

Scripture Standard

Volume 83-2
June 2016

Contents

- 1 **Which Bible?**
Editor
- 3 **Stephen, The First Martyr**
John Kneller,
Tranent.
- 5 **Unshakable Faith**
Derek L. Daniell,
Tunbridge Wells.
- 7 **The Song of Mary**
Jonathan Ashurst,
Byron GA.
- 9 **The Lamp on a Lamp-Stand**
James Lim,
Lavender,
Singapore.
- 12 **To Please or Not to Please**
J. W. Wealand,
Glendale, Arizona.
- 14 **Contradiction? Lamb - Sheep Sheep - Lamb**
Allan Ashurst
- 16 **NOTICES**

Pleading for a total return to New Testament principles.

contend earnestly for the faith
Jude 1:3

Scripture Standard
www.ScriptureStandard.eu

Which Bible

Is It Which Bible or Which Text?

Allan Ashurst, Stretford

The March editorial: "THE ONE LOAF MUST BE BROKEN" raised two significant comments: The Lord's bones were not broken, and κλωμενον ("being broken") is not in the Sinaitic manuscript. It is true that His **bones** were not broken but His body was severely lacerated. Even so, was "broken" part of the original Greek text? Since it is in the Authorised Version of 1611 (AV/KJV) but omitted in the revisions of 1881 (RV) 1900 (ASV) and not in most subsequent translations in general use. For example, the NIV has, "This is my body which is for you." (1.Corinthians 11:24). Scholars were deeply impressed with the "4th century" Sinaitic manuscripts' completeness, age, and that it was done on very expensive vellum, perhaps because it was one of the fifty copies produced for Constantine. So they tended to consider it to be the most reliable of texts, even though it had numerous copyists mistakes. On the contrary these suggest that it was done carelessly by professional copyists whose mother tongue was not Greek. Many words incomplete at the end of lines, spelling mistakes, duplicated lines, jumps from a word in one line to the same word further down, and corrections by a different hands etc. indicate that its provenance is very poor.

DETAIL FROM CODEX SYNAITICUS.

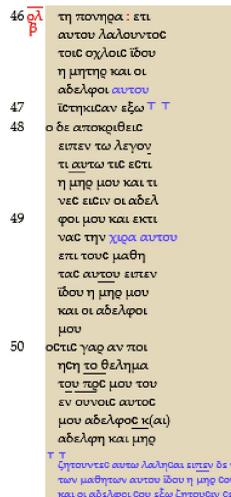
Typical example of omissions etc. in Matthew 12 (highlighted in blue).

From: <http://codexsynaiticus.org/en/manuscript.aspx?Submit>

Query&book=33&chapter=12&lid=en&side=r&verse=47&zoomSlider=0



CODEX



TRANSCRIPTION

THE PROVENANCE OF THE ORTHODOX KOINE GREEK NT.

Age, completeness and quality of writing material do not necessarily indicate good provenance. A lot depends on the skill, knowledge of the language and the dedication of the copyists.

The mother tongue of people living in Asia minor (east Turkey), where the apostle John spent much of his latter years, was Koine Greek. The scriptures were carefully transcribed by committed Christians in this area. When the Muslims overran the peninsula the work was taken on board by, and continued by, dedicated monks in Mount Athos, Greece. Their transcription of the Koine Greek New Testament is still used in worship by the Greek Orthodox Church. It would be hard to find greater provenance than this. This text is available on the Internet.

My research is ongoing, but a remarkable thing is that, the text on which the AV is based," (which was put together from

manuscripts mainly available in the western church, in relative isolation from the eastern church) and the Koine Greek New Testament used by the Greek Orthodox church, so far seem to agree almost word for word, even in disputed texts such as Matthew 19:9, Mark 16 9-20, Acts 8:37, 1 Timothy 3:16 & 1 John 5:7-8.

Western Scholars have woken up to this and have been granted access to and are cataloguing Mount Athos' library Manuscripts. Some scholars are tending to move back to the received text.

The Greek Orthodox Koine for 1.Corinthians 11:24 reads:

καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασε καὶ εἶπε· λάβετε φάγετε· τοῦτό μου ἔστι τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κλώμενον· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἑμὴν ἀνάμνησι. [ὑμῶν κλώμενον = "broken for you"]

STEPHEN THE FIRST MARTYR

John Kneller, Tranent.

Stephen is well known as the first Christian martyr but that begs the question, "Why was he the first martyr"? Surely the apostles had a more prominent presence in Jerusalem and should have been the first object of opposition. What was it that set Stephen apart as the most conspicuous member of the early church and led to his death?

Stephen first appears in Acts 6 and is chosen, with six other men, to help resolve the dispute between the Hebrew and the Greek widows. In this work The Seven successfully resolve the dispute and the narrative then centres on Stephen, the powerful preacher. The text reveals him as a remarkable spirit-filled man. Acts 6, v5 describes him as *'a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit'* also v3, v8 and Acts 7, v55 which also testify to his spirituality.

His ability as a speaker is declared in Acts 6, vv9&10, when it tells us that he debated with members of the synagogue of the Freedmen who argued against him. He had done great signs and wonders amongst the

people in support of his teaching and as evidence of God's approval. Luke records that these men could not withstand *'the wisdom and spirit with which he spoke'*. What is interesting here is that some members of this synagogue came from Cilicia as did Saul of Tarsus. Tarsus was the principle city of Cilicia. Could it be that Stephen's preaching was so powerful and logical that even Saul was unable to resist this man who was 'full of the Holy Spirit and power'?

Luke tells us in the first four verses of his gospel that he used eyewitness accounts as the basis of his gospel record which he carefully checked. Who were the eyewitnesses to these events that Luke uses here in Acts? Phillip and other Christians could certainly have told Luke what happened but the one person named in the text is Saul who consented to Stephen's death and kept the cloaks of those who stoned him. Years after these events Saul, now known as the apostle Paul, spends much time in Luke's company preaching and teaching as the apostle to the Gentiles. Surely in all that time they spent together they must have talked about these events in Jerusalem. Perhaps what we read in Acts 6 and 7 is largely Paul's account of these events and his personal testimony to the power of Stephen's preaching and witness, when he agreed with the other witnesses that Stephen must be put to death.

It is interesting that Stephen's defence in chapter 7 is longer and more detailed than any of Paul's which are recorded later in Acts. If it is Paul that Luke relies on for his eyewitness account then its length and detail must tell us something of the significance that Paul himself attaches to Stephen's short ministry.

The charge that is brought against him is stated in v13-14:

"This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us"

Their attachment to the temple and the law is understandable and commendable but to stoop to false evidence reveals the weakness of their case. Maintaining the customs they had built around that religion had become central to their worship. Jesus himself had battled against these same attitudes throughout his ministry.

Stephen's defence (chapter 7) challenges them to see God at work in the lives of the nation's early leaders far from the temple and outside Jerusalem and Israel and before the law was given. This they refused to accept and in their rage took up stones to kill him.

We will look at his defence in the next issue which will help us appreciate why he was the first martyr.

Unshakable Faith

Derek L. Daniell, Tunbridge Wells.

What is the foundation of our life? We all have something that is keeping our life together. **Hebrews 11** teaches us that faith was what guided men and women through life and helped them to do great things for God. All of us have something that is propping up our belief system. What props up our belief system? **Hebrews 11:1** says "faith is the substance of things hoped for." Faith literally stands under and props up our hope - this being eternal life or our hope of being safe when we die. According to Romans, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). So why does our faith get shaken? Why is it easy at times to get discouraged? We all want and need hope. Maybe it's because we put our faith in

things that are truly shakable, while God, His word and His Son never are.

1. Our Present Situation

We try to find God in our present situation or experience. The problem is doing this makes our faith very fragile. Life is not consistent. **James 4:14** tells us in fact our whole life is only the length of a vapour. Maybe God isn't acting the way we think God should act. We should be like Joseph. He had every reason to conclude God was not with him based on his current situation, but we know God was always there with him through good and bad times, (Genesis 45:4-8). Let us thank God that He makes all things beautiful in His own time!! (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

2. Lifestyle decisions

We change the way we behave when we change the way we believe. The pleasures of life will cause our belief system to be inconvenient, and then we leave our faith. The thing about pleasure is it is also not stable and fleeting. **Proverbs 31:30** teaches us that charm actually deceives us and beauty is fading, but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised.

Ultimately if we adapt our belief system to fit our behaviour, we look up at the sky and say, "I don't believe in anything," and we realize believing in ourselves is not enough...There is more to life. God is life - without him we can do nothing.

But our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their

throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: he is their help and their shield. Psalm 115:3-9

We cannot put our faith in our present situations or ourselves because both let us down; we need something unshakable, that won't let us down.

3. Consider Jesus The foundation of our faith is in Him who is called "**the author and finisher of our faith**" (Hebrews 12:2-3). Consider that something happened in history - **God sent his son.** God says I want you to know that 2000 years ago I sent my son into history to die for your sins. To walk as you walk, to be tempted as you are. I love you not because I answered your prayer but because I loved you from the beginning. I just want you to trust me and lean your faith on something I did on your behalf.

Let us thank God for His unshakable power, His promises, His word and His son who showed us we can truly have unshakable faith in Him.

The Song of Mary

Jonathan Ashurst, Byron, GA.

It was truly a day to rejoice: Elizabeth was to have a child in her old age, and Mary was to have a child by the power of the Holy Spirit! When Mary came to visit Elizabeth, the baby inside Elizabeth leaped for joy in Elizabeth's womb. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, blessing Mary (Luke 1:39-45). Now, it is Mary's turn to express her thankfulness:

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour
For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.
For He who is mighty has done great things for me,

And holy is His name.
And His mercy is on those who fear Him
From generation to generation.
He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
And exalted the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich He has sent away empty.
He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of His mercy,
As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever.”

(Luke 1:46-55, NKJV)

Mary begins by praising the Lord. She expresses worship, rejoicing and referring to God as her Saviour.

She then explains why she is praising the Lord: first, because He has noticed her needs; second, because He has given her such a great blessing that all future generations will recognize it; and third, because He has done great things for her.

Mary describes God as mighty and holy. She recognizes that, in every time period, God shows mercy to those who fear him.

Mary continues by contrasting the power of God to the pride of man. The Lord lifts up the humble, the lowly, and the hungry, but He brings down the proud, the mighty, and the rich. (Just as He had chosen lowly people like Ruth, David, and the apostles, now God had chosen Mary for this special purpose).

Mary concludes by reaffirming God's commitment to his promises. She sees that God is bringing about the fulfilment of the prophecies made long before to Abraham and his posterity. As children of Abraham through faith (Galatians 3:7-9), we too can rejoice in the faithfulness, power, and purposes of God!

Extra Note:

Mary's knowledge of and love for the Scriptures would have enabled her in her service of the Lord and others. If you can find a Bible with cross references, notice that Mary's words in Luke 1:46-55 contain many Old Testament references. For example, there are similarities to the words of Hannah, another mother who miraculously conceived a son (1 Samuel 2:1-10).

The Lamp on a Lamp-stand

James Lim, Lavender, Singapore

Have you ever noticed the lamps in your home? Most probably you would take them for granted unless a bulb had fused or you needed to spring clean the house. A lamp is much appreciated especially when you have a blackout!

In the New Testament (NT), two Greek words are used for lamp as a metaphor. They are *λαμπας lampas* and *λυχνος lychnos*. The former means "torch" and the latter is a portable lamp that is placed on a lamp-stand. These two words are not consistently translated in the various English versions of the NT. The former is found in the parable of the ten virgins where five of them were negligent in replenishing their oil supplies to keep their torches aflame. The same word is used in John 18:3:

Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

The second word *λυχνος lychnos* is used more frequently in the NT, but is mistranslated in some versions as candle. It is an oil lamp meant to be placed on a lamp-stand *λυχνια lychnia*. We may learn how Jesus used the metaphor of a lamp, *lychnos* from the following verses from the Gospels.

Matthew 5:15 - "Nor do they light a **lamp** and put it under a basket, but on a **lamp-stand**, and it gives light to all who are

in the house”.

Matthew 6: 22 - "The **lamp** of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light”.

Mark 4:21 - Also He said to them, "Is a **lamp** brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a **lamp-stand**?

Luke 8:16 - "No one, when he has lit a **lamp**, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a **lamp-stand**, that those who enter may see the light”.

Luke 11:33-36 - "No one, when he has lit a **lamp**, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a **lamp-stand**, that those who come in may see the light. The **lamp** of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness ... If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a **lamp** gives you light."

Luke 15:8 - "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a **lamp**, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?."

The lamp is a mere vessel of oil that is to be lit. It is placed on a lamp-stand to illuminate. Its light is meant to be seen. It may refer to one's sight and affects one's enlightenment. It helps those who are lost or are seeking the lost ones.

Who lights up the lamp? Who places it up on the lamp-stand for all to see and be illuminated? Are we to be attention seeking?

The following verses are instructive.

Matthew 12:16-19 - **Yet He warned them not to make Him known**, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the

Gentiles. **He will not quarrel nor cry out, Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.**

Lesson 1

Jesus Himself was not attention seeking like some roadside orator.

Matthew 5:14-16 - "You **are** the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a **lamp** and put it under a basket, but on a lamp-stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven**".

Lesson 2

We are the light so as light naturally shines, thus **let**, not deliberate make our light shine, beaming away to illuminate the way to our Father in heaven. A lamp is merely a portable vessel for light.

Matthew 6:1-4 - "Take heed that you **do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them.** Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. "Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, **do not sound a trumpet** before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, **do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing**, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and **your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly**".

Lesson 3

We are not to draw attention to ourselves to have glory from men. If we do, we will not get any recognition from our Father. It is up to our Father to reward us openly as He sees fit.

How did Jesus use the word, *λαμπας lampas (torch)*, in the parable of the ten virgins?

Matthew 25

- 3 - "Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ..."
- 5 - "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept".
- 6 - "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'"
- 8 - "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ..."
- 10-12 - "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterwards the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, **'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'**"

Lesson 4

It is our responsibility to be "filled with oil", ever vigilant and aflame even when we are physically tired while waiting. God's response to these foolish ones was "I do not know you". We would then be more than disqualified for non-compliance. We would be unrecognised and unacknowledged by Him.

TO PLEASE OR NOT TO PLEASE?

J. W. Wealand, West Valley Church of Christ, Glendale, Arizona.

In and around the second largest city in Iraq is not only a historic site for current events now, but the city of Mosul held thousands of people who had a love for Christ, The city fell to Islamic extremists this past summer. These Christ-loving people feared for their lives and ran away, losing everything but their faith in Christ. In some areas, they were forced to convert to Islam, pay

a tax or face death. Well documented stories are emerging of many of them executed for not renouncing their faith in Christ.

Regardless of what the Bible says about the necessity of baptism, and whether or not I believe it, does not change the fact that the majority of these Christ-loving people were slaughtered without ever being baptized into Christ. This fact speaks volumes about how faith in Christ can be very strong before a person is baptized because, had they been told about it, their self-sacrifice proves they would have done it. But instead of writing about hypothetical situations, I propose to you that their cruel deaths speak to us Christians who have been baptized and shy away from even speaking the name of Christ in public. What has happened to our faith after we were baptized? That question is answered by the reason we were baptized, and also what our purpose for being a Christian is today.

If I was baptized (immersed) for the sole reason of having my own spirit washed clean of sins by the blood of Christ, why would my faith grow weak? Because the absence of sin does not produce any fruit or conviction in what I believe in my spirit. There must be something or someone within me, taking the place of sin. Which introduces the whole subject of God's Spirit being a gift within a Christian's spirit. Take time to read Acts 2:37-39 carefully and look at the promised gift. Is it spiritual cleanliness, or is it Christ's Spirit?

The apostle Paul wrote:

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. (Romans 8:8-10)

These words teach us that a Christian's spirit envelopes the Holy Spirit. Our purpose for being baptized should be to live with him,

not with the flesh. This purpose results in God being very pleased with us!

Do we have any idea what the Spirit of Christ feels or where He is, when any Christ-loving person takes on cruelty and death for refusing to renounce Christ? Do we know that strength in the churches of Christ? Lots of people in Iraq don't just believe in the presence of Christ, they know Him. Do you? What exactly is your purpose for becoming a Christian?

J. W. Wealand, www.wvcochrist.org

An apparent contradiction:

Is it "lamb" then "sheep", "sheep" then "lamb."

Allan Ashurst, Stretford, Manchester

In Isaiah 53:7 (AV) it says:

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

Here we have a lamb slaughtered and a sheep sheared.

Conversely in Acts 8:32 (AV) it is quoted as though it says:

The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth.

Here we have a sheep slaughtered and a lamb sheared.

The sceptic will say "Which is it? Both cannot be right. Has Dr. Luke got it wrong?"

In the Law of Moses it was always a lamb of the first year that was led to be slaughtered for sacrifice. (Exodus 12:5, Leviticus 9:3, Numbers 6:14 etc.). Also it is not normal to shear lambs during their first year. It appears then that Isaiah is correct. So did Luke make a mistake?

Often for apparent errors of this kind a simple explanation can be found by careful reading of the text.

Note that Luke wrote down, not his own words but the words

that the Ethiopian was reading from his scroll:

Acts 8:32 The place of **the scripture which he** (the Ethiopian) **read** was this:

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

It is unlikely that the Ethiopian was fluent in Hebrew. So he would be reading from a Greek translation.

About 200 years before Jesus was born several rabbis translated the Hebrew scriptures into Greek. It is called the Septuagint Version. Even though it tends to be somewhat liberal in its rendering of the Hebrew and has some mistakes, it was widely used by Greek speaking Jews. This translation has the mistaken rendering of Isaiah 53:7: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer..." Evidently the Ethiopian was reading from this, or a similar, translation. So the mistake was in that translation. Luke correctly wrote down what the Ethiopian was reading. The mistake was not Luke's.

I would have got tied up, hide-bound in explaining to the Ethiopian the problems of using a faulty translation. Whereas Philip went to the heart of the matter. He "began at the same scripture, and preached to him Jesus." So the Ethiopian learned how that Jesus suffered and died for us.

[Read Isaiah 53, the chapter he was reading, written about 700 years before Jesus was born]. See how it predicts His passion.

Then, in the desert, coming across sufficient water for baptism, he asked if he could be baptised. Philip replied: "If you believe with all your heart, you may". The Ethiopian responded:

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Then they went down into the water and Philip immersed* the Ethiopian. Who then went away rejoicing! (see Acts 8:35-38)

*NOTE: not many people know that in the Bible the word "baptise" is from a Greek word *baptizo* which means lit. immerse, fig. overwhelm. That is why they had to go into the water.

NOTICES

STRETFORD, Manchester.

The Green Hut, 538 Kings Rd. **M32 8JT**

Saturday, October 1st. 2016

10:30 am Registration.

11 am Speaker.

1 pm Lunch.

2 pm Quiz.

3 pm Message. John Morgan

4 pm Announcements.

Talk followed by discussion.

Contacts:

Pilomon Raja: drmpreja@yahoo.co.uk

John Purcell: Tel. 0161-439 1758

Map:www.eusebos.eu/eusebos/d4web4s/longford.htm

SCRIPTURE READINGS 2016

Reading Cards are available from
John Kneller, 2/2 High Waterfield,
Fairmilehead, Edinburgh, EH10 6HQ
Tel. 0131-445 1832
E-mail: johnkneller4gpr@btinternet.com

PLEASE NOTICE THE PRICE INCREASE.

Generous gifts have enabled us to offer the magazine at £3.50p. We regret that increased costs (mainly postage) mean we have to increase the subscription to £5.00p per annum.

EASTWOOD, Nottinghamshire.

Seymour Road, **NG16 3ND**

Saturdays. 2016

August 13 th. November 12 th.

6.00 pm Refreshments

7.00 pm Message

Contact:

Adrian Limb Tel. 01773-761 670
cofceastwood@aol.com

GHANA APPEAL

Please send donations to:

Mrs. Christine Wood

11 Albert Place, Stirling, **FK8 2RE**

E-mail: ctkwood@hotmail.com

BIBLE QUESTIONS

Frank Worgan, 11 Stanier Road,
CORBY, NN17 1XP
Tel. 01536-206 848
E-mail: frankworgan@outlook.com
Brother Frank Worgan is happy to
receive Bible questions requiring
urgent answers by, letter or e-mail.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD

FOUR ISSUES PER YEAR (SUBJECT TO REVISION)

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION - UNITED KINGDOM £5.00p

OVERSEAS RATES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE TREASURER

TREASURER: Miss R.M. Payne, 1 Kenilworth Avenue, Reading, RG30 3DL

Tel: 0118-959 1176. E-mail: rosabelle.payne@btinternet.com

To whom change of address should be sent.

EDITOR: Allan Ashurst, 60 Kenwood Road, Stretford, Manchester, M32 8PT

E-mail: AshurstA@aol.com

DOWNLOADABLE BACKNUMBERS: www.ScriptureStandard.eu

The *Scripture Standard* is printed for the publishers by agapeonline.co.uk