

# SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

A Quarterly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries

John

5:39



Volume 19, Number 3

Fall/Winter 2020

## A Triumphant Witness for Messiah Jesus in Israel (2 Corinthians 2:14)

From our 49th Gospel outreach to Israel, December, 2019: On every Gospel outreach to Israel this ministry undertakes we endeavor to make the scenic and arduous drive to Mount Hermon, the likely site of the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17), located in far north Israel. We travel there every time when in Israel to humbly and boldly bring the Gospel to the courageous IDF soldiers stationed there. The journey this time was fraught with peril. Once August Rosado and I reached the Golan Heights, about 30 minutes out from arriving at Mount Hermon, the road we were driving on became



so extremely thick with fog that our visibility in front of us was down to nearly zero! This was particularly m o s t concerning when it started to rain in a torrential downpour,

coupled by the fact we were driving up a precipitous mountain over 9,300 feet in elevation with winding roads requiring constant hair pin turns. Yet August Rosado and I were not the least bit deterred, afraid or worried because we had the shalom of (peace) the Lord guarding our hearts and minds through it all (Philippians 4:6-7). Nothing is too great a risk in this divine calling to bring the Good News of the Jewish Messiah back to His ethnic people He has compassionately regathered to the land of Israel in these last days before His return (Deuteronomy 30:1-3).

No price is too great in carrying out this task in obedience to God's Word! To that end we finally arrived at the IDF base at the peak of Mount Hermon where we met two valiant, young soldiers. We brought them some bottled water and snacks. Both men received them with wide eyed expectation. August and I expressed our heartfelt appreciation for their brave and unflagging

fight against terrorism and Islamic tyranny that has failed in their satanic designs to remove the Jewish people from the land God gave them for an everlasting possession in an everlasting



Covenant (Genesis 17:7-8). With that said, we then showed both soldiers two complete Hebrew Bibles that we wanted to give them without money, without price (Isaiah 55:1). Pointing to the Scriptures, we said to them that in these divinely inspired pages is revealed the greatest Jew of all alive today who died for our sins, conquered death, forgives all sin, and will shortly return to restore and redeem Israel and reign over all the earth from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:1-5; Revelation 20:1-6). This person is none other than Yeshua the Messiah. Both soldiers gratefully accepted the Scriptures after hearing the Gospel presentation August and I gave. Both of them then held their copies of the Bible up in the air denoting their total and triumphant acceptance. Pray these two intrepid army men see this great God and Savior revealed through the Scriptures we gave then as they read God's Word during their isolated and remote time on the Mountain of the Transfigured Messiah.

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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. 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. †

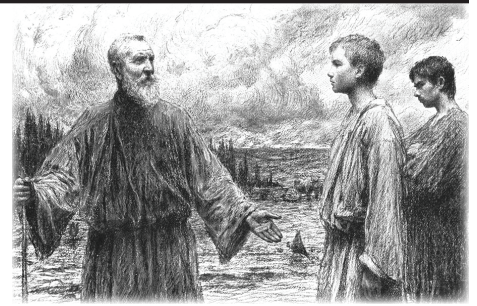


Special thanks go out to Zola Levitt Ministries / To The Jew First Ministry for their ongoing funding contributions, helping to make these mission trips to Israel possible. Also special thanks to Rabbi Samuel of Sar El Tours for supplying us with Hebrew Bibles.

# The Parable of the Two Sons

## (Matthew 21: 28-32)

### Part 9



*“But What Do you think? A Certain man had two sons, and he came to the first, and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he repented and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father. They said to Him, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, Truly, I say to you that the tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not repent afterward and believe him.” (Matthew 21:31-32)*

After finishing His brief parable, the Lord presses for an answer from the hostile, religious leaders. Unbeknownst to them, Jesus uses this simple parable to teach them what true acceptance of God really is; they were forced to reluctantly admit the true meaning of the parable. Christ reveals that they were under the archetype of the second son. The Scribes, Chief Priests, and Pharisees self-righteously claimed to be the heirs of God's kingdom. They prided themselves on being children of the divine law. The problem was they were religious but not repentant, and so scoffed and rejected the vital message of John the Baptist. They refused to admit the validity and holy virtue of John's call for the nation's repentance, even after they continuously witnessed the worst of sinners, the publicans and harlots who repented, being converted and wondrously made children of God and citizens of Messiah's heavenly kingdom. The religious leaders of the nation pompously esteemed John nothing more than a demonized maniac roaming the desert wilderness screaming hell and damnation and therefore was unworthy of their serious consideration (Matthew 11:18). John indeed came “in the way of righteousness.” He fearlessly exhorted the people of Israel, one and all, to repent and return to God with “*fruits*

*worthy of repentance*” (Matthew 3:8). By doing this, their hearts could only then be open to unreservedly accept Jesus the Messiah whom John pointed to. But the unrepentant leaders of the nation did not believe the Baptist's testimony and rejected the saving counsel of God. For we read in the Scriptures: ***“the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him”*** (Luke 7:30).

The religion of the Pharisees emphasized the outward glamor of religious formalism, instead of the inward necessities of holiness and repentance. They made their boast in God's Law, but dishonored Him by breaking the heart of it, of which culminated in not heeding both John the Baptist's and Christ's command to repent of sin since the kingdom of God was at hand in their day (Matthew 3:2; 4:17). The Pharisees, like the second son, said “yes” to God in verbal terms only. They did not, however, obey Him with a consecrated life of repentance and obedience when commanded to do so by the Lord and His prophetic forerunner, John the Baptist. The publicans and harlots are, according to our Lord in this parable, representative of the first son who was rude and rebellious at first, but repented later and was obedient in the end. One obvious truth noticed

here, though paradoxical in the eyes of the natural man, is the conspicuous despiser of Christ and the Gospel is more likely to repent and become a child of God, than the hard hearted, hypocritical, self-righteous religionist who presumes he has no need of repentance. The publicans and harlots of Jerusalem and Judea were cut to the quick when hearing John's fiery messages of repentance. They acknowledged their terrible sinfulness, were baptized upon repentance, and received the forgiveness of sins, and thereby were given entrance to the kingdom of heaven (Mark 1:4-5).

The religious leaders remained without, while the vilest of sinners, who simply repented went in ahead of them. The will of God was executed by the sinners of Christ's day, for they had repented and surrendered to the Lord. The will of God for sinful man is repentance. God ***“commands all men everywhere to repent”*** (Acts 17:30). The religious leaders, on the other hand, refused to repent and acknowledge Christ as Lord and Savior. Consequently, by not repenting, they did not obey the will of God. Our Lord does not intend to retract any hope of salvation from the pharisaical crowd, but showed them that the humble and repentant in God's eyes were preferred before them.



Indeed, it was not until after Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven that “a great company of the priests”, who formerly rejected Christ, were “obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7). The only recourse for the unrepentant Pharisees was repentance and faith in the Savior Jesus Christ. The “porter,” John the Baptist, opened the door leading into the way of righteousness to them but they refused to enter in, clamoring that their own sanctimonious religion was superior to the saving power of Jesus. They counted their own religious wisdom of better value than the divine revelation John made of Jesus the Messiah.

The second son knew that merely by saying “yes” without backing it up with obedient action was not true obedience to the father. The Scribes and Pharisees also knew better than to lightly appraise the testimony of John the Baptist, but they tragically did not do better. The religious leaders of the nation despised the publicans and harlots and did not consider these wretches worthy of sonship with God. Our Lord, to the contrary, shows them sinners of all classes who believed John’s message and repented of sins were sons of God. But those, like the Pharisees, who said yes to God, yet did not repent and

do His will were not true sons of the kingdom. The Pharisees and Scribes were excluded from God’s kingdom because they were falsely convinced that repentance was not necessary, since they were faithful stewards of religious works. Jesus passes by these religious palterers—for it is the self-admitted and repentant sinner Jesus came to save, not the self-righteous boasters of irredeemable, vain religion. ***“I have not come to call the ‘righteous’, but sinners to repentance”*** (Luke 5:32).

## How did “Yeshua” become “Jesus”?

by Greg Hartwig

You’re no doubt familiar with “Yeshua” (עֵשׂוּא) as a more accurate name for Jesus from Hebrew and Aramaic. “Yehoshua” (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ) is the actual name but it was often shortened to Yeshua. Yehoshua and Yeshua are the same as Joshua in English — meaning “the LORD is salvation.” So why don’t we call the Messiah Yeshua or Joshua instead of Jesus?

The full story can get very complicated, but here is the simple answer: If the New Testament had been originally translated from Hebrew into English, His name would likely have been translated as “Joshua.” But that’s not what happened.

The earliest New Testament copies we have are written in Greek. Those were translated into Latin on their way to English. Each translation comes with adjustments needed for those languages. For example, English doesn’t have some of the guttural sounds that other languages have, so when moving words into English, some sounds must be eliminated. The same thing occurs between other languages.

Today, we have many translations made from the original Hebrew and Greek directly into English, but names and their spellings have already been established, so they remain as we know them to avoid confusion. So “Yeshua” went through these



transformations from Hebrew through Greek through Latin to English:

עֵשׂוּא (Yeshua) → Ἰησοῦς (Iesous) → Iesus → Jesus

which sounds like...

yeh-SHU-a → ee-AY-soos → ee-AY-soos → GEE-suhs

Moving “Yeshua” into Greek was a rough journey:

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we met Dasha a young lady of mixed heritage—her mother is a Russian Orthodox Christian, and her father is Jewish. Because of this, Dasha has some familiarity about Jesus and the New Testament. According to Jewish Halachic law Dasha said she would not be considered Jewish. We countered that to be a born-again spiritual Jew through faith in Messiah Jesus is more important in the eyes of God (John 3:1-3). To qualify what we said here, August and I then said that we wanted to give her a copy



of the complete Hebrew Bible so she can come to know and trust the Jewish Messiah in her life. Dasha was very happy to accept our free and wonderful offer. Dasha told us she would certainly

In the northern Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona read all of the Word; her stated reason was because she

had already read some of the amazing events in the Bible and thoroughly enjoyed learning about them. Now may the Divine Author of the sacred Scripture draw Dasha to the Savior Jesus prominently disclosed within its inspired pages and that faith be born in her heart for salvation as Dasha discovers He that is born King of the Jews (Matthew 2:2).

Folks I am sad to report that all of our 2020 trips to Israel have been cancelled due to the COVID 19 lockdown in Israel. Our plans are now to travel to the Holy Land in March of 2021 to carry out the glorious 50th Gospel outreach in Israel. We need your financial help! So please consider partnering with us now and watch the Lord mightily move once again in the Land, as Jesus is being reunited with his physical kinsmen in Israel.

To donate online, you can go to the following secure link on our ministry web site:

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Greek doesn't have a "Y" sound, so the yod (י) with a "yeh" sound becomes an IH (iota eta or 'In) with an "ee-AY" sound, which somewhat simulates a Y. The eta (η) character originally had an "H" sound but had changed to a long A ("ay") by around 400 b.c.

Greek also has no "SH" sound, so that becomes just a sigma (σ) or S.

Male names often end in "S" in Greek rather than with a vowel sound, so a trailing sigma (ς) for S was added to the end to make it properly male in Greek. My name is Gregory, but in Greek it's Gregorius. (I was named after my Greek great-grandfather.)

The English letter "J" was originally a fancy form of the letter "I" (often used when at the start of a word) and both were pronounced the same (as "y" in "yet"). Eventually, "J" took on a sound of its own. The original 1611 King James translation used the "I" spelling (Iesus), but the subsequent Geneva Bible which followed popularized the "J" spelling by the 1700s.

So the "I" became "J" in "Iesus" giving "Jesus" (which, as you can see, has nothing to do with Zeus as some claim). The "J" is a reasonable replacement for a "Y" sound, as happens when Yerushalayim in Hebrew is translated to "Jerusalem" in English.

In Romans 10:13, Paul quotes Joel 2:32 saying: "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." I believe this is true no matter what language you speak or which name you use for Him. God has many names and titles. He knows our hearts and knows to whom we are calling out to when we say "Jesus" in English or "Yeshua Hamashiach" (Jesus the Christ) in Hebrew.

References:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Yeshua-Jesus.html>

<https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/4122/if-joshua-can-be-translated-why-is-the-name-of-jesus-translated-jesus-but-his>



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year for the Gospel of salvation to be preached in Israel (2 Corinthians 6:2) Partner with us in this exciting End-Time effort.

Your servant in Messiah Jesus,

Dr. Todd Baker.

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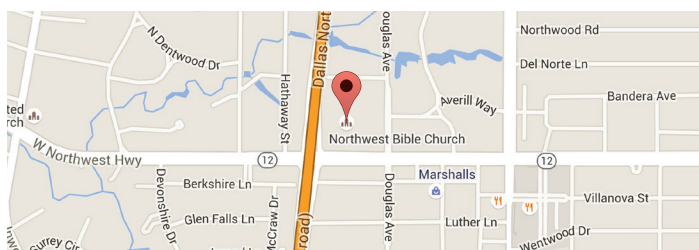
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