinded eyes of modern, epicurean civilization. Nor will they be induced to seek the Lord and live righteously either, even though they are unwitting partakers of God’s daily provision. *“Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will He not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord”* (Isaiah 26:10). The householder intended only good and was repaid with evil complaining by the spokesman of the early hour laborers.

The owner of the vineyard refused to answer the fool according to his folly but affectionately responded in the affirmative, *“Friend I do you no wrong.”* All that God does and accomplishes is perfectly righteous. There is no malice aforethought in His judicial dealings with us. *“For the word of the Lord is right; and all His ways are justice—a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He”* (Deuteronomy 32:4). The householder dismisses the group and tells them to go “their own way”. But what way was that? It was the selfish way of greed, covetousness, cupidity and lust for wealth and power—which is the sure way of apostasy that in return brings damnable destruction to its disenchanted victims! The same applies to “mercenary” ministers who covet after material wages in hopes of acquiring wealth by prostituting the Gospel of Jesus Christ for profit! The greed of the early hour laborers is a common trait of apostate ministers in the church ever devoted to personal gain at the expense of subverting the Gospel. *“They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness”* (1 Peter 2:15). Going the way of Balaam is defined as one, who by the covetousness of his heart, hires himself out to do religious work for monetary gain.

The early hour laborers, and the like, do indeed go “their own way” - the way of Balaam. Balaam was an Old Testament prophet, who by the lucrative persuasion of the evil Moabite Balak, was enticed to call down a curse on Israel. In return for his services, Balak promised Balaam wealth, prestige and power. Balaam was following the Lord in “the right way”, but went astray because of his

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inordinate love of money. He was destroyed because of one overriding sin, the sin of greed (Numbers 31:8). Greed has left a tragic and bloody trail in the biblical narrative on those who disobeyed the Tenth Commandment of God - **"You shall not covet"** (Exodus 20:17). The death penalty was passed on Achan due to his coveting after a Babylonian garment and two hundred shekels of silver (Joshua 7). Gehazi the servant of Elisha was punished with leprosy for his sin of coveting after two talents of silver given by Naman the Syrian (2 Kings 5). Judas Iscariot the thieving treasurer of the inner twelve, greedily betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. After he saw this prosperous venture backfired, he went out and hung himself (Acts 1). The early hour workers were not pleased with what was given them. **They coveted for more pay and were denied; consequently, they went "their own way,"** murmuring. In this, no doubt, they personify the misleading words of Elihu in Job 34:9: **"It profits a man nothing that he should serve God."**

We believe the early hour laborers, as indicated by the Lord Jesus, are truly representative of these types of religious apostates who covet after earthly riches using a cloak of Christianity to justify the massive appeal for money. Covetousness after money is another sure earmark of the false or apostate Christian fallen away from the faith. **"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which draw men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"** (1 Timothy 6:9-10). If covetousness has dominance in a person that claims to follow the Christian faith he is greatly deceived. Covetousness must be mortified from the heart at all costs, or it will defile and damn the human soul. For the covetous will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:10; Ephesians 5:5). A continual propensity toward covetous desires exhibits a nature altogether foreign to Christ.

In First Samuel chapter thirty we read of an account similar to the one given in Matthew 20:1-16 concerning the equal distribution of goods and the response of covetousness resulting from such. David and six hundred of his men pursued after the Amalekites who had ransacked them and taken their wives and children. During David's pursuit after the Amalekites, two hundred of the six hundred men of David's army were weary and stayed behind while

the rest pursued after the Amalekites. When David achieved victory over the Amalekites, he returned to the two hundred men who stayed behind at the Brook of Besor. Verses 21-22 of 1 Samuel tells us what followed: **"And David came to the two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they also had to stay at the Brook of Besor. So they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him. And when David came near the people, he greeted them. Then answered all the wicked men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead them away and depart"** (1 Samuel 30:21-22). In verses 23-25 David's will prevailed and all the men received equal compensation from the spoils of war.

In David's company of most treasured warriors, there were discovered selfish men who wanted the spoil all for themselves, even if it meant utter depravation for the rest of their comrades that stayed behind. The Holy Spirit gives these covetous men the ignominious title of being **"wicked men of Belial."** The name of "Belial" in the Bible is a sinister term used of men who are children of the Devil (2 Corinthians 6:15). The early hour laborers were cast from the same spiritual mold as the evil men of David's army! Both groups showed the familiar characteristic of selfishness. Yes, even in the most prominent community of Christian servants, there will be found covetous, self-seekers placarding the name of Christ about merely for personal gain and profit. In effect, what we are saying is this: the early hour laborers were spiritually distinct from the late hour workers in motive and intent. The former's motive for service was entirely egocentric and selfish at heart; and like David's army, they were **"wicked men of Belial"**. **"Yes, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough. And they are shepherds that cannot understand. They look to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter"** (Isaiah 56:11). One of the telltale distinctions between a religious worldling and born-again Christian is the former who professes Christianity, is basically self-centered, and is not a servant of Christ, the latter in service to God, seeks to promote and enhance the wealth of his fellow man. **"Let no man seek his own, but each one the other's well being"** (1 Corinthians 10:24) is his godly motto. The obsessive pursuit of personal wealth fueled on by greed is unbecoming of a Christian; a marked expression of this indicates otherwise. ☩

Defusing Demonic Dirty Bombs... Continued from page 2

didn't know what was going on (even though the empty tomb had been discovered and angels had said He was risen)... **"Jesus said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter His glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself."** Luke 24: 25-26.

Question: If knowing God experientially is more important than knowing the Bible, why would Jesus do this? *Jesus wasted all that time explaining the scriptures to them?? He should have been developing a deep and personal relationship with them! He must've had a religious spirit!*

6. "God offends the mind to reveal the heart." (Similar to: "it's all about your heart-not your head" or something like that) Sometimes, this anti-intellectual sentence is used in a sermon as if it were scripture. It's not-it's just another (stupid) catch phrase. And it can be very manipulative and confusing. If anybody tries to be discerning (which involves using the *mind*) they can be dismissed with this Yoda-like catch phrase. God did *not* give us a mind and then expect us to stop using it. Ironically, when a false teacher says things like this, he is using a type of *thinking* to convince others to *think* a certain way. **Jesus said in Matthew 22:37 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and MIND."** There is no false dichotomy between our heart and mind in scripture-if anything, our heart is *not* to be trusted, but God's Word is.

7. "Don't touch God's anointed!" "You better be careful if you speak against prophet/bishop/pastor/so and so!" When false teachers can't defend their beliefs in the clear teachings of the Bible, they use this (partial) verse as a *rebuttal*. It's taken *completely* out of context from the Old Testament and it refers to *physically* harming the Israelite king or prophet. This has *nothing* to do with questioning bad leadership or false teachings. It's interesting to note that cult leaders often use some type of threat to maintain their authority-this is the lowest form of leadership. In stark contrast, the Jewish believers from

Berea in **Acts 17:11, "were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so."** If it was good and noble for these Bereans to question the Apostle Paul (who wrote much of the New Testament!) and compare his teachings to scripture (which would've been the Old Testament), we can do the same thing with *any* teacher/pastor. Any pastor/teacher who demands special treatment as God's chosen and untouchable authority is clearly *not!*

8. "We only teach the Bible!" Believe it or not, this is probably the easiest way to teach false doctrine. Most Christians will shut off any discernment once they hear a pastor/teacher say something like this. If he's "just teaching the Bible" who are we to disagree, right? Once a pastor/teacher has gained your trust by saying this, he can easily stick a Bible verse wherever he wants - whether it actually fits or not. He could probably just make up Bible verses half of the time, since no one is checking anyway. If a teacher/pastor actually says, "we should never proof-text!" he might actually be making it easier to *keep* proof-texting; the key is to keep people comfortable and trusting. By the way, proof-texting means using a Bible verse (or verses) taken completely out of context to make a point that it was never supposed to make. Basically, when a pastor/teacher wants to make his idea really convincing he can just dig up some Bible verse to validate his point (with all those crazy stories from the Old Testament you can prove *any* point!). Unfortunately, this happens a *lot*; and it really confuses people because it looks like the Bible teaches a thousand different and conflicting things from just one passage. This is *not* God's fault - it's the lazy, loose and *wrong* interpreting being done by the pastor. **James 3: 1 says: "Let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment."**

9. "You're putting God in a box! As soon as you think you've got God all figured out He'll do something unexpected!" This is a weird way to spiritualize false teaching, and cover it up under a cloud of supposed "mystery." The truth is, God has made it very clear in His Word that we are to hold fast to correct doctrine. Period. While it's true that

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B'rit Hadashah Ministries

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Daniel E. Woodhead Ph.D., President

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no one can claim to have God "all figured out," it's not like God is always changing His ways to keep us guessing like some strange magician or devious leprechaun in the sky who enjoys confusing us. God has given us His Son and His Word because He *wants* to be known! In **John 17: 3 Jesus said: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."**

10. "Christianity has to adapt and change with the times or else it will die. Those discernment people are so old-fashioned and outdated - they're the problem!" This idea is just plain false; it's a pragmatic "let's fix it ourselves because God needs our help" way of thinking. Think about it; are your religious beliefs so shallow and frail that they can't stand up against whatever new trend is affecting society? God's truth is above us, distinct from us and unchanging; otherwise it's just something we're making up as we go. Historically, the Christian church was *stronger* when it went against the cultural of the day. The early church began and flourished under the (sometimes very) hostile Roman Empire. But it was weakened and diluted when it became enmeshed with political and social power. The constant striving to make church "relevant" is usually counter-productive, and the unbelieving world often views our attempts at "marketing God" as shallow pandering. **Romans 12:2 "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will."** **Galatians 1:10 "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ."**

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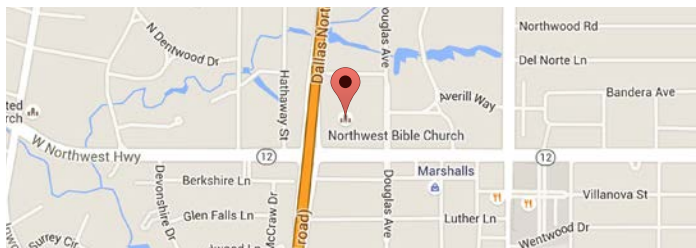
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