

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

A Quarterly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries

John
5:39



Volume 20, Number 1

Spring 2021

The Gospel is for Both

Jew and Muslim

This ministry makes it a point to follow the divine order of evangelism given in Romans 1:16—the Gospel is to go to the Jews first. This divine order does not mean however that it excludes the Gentiles, of course. There are about 1.6 million Muslims currently living in Israel; and this ministry makes a concerted effort to reach out to them with the Gospel as we do with the Jewish people there. On our first day of ministry in Israel during the 49th Gospel, August Rosado and I were in the bustling metropolis of Tel Aviv walking in the spacious Dizengoff Mall.



The Lord led both of us to extensively share the Gospel with a young Muslim lady by the name of Salma. We asked her about living in Israel. Salma said she would

live in no other place in the Middle East than in Israel! She thoroughly enjoys living here in the Land with the Jewish people as equal citizens! She truthfully affirmed that she enjoys the same rights as everyone else. This ministry has repeatedly heard the same from many other Muslims living in Israel—a thing you will never hear in the anti-Israel liberal media.

Salma attentively listened with openness as we shared that the God of the Bible chose the Jewish people so that He could send her the Savior Jesus Christ to atone for her sins and give her eternal life through His resurrection from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). As a result, Salma cheerfully received an Arabic Gospel tract and wanted a copy of the Bible in Hebrew as she excitedly told us she reads Hebrew without any problem! Yes, the Spirit of God is, indeed, opening the hearts and minds of Muslim Israelis like Salma to hear the Good News

of the Lord Jesus Christ. Natasha was the next precious Israeli we had good Gospel ministry with when we met her working in a clothing store. She is a hard working mother of two.



She too was touched by the Gospel of how God has kept His promises to His ancient people Israel and sent Yeshua the Messiah to reveal fully who God is and the love that saves sinners which took Him to the Cross for the Jew and Gentile who believe in Him for salvation. Overwhelmed at our desire to bless her with a copy of the Scriptures to own for herself, Natasha fully embraced God's Word with both hands to cherish and study with her children—which she told us she would do.

In Netanya the Lord led August and I to visit a major shopping mall to share the Gospel with Guy and Oriyah working at the Rebar Yogurt kiosk. Prior to this, we suspected that another mall employee called security on us earlier after August rightly and firmly disputed with her over the validity of the New Testament for the Jewish people. Her response to that was one of visible hostility. The devil was

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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. †



The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen

(Matthew 21:33-34) Part 1



"Hear another parable: There was a certain householder who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to husbandmen and went into a far country. Now when the time of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first, and they did to them likewise. But last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'they will reverence my son.' But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, 'this is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.' And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those husbandmen? They said to Him, 'He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and lease his vineyard to other husbandmen who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.'" Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone shall be broken. But on whomever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder"

The parable of the wicked vinedressers is also found in Isaiah 5:1-7 and in the Gospels of Mark and Luke (see Mark 12:1-12 and Luke 20:9-19). We will, however, concentrate our main attention on the account given in the Gospel of Matthew and will focus on the accounts given in Isaiah, Mark, and Luke whenever there is a particular detail emphasized that is not included in Matthew's account of the parable. The parable comes after the parable of the two sons. It is the second parable of the three Jesus uses to indict the religious leaders for their crime and guilt of rejecting Him as the Messiah of Israel. Both Matthew and Mark state Christ spoke this parable to the Chief Priests and Pharisees. The account given in Luke states the parable was spoken to the people as well (Luke 20:9). Therefore, from these differing accounts given in the Synoptic Gospels, it is only logical to conclude that Jesus both addresses the religious leaders of Israel with primary emphasis, and the people at large with secondary emphasis when He spoke the parable of the wicked husbandmen.

In the parable of the two sons, the Lord incriminates the religious leaders of Israel for their individual rejection of Him as Lord and Savior. In the parable of the wicked husbandmen, Jesus further charges them of their guilt in the corporate and national disownment and murderous elimination of Him, which was shortly to result in the crucifixion less than a week later! The parable of the wicked husbandmen concludes with the subsequent punishment of the leaders of Israel for slaying Jesus the only begotten Son of God. As a result of this, Christ then foretells the visible transference of the kingdom will go to the Church during

the present age, but as we know from Bible prophecy, will then be reoffered and received by the restored nation of Israel when Jesus returns to them at the Second Coming (Romans 11:26-27). Now let us examine the parable of the wicked vinedressers in the light of this meaning with much closer detail.

"Hear another parable: There was a certain householder who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to husbandmen and went into a far country" (verse 33).

The parable of the wicked husbandmen opens with the familiar character of a householder. The householder, as we saw earlier in both the parable of the wheat and tares and the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, is none other than God Himself. In the parable of the wheat and the tares, He is the Householder over the field of the world; and being so, will in the end order and remove that which is noxious and harmful (the tares) in His field of wheat wherein the good dwell (Matthew 13:38, 40). God is the divine Owner of all that He has created on the earth and in heaven. *"The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours, as for the world and the fullness thereof, You have established them"* (Psalm 89:11). In the capacity of a caring householder, God is the all-sufficient provider of the whole earth. It is the merciful God, alone, *"who gives food to all flesh. For His mercy endures forever"* (Psalm 136:25). In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, God is the preeminent householder of the Church. As householder and Head of the Church, Christ appoints His spiritual laborers in the Church, *"for the perfecting of the saints, for the*

work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, until the church reaches full maturity to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13).

In the parable of the wicked husbandmen God is presented again as the Householder in a different function. This time, He is Householder over a third company of people. This particular brand of people is adumbrated by the familiar figure of the vineyard. The key in disclosing the accurate meaning of the vineyard is found in several passages of Holy Scripture. In examining these revealing Scriptures, we must first make mention of an important action executed by the householder. This in return will significantly contribute to identifying the meaning of the vineyard. Our Lord says the householder "planted" a vineyard. *"There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard"* (Matthew 21:33). In Psalm 80:8-11 we read of a similar account: *"You have brought a vine out of Egypt. You cast out the heathen, and planted it."* This vine or vineyard taken out of Egypt, within the context of the Psalm, undoubtedly refers to the mass exodus of the nation of Israel from Egypt under the sure guidance of God through His faithful servant Moses. *"Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians.... And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses"* (Exodus 14:30-31). Forty years later God sovereignly planted Israel in the land of Canaan as His chosen vineyard. It was primarily through Moses and Joshua, that God uprooted all the heathen nations from the land and firmly established Israel in place

of them. ***“He cast out the heathen before them, and divided them an inheritance by line and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in tents”*** (Psalm 78:55). Israel was to God as sweet and delicious grapes of a vineyard in the midst of a godless, barren world. ***“I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness”*** (Hosea 9:10). God plainly says in His Word that Israel is the chosen vineyard He owns. ***“The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel”*** (Isaiah 5:7).

Israel, under the theocratic government of Yahweh, is obviously the vineyard Christ mentions in the parable of the wicked husbandmen. The vineyard also pictures the kingdom of God in its earthly reign over and through the Jewish nation (Matthew 21:43). God said of Israel, ***“I had planted you a noble vine, wholly a right seed”*** (Jeremiah 2:21). Indeed, the word “plant” is a metaphorical expression often used in Scripture to describe the Lord’s settling of Israel in the Land of promise (see Exodus 15:17; 2Samuel 7:10; 1Chronicles 17:4; Psalm 44:2; 80:8; Isaiah 5:2; 60:21; Jeremiah 2:21; 11:17; 24:6; 45:4; Amos 9:15). God has always been the faithful Householder of His vineyard, Israel, and will always be her perpetual Protector and Provider. ***“Behold, He that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. I, the Lord do keep it. I will water every moment, lest any hurt it. I will keep it night and day”*** (Psalm 121:4; Isaiah 27:3). A householder is bound by his unbreakable love to sustain his family insuring their survival no matter what may happen. God has sworn to Israel, His choice vineyard, that He will never forsake

her. For it would be infinitely much easier for a mother to forsake her suckling child, than for God to ever forget Israel altogether. ***“Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you”*** (Isaiah 49:15)?”

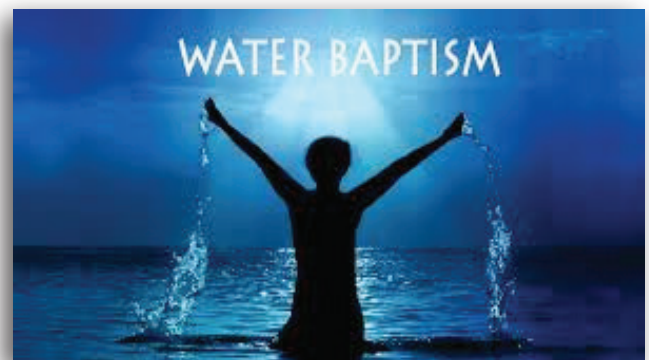
God the Heavenly Householder completed the physical planting of Israel, when He led them out of the wilderness to possess the Promised Land under the humble leadership of Joshua. For we read in Joshua 21:43-45: ***“So the Lord gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. The Lord gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them. The Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord has spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.”*** The spiritual implantation of Israel occurred after He gave them the Law, whereby they were to be governed and ruled as a united nation under God (see Exodus 24:1-8; Deuteronomy 26:15-19). After receiving the Law of God’s kingdom, Israel was expected to be ***“a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation”*** (Exodus 19:6). The Lord would reign as King in the midst of Israel. The throne of Israel was actually the throne of God from whence God reigned. David, by far the greatest of the kings of Israel, actually served under the kingdom of the superlative King—God Almighty; King David knew his 40 year kingship over Israel was but continuing extension of God’s

greater kingdom over all Israel. “Therefore David blessed the Lord before all the assembly; and David said: ***“Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all”*** (1Chronicles 29:10-11).

We then see that the vineyard was a delegated kingdom given to Israel by the Lord that was in reality the kingdom of God. The parable of the wicked husbandmen is divided into three chronological sections in which the Lord Jesus brilliantly chronicles God’s administrative dealings with Israel in parabolic narrative. The first section is *historical*. It is retrospective of Israel’s past history as the chosen nation of God. The first section is covered in verses 33-36. The second chronological section deals with the *present history* of Israel in the light of Messiah’s redemptive visitation to her. This climatic period is covered in verses 37-38. The third chronological section of the parable is prophetic when Jesus spoke it. This section begins in verse 39 and ends with verse 44. The prophetic aspect of the parable cover the future state of Israel and subsequent judgment of God in A.D. 70 for the rejection and murder of His beloved Son—Jesus of Nazareth, who was indeed the Messiah of Israel come to save them. But to no avail, the Jewish nation did not receive Him. ***“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him”*** (John 1:11).

What Does Water Baptism Mean?

The Word of God considers the doctrine and practice of baptism to be a part of the elementary principles of Christ. Baptism is a foundational doctrine of the Bible. Hebrews 6:1-2 tells us this and uses the plural form of baptism as being one of the foundations of the Christian Faith. There are approximately seven different types of baptism in Scripture—hence the plural use of baptisms in Hebrews 6:2. They are: (1) the Baptism of Moses (1Corinthians 10:1-2); (2) the Baptism of Suffering with Christ (Mark 10:38-39); (3) the Baptism of John (Mark 14-8); (4) the Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17); (5) the Baptism of fire (Matthew 3:11-12); (6) the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11-12); (7) Christian Baptism (Matthew 28:19). I will focus on Christian baptism. Christian baptism in water is beautifully symbolic of the fact the believer has died, is buried, and risen with Jesus Christ to receive a new life with God (Romans 6:3-7). When the Christian is immersed in water and raised out of the water this portrays that he or she is buried and then risen with Jesus Christ. Water Baptism is one the



two Ordinances of the NT Church.

Water baptism is one’s public testimony to the world he or she is now a follower of Messiah Jesus Who died for them, was buried, and rose from the dead to give eternal life to those

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not happy. But Guy and Oriya saw and accepted the clear and obvious connection that we shared between both Testaments of the Hebrew Bible that is found in Yeshua of Nazareth. Both Israelis were most curious and demonstrably grateful to accept a pair of Hebrew Bibles to read. During this awesome time of effective ministry, out of nowhere, the Enemy caused August's cell phone to inexplicably issue a warning that all his data would be erased. Fortunately, there was a cell phone store in the



mall where we went and had his data quickly restored.

Throughout it all, August remained calm and determined to finish this time of Gospel ministry with

me. The Enemy tried his best, but the Lord thwarted this attack so that Yeshua can be victoriously proclaimed and made known in His inerrant Word to hungry souls of both Muslims and Jews in the Land of divine destiny! Our plans are now to travel to the Holy Land in the Summer or Fall of 2021 to carry out the glorious 50th Gospel outreach in Israel once the pandemic ban is lifted. 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.

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who believe the Gospel.

The Christian is to be baptized in obedience to the Lord's command given in Matthew 28:19—those baptized are to be done so in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or in the Name of Jesus (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38). Water baptism is for believers in Christ only—hence, the term “Believer’s Baptism.” In the book of Acts baptism was done for only those old enough to understand and believe the Gospel. Infant baptism is not taught or practiced in the New Testament. The biblical act of baptism always follows after the sinner has consciously and deliberately believed Christ died for his sins and rose again from the dead to give the believer eternal life; through that faith the person is born-again by the power of the Holy Spirit and forgiven of all sins—then at that point he is ready for water baptism. The apostolic pattern in the book of Acts is first belief for salvation in Christ with water baptism following afterwards (Acts 2:41; 8:35-38; 19:3-5).

Water baptism is not necessary or a prerequisite for salvation. The thief on the cross who was saved is a classic example proving this. The thief merely asked Jesus for salvation and the Lord granted it to Him without the requirement of water baptism! (Luke 23:39-43). Some who do teach water baptism salvation will point to Mark 16:16. But a correct reading of this verse does not teach baptism saves, since the lost are condemned because of unbelief, not because they were not baptized. Water baptism does not produce salvation or cleansing from sin either. It is the shed blood of Jesus Christ coupled with the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit that cleanses the believer from sin (1 Corinthians 6:1; 1 John 1:7). The water of John 3:5 is not the water of Christian baptism, but the Old

Testament symbol of spiritual washing and renewal by the Spirit of God (Psalm 51:1-10; Isaiah 32:15; 44:3-5; Ezekiel 36:24-27; Joel 2:28-29).

Acts 2:38 does not does not teach baptismal regeneration produces forgiveness of sins as it is poorly translated in English to read: **“Repent for the remission of sins.”** The correct reading from the Greek text reads: **“Repent because of the remission of sins.”** Note: this is in proper keeping with the whole tenor of Scripture that uniformly teaches water baptism always follows salvation. 1 Peter 3:20-21 does not teach baptism saves the sinner. The context shows Peter is speaking about how being in Christ is like Noah’s Ark that saves us from God’s judgment. And though Peter were speaking about baptism, he is quick to say it cannot remove or wash away the filth of our fallen nature in the flesh. Baptism is done as an answer of a good conscience before God.

The particular mode of baptism is full immersion in water reflected by the fact the New Testament Greek word for baptism (baptizo) means to fully immerse. So proper Christian baptism is full immersion in the water. Nowhere in the New Testament did they sprinkle water. The New Testament Greek word for sprinkle is rhanizō and is never used in association with water baptism. Christian baptism has its roots in the Old Testament with the Levitical priests washing themselves in the bronze laver located in both the Tabernacle and the Temple. Observant Jews immerse themselves in the Mikveh or ritual bath of water. If you are saved and have not been baptized do so to show you are a obedient disciple of Jesus Christ following Him in His death, burial, and resurrection.



B'rit Hadashah Ministries

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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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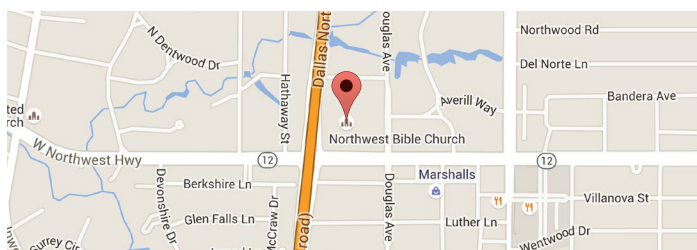
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