

Scripture Standard

Volume 84-3
September 2017

Contents

- 1 **Editorial**
Allan Ashurst
- 4 **Whole Armour**
Ken Lewis
Merthyr Vale
- 6 **Simeon**
Jonathan Ashurst
Byron GA
- 8 **Hard for Rich**
Izu Egege
Sheffield
- 10 **Abraham**
John Kneller
Newtongrange
- 14 **Micah's Levite**
James Lim
Singapore

16 NOTICES

**Pleading for a
total return to
New Testament
principles.**

**contend earnestly
for the faith**
Jude 1:3

Scripture Standard
www.ScriptureStandard.eu

"Out of Egypt I called my son" Part 1

HEROD'S DEATH

Matthew 2:13-15 (NKJV)

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for **Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.**" When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there **until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled** which was spoken **by** the Lord **through** the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." *[All emphases mine]*

The Authorised Version reads:

"was spoken **of** the Lord **by** the prophet."

This is regrettably misunderstood by many to mean:

"was spoken **about** the Lord **by** the prophet" ^{NOTE 1}

as though Hosea was specifically predicting the manner of the Lord's return from Egypt. Consequently, critics correctly point out that Hosea is obviously referring back to the nation's exodus from Egypt.²

The New King James Version rendering is less confusing:

"was spoken **by** the Lord **through** the prophet"

Compare it with Hosea's introduction in chapter one verse two:

"When the LORD began to speak by Hosea ..." NKJV

Both Hosea and Matthew are acknowledging that YHWH (the LORD) is the speaker, Hosea is the instrument.³

Why then did Matthew mention Hosea 11:1:

"I...called my son out of Egypt"?

Even though it was remarkably co-incidental, Hosea was not predicting Jesus' return from Egypt. Matthew is telling us that they remained in Egypt **"until the death of Herod, that⁴ it might be⁴ fulfilled."**

These two phrases: 1) **"until the death of Herod"** and 2) **"that it might be fulfilled"**, are vital to our understanding of what Matthew is saying.

1) Herod was a major threat to the child's life.

"for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."

Matthew 2:13

Herod had heard about dignitaries from the east asking:

Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and we are come to worship him.

Matthew 2:2

Learning the Messiah (who would rule Israel) would be born in Bethlehem of Judaea, he considered the babe to be a threat to his throne. Herod instigates the heinous massacre of all children under three years of age to "take out" the Christ child.

2) The family's return was not the full-filment.⁵ The filling was incomplete until what Hosea had in mind was fully accomplished. Figuratively speaking, returning the babe to Israel was necessary to getting the process of filling back on course.

So Herod's death removed that threat and opened the way to resuming God's purpose which was the promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that their seed would become a blessing to all

nations.⁶ It was necessary for Jesus to return to Israel where it was to be accomplished.⁷

In the next issue, I want to show what Matthew had in mind when he quoted:

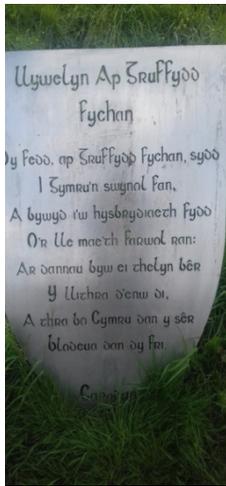
"Out of Egypt I called my Son"

NOTES:

- 1) Like "speaking **of** boycotts" means "speaking **about** boycotts." (Collin's English Dictionary).
- 2) Exodus 4:22, 23 AV. "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn." Hosea 1:5 "He shall not return into Egypt..."
- 3) 2 Peter 1:21 "For the prophecy came in old time, not by man's will, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."
- 4) "that" Greek 'ina (hina): meaning "in order that." In the North of England "might" is used to denote possibility and "may" to denote permission, as in this sentence "Mum says to her belligerent teenager: "you **might** go out but you **may** not."
- 5) The word πληρωω (play-rowe) meaning "to fill to the full."
- 6) And to **all that are afar off**, even as many as the Lord our **God** shall **call**.
Acts 2:38,39
Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were **far off** are made nigh by the blood of Christ
Ephesians 2:13
He (**God**) **called** you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2 Thessalonians 2:14
Also, Acts 28:28, Abraham: Genesis 22:18, Isaac: Genesis 26:4, and Jacob: Genesis 28:13,14.].
- 7) Genesis 50:24,25, Hebrews 11:22, Exodus 13:19, Joshua 24:32, Acts 7:15-17, Matthew 27:52,53, Acts 7:37, Deuteronomy 18:15-18, 34:1-4, Luke 13:33.

PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD

Ken Lewis, Merthyr Vale



Llywelyn ap Gruffydd Fychan, of Llandovery, Wales, was on the side of Owen Glyndwr in his fight against King Henry IV.

After King Henry took him prisoner, Llywelyn refused to give the whereabouts of Owen and was hung drawn & quartered.

One question I have in mind, brethren, How many of us would be prepared to do the same for our Master? the One who hung and died on that cross for us!

Paul writing to the Ephesians says,

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of

his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Ephesians 6:10-11 (AKJV)

What is this armour?

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God

Ephesians 6:14-17

Loins girt about with truth. So, the main body armour is the truth.

Then the breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith to withstand the fiery darts of the evil one, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

What is being strong in the Lord? What is the armour of God?

Both questions could be answered by one word: Faith. How much do we have?

Like Llywelyn how far could or would we stand against the things that the devil throws at us? These are things that we have to ask ourselves. Would we sacrifice ourselves and stand up against the things that are not taught in the Scriptures?

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Ephesians 6:12-13

These verses tell us what we are up against, and how to stand victorious by taking on the whole armour of God.

SIMEON

Jonathan Ashurst, Byron, GA.

In our last issue, we surveyed the life of Reuben, the first son of Jacob. In this article, we will study the life of Jacob's second son, Simeon. We will also learn about a tragic incident in the life of his sister, Dinah.

As previously discussed, Jacob had two wives and two concubines. Because Jacob showed favoritism to Rachel over Leah, God had compassion on Leah and allowed her to bear children first. After bearing Reuben, Leah next gave birth to two more sons, Simeon and Levi. In the Hebrew language, Simeon's name referenced the fact that God had "heard" Leah's prayers. Similarly, Levi's name expressed Leah's hope that the birth of these children would cause her husband to be "attached" to her. (Genesis 29:21-33, NKJV)

After several other children were born to Jacob, Leah had a baby girl. Dinah was Leah's seventh child, and Jacob's eleventh. (Genesis 30:21)

Many years later, Jacob decided to leave his Uncle Laban and return to Canaan. On the way, he stopped near the city of Shechem. Since the city was ruled by Hamor, Jacob bought some land from the sons of Hamor. (Genesis 33:18-20)

One of Hamor's sons was named Shechem. When Shechem saw Dinah, he took advantage of her. The prince then decided that he wanted to marry her. So he and his father went to bargain with Jacob and his sons. (Genesis 34:1-4)

Jacob's sons were "grieved and very angry" at the disgraceful way their sister had been humiliated. However, they did not show their anger at that time. They instead decided to deceive the men of the city by entering into a treaty with them. (Genesis 34:5-24)

Three days later, Simeon and Levi killed all the men of the city. After killing Hamor and Shechem, they brought Dinah back home. Jacob's sons "plundered the city" and took the women and

children of the city as captives. (Genesis 34:25-29)

Jacob expressed disapproval of Simeon and Levi's actions, fearing that the incident would turn the people of the land against him. The two defended themselves by denouncing Shechem's shameful treatment of their sister. (Genesis 34:30-31)

In contrast to his defence of Dinah, Simeon did not defend his younger half- brother Joseph from being mistreated. Many years later, Simeon was the brother who stayed a prisoner in Egypt while the other brothers took food to their families. Eventually, he and his brothers would learn that the ruler of Egypt was Joseph, who was willing to forgive and provide for them through the famine. (Genesis 42:21-24; 43:23; 45:3-8)

When blessing his children, Jacob (then renamed Israel) recalled Simeon and Levi's fury against the men of Shechem. He censured their "cruelty" and told them that their descendants would be scattered among the tribes of Israel. (Genesis 49:1,5-7)

Simeon had children of his own, one of whom was the son of a Canaanite woman. (Exodus 6:15)

Though Simeon had taken action against immorality, not all of his descendants shared his zeal. Generations later, as Moses was leading the people in the wilderness, a Simeonite named Zimri defiantly brought a Moabite woman into the camp to commit sin with her. In contrast, Phinehas, a descendant of Levi, took action to remove the abomination from God's people. (Numbers 25)

During the time of the judges, the tribes of Simeon and Judah helped each other claim their respective territories from the Canaanites. In the time of King Asa, many Simeonites celebrated the Passover to God. By the time of King Josiah, pagan altars had to be destroyed from the cities of Simeon. (Judges 1:3,17; 2 Chronicles 15:9; 34:6)

Simeon's zeal for justice was commendable, but his use of deception and viciousness were not. Thus his tribe was eventually scattered. In our next issue, we plan to see how Levi's descendants were scattered.

IT IS HARD FOR A RICH MAN TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Izu Egege, Sheffield

This article is about one of the most controversial teachings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament books of Matthew 19:23-24, Mark 10:23-25 and Luke 18:24-25.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again, I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Matthew 19:23-24 (NKJV)

Preceding this pronouncement was one of the most unfortunate events that occurred within the period of Jesus' ministry. A young, rich ruler ran to Jesus. Yes, he ran to Jesus! As influential as he was, as rich as he was (and yes, he was very rich), he knelt before Jesus. He also had great charisma. He was drawn to Jesus, for He loved him (Mark 10:21). Most importantly, he was a good man (Matthew 19:18-20). He knew the Law very well and kept same religiously. By all standards, he was a good man and did not need much, or so we may think. But he needed to be "Perfect". For Jesus Christ had earlier taught on the need for perfection in His Kingdom.

"Therefore, you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Matthew 5:48

Jesus emphasizing further the need for perfection in His Kingdom had to include it in His prayer for His Church.

"I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."

John 17:23

Jesus is emphasizing commitment in following Him. Christianity is a full-time course. It is a full-time lifestyle.

Jesus had earlier taught his followers to seek first His Kingdom (Matthew 6:33).

Now, back to the unfortunate rich young ruler, he had great wealth. He obviously was attached to his material possessions. He was unwilling to give it all up for an eternal life of bliss.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. How greatly his assets would have helped the Church? No. Jesus said he should give it all to the poor. We are to love God with our all. (Matthew 22:37). All we have belongs to God. We must love God more than our home, our wife, our husband, our children, our father and mother, our brothers and sisters. (Luke 14:26,27,33). We are crucified with Jesus; hence, we no longer live for ourselves in every sense (Galatians 2:20). Considering the aforesaid, is it easy for any rich person to place Jesus Christ and His Church above all?

But can the rich make heaven?

Even Jesus' disciples were amazed at His teaching, just as we are. But Jesus is God and searches the innermost parts of our minds. His comforting answer is,

But Jesus looked at them and said, **“With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.”**

Mark 10:27

The young rich man was desperately in need of salvation, but he went away sorrowful. He went away a very sad man. Oh, the choices we make. He made a conscious choice. Choosing “life” over eternity with God. This is a choice many of us have consciously made today. The unfortunate thing is that the modern-day Church has decided to water down what Christianity demands under the classification of moderate Christians. Some have equally decided to follow Satan while still in the Church,

while hiding under the misconception of grace. I pity such individuals. Our salvation is a gift. Not by our personal efforts, for the rich man had plenty of that and a good name to match with it. It is God's gift.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name

John 1:12 (NKJV)

Yes, the rich can make heaven, if they are willing and ready to give it all up for God, not in death, no, but by using it ALL in His service and to His glory. God requires our total commitment.

Jesus Christ had these comforting words for His followers:

And he said unto them, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Luke 12:15 (ASV)

But having food and covering we shall be therewith content.

1 Timothy 6:8 (ASV)

ABRAHAM, HAGAR AND ISHMAEL

John Kneller, Newtongrange

Genesis 21:8-20

Abraham was rich, powerful and prosperous. Father of the Jewish nation, faithful to God and known as the friend of God. He had everything he needed or wanted. Well almost. He lacked a son to inherit it all. (Genesis 15:3-4)

Sarah, his wife, is pointing out the obvious truth; that due to her age he would not get a son by her. She says they would have to improvise if God's promise is to be fulfilled! Sarah's idea is for Abraham to take a second wife and have a son by her. But who to choose. Not somebody who would oust Sarah from Abraham's

affections! Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, seemed ideal. She knew her place and Sarah could control her. Hagar would not be a rival.

He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress.

Genesis 16:4 (NRSV)

Hagar despised Sarah. How hurtful for Sarah. So, it was in this atmosphere that Ishmael came to be born. It was about 14 years before Isaac, the son of promise, was born. It was a very unhappy period for both Sarah and Hagar.

Genesis 21:8-20 relates the events after Isaac is born. The problems that had been simmering away for 14 years came to a head when Ishmael is seen mocking his young brother. Sarah demands that Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael away. Sarah said to Abraham,

Cast out this **slave woman with HER son**; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with **MY son Isaac**. The matter was **very distressing to Abraham on account of HIS son**.

Genesis 21:10

The emphasis is mine but we can readily imagine the passion and hurt during this encounter.

Hagar is given provisions and sent away. She wanders in the wilderness of Beersheba with no sense of direction or purpose. Without friends or support she loses all hope and waits to die. She cannot bear to watch Ishmael die. What mother could bear that? So, she watches from a distance, weeping.

And the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is." **Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water**. She went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy to drink.

Genesis 21:17

This is a very moving account full of emotion in the lives of real

people. The well was there but she didn't see it. She was blind to the well of water that could save her and her son. God opened her eyes and the outcome was that Ishmael grew and became the father of a nation. God 'heard the voice of the boy' (verse 17) and provided a life giving well. 'God opened her eyes and she saw' the well. We serve a God who loves his creation and provides for it. A God who listens and hears those who call on him.

I want to suggest to you that there is also a lesson for our time. A picture of our world today. A world wandering about in a wilderness of its own making, without sense of direction and without any hope in consequence. A world oblivious to the salvation and future that God has provided. A world that **doesn't see** the well of water springing up to life now or eternal life in God's presence.

People are still blind to God and his blessings especially in this day and age.

Matthew quotes Isaiah, who says:

'People have eyes that don't see and ears that are deaf to God.'
Matthew 13:14

People are oblivious to His being, to His existence and the blessings He offers.

Hagar did not see the well until God opened her eyes! Can the nations not see God? Are they permanently blind? Paul in Romans chapter one accused his generation of not wishing to retain God in their knowledge. Sin therefore came to fill the void in their lives.

Life did not turn out for Hagar as she imagined. To end up dying in a wilderness was not what she expected. Will our generations search for a utopia of their own design and end up like Hagar lost in a wilderness that threatens their very existence?

The way back for our society is to open its eyes and acknowledge God the Creator and respect God's wisdom in the affairs of men. The Prodigal Son of Luke 15 eventually had the good sense to

realise the mess he was in and that the **only way out** was to go back to his father and seek forgiveness.

But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Luke 15:20

The father **ran** to meet him. This demonstrates the gracious and merciful nature of God.

After Abraham's death, the Philistines filled in the wells that Abraham had dug for his flocks. (Genesis 26:15) Isaac needed wells to water and bless his flocks and it was down to Isaac to clean them out and make them usable again. Present society seems determined to infill the wells of truth and holiness that the Scriptures have provided for us. As Christians, we need to continue promoting and defending those truths in spite of opposition.

So how do we see God? Or, are we also lost in our own little wilderness?

As Christians, we see and enjoy the 'wells of blessing' that God has provided for us. If we can share these blessings with others and point them to the well that springs up to life eternal, then we will be fulfilling our Christian vocation.

As John Newton wrote in his hymn 'Amazing Grace', *I once was blind but now I see*. For that vision, we thank God and wish to share it with others.

BIBLE QUESTIONS?

Brother Frank Worgan is happy to receive Bible questions
by e-mail or letter.

frankworgan@outlook.com

11 Stanier Road, CORBY, NN17 1XP

MICAH'S LEVITE

Temptations faced by a Paid Preacher or Pastor

James Lim, Lavender, Singapore

Judges 17

Unlike an administrator, it is not easy to measure the success of a preacher's work because he may be in a situation similar to Ezekiel where his audience may not be receptive to God's message. We all face temptations. There is one weakness faced by a paid preacher that has long term implications on the flock he shepherds.

A professional preacher, like a Levite, has no source of income except from the church. His salary, medical benefits, children's education, retirement fund, etc. are fully dependent on the existence of the church. The larger the church the higher chance of a bigger salary. A church of dwindling membership is a cause for concern for his "rice bowl". It may be hard for him to accept that it is God who gives the increase. (1 Corinthians 3:7) Consciously or unwittingly, he must ensure his church survives. Thus, it is not a surprise in his moment of weakness that secular methods are employed to make God's message more palatable in order to draw the crowd in.

Such a situation is found in Judges 17, with regard to Micah's Levite. Micah's mother was thankful that her son returned the silver he took earlier without informing her. She decided to thank the Lord by making idols (verse 3). Micah then consecrated his own son to be a priest for all his house gods.

One day, a Levite came sojourning. Behold, a purebred qualified person is here! He was invited to be Micah's priest. In a time when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (verse 6), what should a Levite do for his survival when faithful temple worship was no more in fashion?

For his own survival, this Levite was not able to obey, "Man shall not live by bread alone" (Deuteronomy 8:3, Luke 4:4). He had to eke out a living, ensuring he "brought the bacon home". He

became a priest for Micah and his idols instead of showing Micah the way of the Lord. The Levite certainly had his “rice bowl” filled, shelter and the “mighty dollar” (Judges 17:10-13). As a result, Micah arrived at a false belief that he stood righteous before God (verse 13).

As God’s priest, the Levite should have warned Micah that idolatry was an abomination to the Lord.

You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God. Leviticus 26:1 (NKJV)

As a result of his negligence, more people were influenced. Instead of repenting, the Levite was glad because his “rice bowl” was secured when he became a priest for the community instead of Micah’s family.

So the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod, the household idols, and the carved image, and took his place among the people. Judges 18:20

For leading God’s people astray, God would hold this Levite accountable.

And the Levites who went far from Me, when Israel went astray, who strayed away from Me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity. Ezekiel 44:10

ANNOUNCEMENT

Allan Ashurst, for the church in Stretford, Manchester

Rejoicing, we report the news of Stephanie Wan Siew Ming's baptism at Hindley on Tuesday the 30th of May. The Stretford congregation welcomed her into fellowship on Sunday the 4th of June.

Stephanie is a friend of a fellow student, brother Micah See; both are from Malaysia. She is well versed in the Scripture, loves the Lord, and is keen to do His will. This year she graduated and has now returned home. We commend her to the church there and pray for God's blessing on her new life in Christ.

NOTICES

STRETFORD, Manchester

The Green Hut, 538 Kings Rd. M32 8JT

Saturday Meeting October 7th

1:00 pm Lunch

2:00 pm Message

Contacts:

Pilomon Raja: dr_mpraja@yahoo.co.uk

John Purcell: Tel. 0161-439 1758

Map:

eusebos.eu/eusebos/d4web-4s/longford.htm

EASTWOOD, Nottinghamshire

Seymour Road, NG16 3ND

Saturday Meeting

November 11th

6:00 pm Refreshments

7:00 pm Message

Contact:

Adrian Limb: Tel. 01773-761 670

cofceastwood@aol.com

SCRIPTURE READINGS for LORD'S DAY 2018

God's Word is our guide to faith, life and worship and we need to understand it to serve Him acceptably. The selected readings have been compiled so that by the systematic reading of the New Testament Scriptures each Lord's Day the whole of the New Testament will be covered over a period of years. The Old Testament reading is related to the New Testament passage and will assist towards a better understanding of the Bible message.

Scripture Readings are selected by Ian S Davidson, Motherwell

Cards are available from JK Kneller, 2/2 High Waterfield, Edinburgh EH10 6TQ
0131 445 1832 email: johnkneller4gpr@btinternet.com

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD

FOUR ISSUES PER YEAR

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION – UNITED KINGDOM£5.00

OVERSEAS RATES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE TREASURER

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

0118-959 1176 email: rosabelle.payne@btinternet.com

(Please send changes of address to the treasurer)

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

Send correspondence & articles to: ScriptureStandard@gmail.com

DOWNLOADABLE BACKNUMBERS: www.ScriptureStandard.eu

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