

# SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

A Quarterly Newsletter of B'rit Hadashah Ministries

John

5:39



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## The Hope of Messiah in Haifa

On the seventh day of the 54th Gospel I had the excellent opportunity of sharing the Gospel with the Israelis in the northern coastal city of Haifa. On that day I was able to hand out three complete Hebrew Bibles with Hebrew Gospel tracts. Here is what happened on two occasions:

One incident providentially occurred when I spotted a tea shop called Pure Blend located in a small indoor mall adjacent to the Dan Panorama hotel. I'm a daily tea drinker, so naturally I ventured into the shop and met Vadim, the affable and knowledgeable owner. He was originally from the Ukraine and immigrated to Israel at four years of age. For his kindness and expertise, as a tea sommelier, leading me to buy the right kind of tea, I told him I wanted to give him the free gift of God's Word about Yeshua the Messiah. He is the One, I said, who is foretold in the Tenach and revealed in the Brit Hadashah. My witness to Vadim covered a broad range of topics from repentance, biblical salvation by faith alone in Jesus the Messiah alone, Messianic prophecy, and God's prophetic panoramic plan for Israel oriented around the First coming and Second coming of the Messiah (See Romans 9-11). I did discuss with Vadim the ongoing war between Russia and the Ukraine—where he has relatives fighting in this war. I borrowed from this to assure him that when Messiah Jesus returns He will abolish wars and establish a worldwide kingdom of peace from Jerusalem (Psalm 46:9-11; Isaiah 2:4). And, more importantly, we can have spiritual peace with God now through this Messiah when we receive His atoning sacrifice for our sins (Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:13-14). The Lord gave me a good twenty-five minutes of effective ministry with Vadim without a single customer walking in what is normally a busy store!

Vadim immediately jumped at the opportunity of taking a Hebrew Bible from me with Messianic reading materials that go into greater depth of what we discussed concerning Messiah Jesus and His glorious kingdom. In return, Vadim gave me a free pouch of tea of my choosing. Thank you Lord for answering my prayer and giving me obvious favor with the people of Israel for the Gospel's sake so they will hear and accept God's saving Word in Yeshua the Messiah.



Tal and Todd



Vadim and Todd

Vadim said, "Amen" to what I shared with him concerning the Gospel and biblical truths of Messiah. Vadim also told me this was the first time he had heard such things! Beloved, please pray the Word of God takes root mixed with faith in the life of this open and receptive young man so that his spiritual eyes will be enlightened. Ask the Holy Spirit to allow Vadim to see the hope of the calling in Christ Jesus and what are the riches of His glory and the eternal inheritance of those trusting in Him (Ephesians 1:18).

The Lord then led me to Tal, the hotel manager at the Dan Panorama Hotel where I was staying. I thanked him for the hotel's service and accommodations towards me for the last fifteen years I have visited and stayed in Haifa. To therefore show my appreciation, I shared the Gospel of Yeshua the Messiah with Tal, explaining how the two comings of the Messiah has a direct impact on the Jewish people. Their modern-day regathering to the Promised Land is in preparation for His return (Deuteronomy 30:1-3 KJV). But the Jewish Messiah can personally be known now, I said to Tal—and He is none other than Yeshua, God's unique Son. I then showed Tal some of the First Coming Messianic prophecies Yeshua already fulfilled from the Promised Messiah pamphlet written in Hebrew

*(continued on page 5)*



### 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 Wicked Husbandmen

(Matthew 21:33-44) Part 10



*“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 prophet Isaiah eight centuries before recorded the same inevitable renunciation, casting out, and brutal slaying of Messiah by Israel; concerning the casting out of Him, the prophet wrote, **“He is despised and rejected of men”** (Isaiah 53:3); and of His violent death Isaiah continues, **“He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter...for He was cut off out of the land of the living”** (Isaiah 53:7-8). The murder of the heir by the tenants left the householder with only one plan of action—swift and severe judgment by the immediate removal of these wretched husbandmen from the vineyard. No more patience and tolerance could be shown, seeing these men proved themselves to be thieves and moral reprobates. By rejecting the heir, the tenants were rejecting the householder who sent him. Thus, through the symbolic language of this parable, particularly verses 38 and 39, Christ reveals to the leaders of Israel their insidious hatred of Him and their plot to murder Him based upon their refusal to acknowledge the divine commission given to Him by the Father declaring Him as His Son to be Lord and King of Israel. This is precisely what Christ alluded to when saying to the Jewish leaders, **“And you have not His Word abiding in you. For Whom He has sent, you do not believe”** (John 5:38, 43). The wicked leaders sought to kill Jesus the Heir simply because He claimed to be the King of Israel, of which the Chief Priests disclaimed at Christ’s trial before Pilate (John 19:12-16). The Jewish leaders also disavowed the Heir’s divine Sonship, and all the more desired His death because of this magnificent claim. For it was in response to Pilate’s declaration of Christ’s innocence that the Jewish leaders sharply replied, **“He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God”** (John 19:7). So in verses 38-39 it was by the spirit of prophecy

Jesus foretold Israel’s rejection and murder of Him as Heir and Ruler over them.

The parable formally ends with this tragic act before us, but not without a concluding addendum in which the Son of God confronts and indicts His religious enemies of their moral guilt in wanting to eliminate Him by murder. Either they were to accept the Messianic claim of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God and King of Israel, or reject this and uproot this Claimant to the Messianic throne of Israel from their minds and physical midst. This did not prevent our Lord from boldly proclaiming the truth of His divine claims before the presence of His murderers. Indeed what holy boldness He exhibited in the face of danger when knowing He was further sealing His own death upon speaking of His divinity, kingship, and Messiahship from God in the parable of the wicked husbandmen. Ah, but the death of the precious Heir had to be so, or how else then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled (Matthew 26:54). Leon Morris, in his scholarly commentary on the Gospel of John, writes the following concerning the controversial matter of Jesus’ Messianic claims made before the Jewish leaders and the fatal danger it brought to Him:

“In the end it was this kind of claim that aroused the implacable hostility of the Jewish hierarchy, and brought about Jesus’ death. It is, as Barclay says, “An act of the most extraordinary and unique courage...He must have known that to speak like this was to court death. It is His claim to be King; and He knew well that the man who listened to words like this had only two alternatives—the listener must either accept Jesus as the Son of God, or he must hate him as a blasphemer, and seek to destroy Him” (From *The Gospel According To John* by Leon Morris, page 311).

**“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’”** (verses 40-41).

Upon concluding the parable of the wicked husbandmen, the Savior turns upon the Jewish religious leaders and presses them with the question of what the householder should now do to these evil tenants for mistreating his servants and finally slaying his only, dear son. They, in turn, are forced to make an answer. They replied that the householder would bring horrible destruction upon the miserable tenants. In confessing this inescapable truth, the Jewish polity passed judgment on themselves and unwittingly admitted their undeniable guilt in murdering the Messiah. Thus by their own words of imprecation, the leaders of Jerusalem brought down the wrath of God on their nation and religious institution. In pronouncing doom on their own heads, the leaders of Jerusalem prove with themselves the inescapable truth that a man’s spoken words will either excuse or condemn him in the Day of Judgment. **“For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned”** (Matthew 12:37).

The solemn prophecy of Micah found its grim fulfillment in the generation that rejected and killed Christ out of envy, greed, and lust for power. **“Now hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice and pervert all equity who build up Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with iniquity. Her heads judge for a bribe. Her priests teach for pay, and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord, and say,**

***“Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us.” Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest”*** (Micah 3:9-12). And so the destruction of these corrupt leaders, along with apostate Israel, foretold in Matthew 21:40-41, came to pass in a most terrible, bloody fashion when the Roman armies led by Vespasian, and later Titus, plowed over and ravaged Jerusalem and burnt down the holy Temple to the ground. In the process, the Roman legions killed multitudes of Jews. Those not killed were taken into captivity and sold into slavery. The culminating effect of the Roman invasion dispersed the nation of Israel from the land in 70 A.D. The ancient Jewish historian Josephus who witnessed this awful event gives a most graphic account of the Roman invasion.

Even though the Chief Priests and Pharisees knew the judgment meted out by the householder upon the disobedient tenants was just and deserving and applied to them, they failed to avert the terrible, accumulated punishment that lay ahead for their corporate and national sin of killing the Lord Jesus Christ. Ah, such is the perversity of the Christ hating, depraved heart in love with itself and enslaved by sin. The ungodly are deceived into thinking that God winks and overlooks their sins because divine judgment is not immediately forthcoming. So they continue on in the deadly pleasures of their unrighteousness since there is no apparent disapproval from on high. ***“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil”*** (Ecclesiastes 8:11). Though the mills of God grind very slow, they grind exceedingly fine. God declares that in the day of wrath and revelation of His righteous judgment, He will punish all the sins of the impenitent wicked. This punishment shall be sudden and inescapable, taking the unsaved by surprise like an unexpected thief in the night. ***“And I will punish the world for their evil and the wicked for their iniquity. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night”*** (Isaiah 13:11; 2Peter 3:10). We most certainly witnessed in this parable the long suffering of God toward wicked Israel from the days of Moses to Jesus Christ. But the day of divine reckoning had come upon the generation that witnessed and rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. Their forefathers in the past killed the prophets and faithful servants of God. The long delayed punishment of apostate Israel ended with the climaxing of the greatest sin of the leaders of Israel against the heavenly Householder---that being the murder of His dear divine Son.

The full concentrated retribution of God for the murdered prophets and righteous men that were sent to Israel throughout the long centuries found its unrestrained, concentrated release upon

the generation who killed and rejected the Prince of the prophets Jesus Christ. In sharing and committing the same sins of their forefathers, the Scribes and Pharisees were to bear the sins of them as well! The proverb of Jeremiah 31:29 and Ezekiel 18:2 finds its clearest meaning and fulfillment here—***“the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children teeth are set on edge”***. The religious leaders of Jesus’ day were only filling up the evil measure of their forefathers’ sins that killed the prophets. Hence, in light of this terrifying portent Jesus foretold to these sanctimonious reprobates: ***“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’ Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation”*** (Matthew 23:29-36).

Shortly thereafter, the Chief Priests and the people of Israel implicated themselves as taking responsibility for the slaying of the Messiah when saying to Pilate, ***“His blood be upon us, and on our children”*** (Matthew 27:25). The natural outcome of this led to the logical removal of such murderous, fruitless tenants from the Lord’s vineyard, and the re-leasing of it to dutiful tenants that would render by diligence and obedience the fruits in their seasons to the patient householder. The self-incriminatory answer of the Pharisees to the Lord’s question posed in verse 40, at once, reveals the unworthiness of these leaders to remain as spiritual custodians and citizens of the kingdom of God. The vineyard, with the fruitful vintage thereof, would be given to others who exhibited a willingness to serve the householder and not themselves. The present church age, wherein both believing Jews and Gentiles can freely enter the kingdom of God bearing the fruit the Lord desires readily evinces and substantiates the truths of verses 41 and 43. A more detailed analysis of this fact will be later examined under the contextual boundaries of verse 43, which confirms the correctness of the answer given in verse 41 by the Pharisees.

Ere passing on, one may marvel at the sincerity of Christ’s enemies in answering

truthfully about the householder’s punishing the murderous tenants. However, their sincerity is not born out of a sorrowful realization of the truth in light of one’s admitted guilt of which godly repentance emanates from, but rather came from a forceful admission of the truth due to public pressure and the fear of the multitude. Although they knew the evil of the plot laid against Christ and how to correct and amend such by believing on the only begotten Son of God, they consciously and deliberately did the opposite. Thus is the nature of fallen man without the gracious enablement of the Holy Spirit. When confronted with doing what God expects versus doing what the ego desires, the sinner is always inclined self-ward and will do that which is contrary to the law of God. ***“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be”*** (Romans 8:7). The law of God is the ruling principle by which the kingdom of God is governed; and the King of His kingdom administers this law. They that reject the divine law reject the Almighty Lawgiver and spurn His chosen King and His kingdom and are thus rejected by Him. We see this was the tragic act and fate of the Christ rejecting nation of Israel, beginning with the heads of state at the time of King Jesus’ first coming. Alas, for Jerusalem knew not the time of her Messianic visitation (Luke 19:44). And for this, utter destruction and worldwide dispersion was to be her bitter portion.

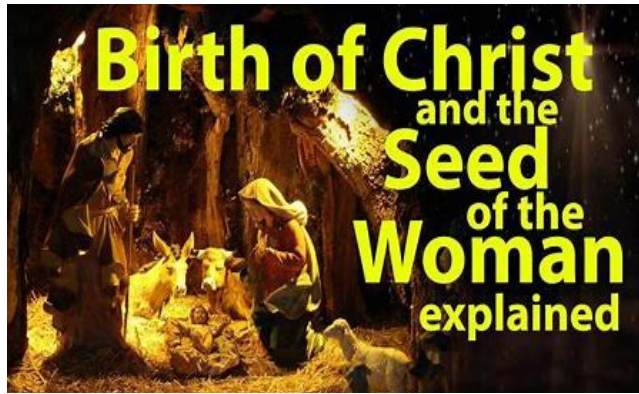
Yet, like Israel in the days of the first advent of Christ, there are many leaders in the church today who reject Jesus in the selfsame manner. The writer is firmly convinced, from observing the fallen nature of man glossed over with the veneer of religious pretense, that if Christ came today in the same manner He came to Israel speaking the truth without respect of persons, He would be abused, slandered and formally rejected by some of the most well-known and respected leaders of the professing church, who like Diotrophes, ***“loves to have the preeminence among them”*** (3John 1:9). And if it were possible—even preeminence over Christ, the true Christ that is foreign to the one of their own contrivance, made in their own selfish image. Beloved Christian, flee from these sorts of ministers, as a child would upon accidentally running across a poisonous serpent in the road. But what is to happen with the despised and slain Heir. Shall He suffer ignominious rejection and death by His own people Israel never to rise again? The answer is found in the closing verses of this parable. Jesus concludes His grand historical, prophetic parable in verses 42-44 on a note of triumphant exaltation, showing that the rejected Messiah will reign over both friend and foe in the end.

# What is the First Messianic Prophecy in the Bible?

The answer to that question is found in Genesis 3:15 where God says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He will crush your head and you will strike His heel." The early church fathers labeled this passage in Genesis 3 the Protoevangelium, which literally means, "the first Gospel" because it is the first time the Gospel message of salvation is revealed in the Bible. The word Protoevangelium comes from a compound Latin word from "proto," meaning "first" and "evangelium," meaning, "Gospel."

Looking at the context here, verse 14 makes it clear that God is speaking to the serpent after he seduced Adam and Eve into sin and disobedience to God. God says there will be an ongoing hostility between the spiritual offspring of Satan as represented in the serpent and the spiritual offspring of Jesus Christ, the Seed of the woman. One of my Hebrew professors at Seminary wrongly thought this verse merely meant that man and physical snakes will fight against each other throughout history. But this is to engage in over simplified reductionism, the text says much more than that.

Jesus further confirmed this hostility between the children of the devil and the children of God in John 8:44. The term "her Seed" in Genesis 3:15 is an obvious reference to the Lord Jesus Christ Who will mortally defeat Satan as represented by the crushed head of the serpent. When did this happen? It happened at the crucifixion where Satan bruised Christ's heel but Jesus crushed Satan there by destroying the devil's power of death he held over mankind (Hebrews 2:14). The



Virgin Birth is also implied in Genesis 3:15 because the seed of insemination is provided by the man alone, but in Genesis 3:15 the seed belongs to the woman alone; no human male is mentioned. This looks forward to the virgin woman Mary when she gave birth to Jesus, the Seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15. He would crush the head of Satan with permanent defeat. The word "seed" in Genesis 3:15 is singular (Zerah) and clearly points to the Messiah Jesus alone who has defeated Satan "the old serpent called the devil" (Revelation 12:9).

The first Messianic prophecy of the Bible was gloriously accomplished in what the Lord Jesus Christ did for sinners on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. By His death on the cross. Jesus struck the mortal blow to Satan's head, so to speak, while the Devil inflicted a temporary blow on Christ. But that was completely shaken off when the Lord Jesus victoriously rose from the dead three days later conquering death and gaining ultimate victory over Satan and the powers of darkness. The Christian website Gotquestions.org provides an excellent conclusion to the Messianic fulfillment of Genesis 3:15 when stating, "Because of what Jesus did on the cross He "crushed" the devil's head, defeating him forever. The Protoevangelium show us God always had the plan of salvation in mind, and informed us of His plan as soon as sin entered the world." The fulfillment of Genesis 3:15 by the Messianic Seed of the woman demonstrates the truth of 1John 3:8: *"For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."*



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Daniel E. Woodhead Ph.D., President

# The Hope of Messiah in Haifa

(continued from page 1)

and English. Tal thanked me for the brief Drash (teaching) and also received a complete Hebrew study Bible from me.

Beloved, this ministry was all set to return to Israel in October of 2023. But our trip was cancelled a week out because of Israel's war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip. I was willing to still go in the face of the relative danger of this war. Indeed, this ministry was conducting Gospel outreaches in Israel all during the Second Intifada going on in the early 2000's. We were, and are willing, now, to hazard (risk) our lives for the Gospel's sake in Israel during times of peace and safety, but also during times of war and great danger (Acts 15:26). Israel just war against Gaza began on October 7th, when Palestinian terrorists sent by Hamas invaded southern Israel, killing some 1,200 Israelis. Their barbarous action included burning Jewish babies alive, shooting other infants in the head, and in some cases beheading them in the various Kibbutzim they murderously invaded. Over 1,200 innocent Israelis were massacred in the most brutal fashion with Hamas abducting around 250 hostages. We ardently wish to return, as soon as possible. This ministry looks forward to returning to Israel in late March of 2024 to bring the comfort of the Gospel of Yeshua to His suffering and war torn people. If not, at that time, then, we will go in April or May of this year. We need your financial support so that this ministry can continue to follow Romans 1:16 by bringing the Gospel to the Jew first in Israel, as we have been doing by God's grace and provision for the last 23 years!

Accompanying me on this upcoming 55th Gospel outreach to Israel will be Robert Williams. Robert has been to Israel with me four times before. He is an evangelist and pastor to the homeless on

the streets of his city. I currently need to raise about 4,000 dollars to underwrite this outreach. Please give what you can—no amount is too small; and once again God will reward those who participate in this urgently needed ministry of bringing Yeshua back to His people as He regathers Israel for His glorious return. But they don't have to wait until then! They can know Yeshua now and be saved through our evangelistic efforts. Help us in this Holy Spirit ordained enterprise. To donate online, you can go to the following secure link on our ministry web site: <https://www.brit-hadashah.org/donate/>

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Your servant in Messiah Jesus,



Dr. Todd Baker



## B'rit Hadashah Ministries



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## What is the First Messianic Prophecy in the Bible? . . . 4

