

# Scripture Standard

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

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

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## WHAT WERE NEPHILIM?

Allan Ashurst, Stretford

Let us consider the two distinct types of people referred to in Genesis 6:4.

Nephilim (AV. giants) and “sons of God”

**Reference: Nephilim.** They were **human beings** who, through socially selective breeding, became impressively big people, impressive because of their size. Genesis 6:4 AV, “There were giants <05303 Hebrew nephilim> in the earth **in those days ...**” Those pre-flood, were wiped out. [2 Peter 2:5 “... spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;”]

Similar socially selective breeding happened after the flood. [Numbers 13:33 AV. “There we saw the giants <05303 nephilim> (the descendants of Anak came from the giants <05303 nephilim>; and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”] Again, it was selective breeding.

Genesis 6:4 relates two outstanding but different type of events, not necessarily related. They must not be confused. The second type of event occurred later, [“... and **also afterward**, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of

renown.”]

**Reference: “sons of God.”** They would be descendants of those remaining faithful to God, as it does today. [Galatians 3:26 “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”] tempted to marry worldly daughters, which was not wise. [1 Corinthians 7:39 “The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; **only in the Lord.**”] This spiritually sensible principle applied from the beginning.

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## **PRIORITISING JESUS**

Pilomon Raja, Stretford

*The following is edited from a lesson given to the congregation meeting at the Green Hut at Stretford. You can hear the complete lesson at <https://youtu.be/d6nk6nh1W1o>*

“Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, ‘Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.’ And Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.’” Luke 10:38

Martha was so welcoming. She was ready to welcome Jesus, and we know that Jesus didn’t go around on His own. There were definitely twelve disciples with Him, but usually there would be a lot more people walking along with Jesus. They would be tired, exhausted and probably very muddy. There was a lot of work to be done for them, because they had been travelling, and they must have been tired and hungry. But Martha was welcoming them into her house and one thing we can learn from her is for us to be welcoming. We welcome Jesus into our hearts and into our houses, but at the same time think about welcoming people who

are exhausted and tired and strangers.

“And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word.”

If you invite Jesus to your house you would want to hear from Him because He had the words of life, and Mary was obviously rightly sitting next to Him. There were many people who would be sitting next to Jesus and trying to hear Him and listen to Him, and we would be the same if Jesus came to our house. If you could see Him in real life and He came and He stayed, you’d probably sit Him on your best chair and then try to sit next to Him or try to sit near Him or even try to sit at His feet just to hear His word. Fortunately, we’ve been blessed with the Bible that helps us to do the same things. We can hear Jesus and we can listen to Him all day long or all night long, but the question is do we actually do that or not?

“But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, ‘Lord, do You not care?’”

“Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore, tell her to help me.”

Let’s forget about Martha for one instance and think about ourselves and where we are with our lives. What are the distractions that we have? I for one, am distracted all the time. There are so many things, with the work and life and COVID and family and more work and more jobs and then buying a house is another job. So, you keep on getting distracted, and you’ve got so many things on your mind that sometimes you don’t give enough time to be able to sit at Jesus’ feet and to listen to Him.

Forgetting about Martha, I think that’s just me. Are we really distracted with our life so much that we are running from one thing to another and actually forgetting to sit at Jesus’ feet and listen to Him? We meet together on Sunday, and most of us are able to meet on Tuesday and Wednesday, but also, our God wants us to spend time with Him alone. He wants us to be at His feet and He wants us to be there with Him. But here Martha was distracted with much serving. Being very, very busy with everything going on

around and trying to do everything alone. Looking for help and no help coming her way. So suddenly she has to interrupt Jesus and say, “Lord, do You not care?”

That’s a very difficult charge to bring against Jesus, “Do You not care?”

Because we all know how our Lord cares and how our God cares, but the question here is, “Lord, do You not care?”

I would have been hoping that Jesus would respond, “I do care,” and then try to find out what the problem is and try to help solve the problem. Whenever you come across a statement “do you not care?” we would try to help them. But Jesus’ response is a bit different, and makes us realize what is more important.

“Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore, tell her to help me.”

Martha is thinking, If Jesus would stop speaking and tell Mary, then I would get help. And Jesus, she was hoping would respond, “Oh yes, of course I do care.” But then Jesus answers her in the next verse saying, “Martha, Martha.” But we know that Jesus loves Martha, Mary, and Lazarus very well. He loves them all dearly. He doesn’t necessarily mean that He loves Mary more than Martha or Lazarus more than Martha or Mary, but that He loves them both.

Here we see two different types of people who are still close to God but Jesus is teaching where our priorities need to be. Are we really worried and troubled about many things? Jesus says, “one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

“I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please his wife.”  
1 Corinthians 7:32-34

Paul is clearly saying that he who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord. It doesn’t necessarily mean that if you’re married you can’t please the Lord, but it’s about how you prioritize

and how you as a family together can do more for the Lord. Not being busy with distractions and worldly things, not doing things to our own glory but those things which glorify Him. Doing more work upon more work or filling our time with our own activities may please me, but He wants us to do the things that please Him.

“One thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part” which is to listen to Jesus.

“One thing I have desired of the LORD,  
That will I seek:  
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
All the days of my life,  
To behold the beauty of the LORD,  
And to inquire in His temple.”

Psalms 27:4

David’s desire was to dwell in the house of the LORD. We need to desire to dwell with Him and to dwell in Him and to be able to have our living and being in Him, because that’s what moves us and that’s what makes us live.

What is the “one thing” that you need to be seeking? We labour for food and things but none of us are in want. In fact, most of us are well-fed, are probably feeding ourselves more.

“Do not labour for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

John 6:27-29

We are clearly reminded not to labour for the food that perisheth, but to labour for the food which gives us eternal life. And that everlasting life is through the Son of Man or through Jesus, whose feet we need to sit nearby or whose words we need to read from, whose direction we need to take, whose life we need to live. Are we really being distracted by worldly cares and a worldly life? Sometimes we worry too much, and we forget that

our God is an awesome God and He can do many things. What little things we can do, God can magnify them. So we shouldn't leave our hope.

There is a children's programme called *Kung Fu Panda*. Initially, he wasn't interested at all in learning martial arts but the master Shifu realized that he loved food, so he trained him by making him reach after food. So, you have got to reach after the things that you love, but make sure that the things that you love are the things that God wants you to love.

In one episode, Shifu was in a meeting with other masters, and Po was told not to watch what was happening. But Po being Po, couldn't resist that temptation, and he looked into the room like many of our children would. For example, my daughters, Rochelle and Michelle, were told not to come in when we were having the parents' meeting, but they would peek their heads in and look. They were curious, wondering what was happening. What are they talking to my teacher about? Po was like that, so he looked into the room. And because he looked into the room, he became blind. He was really worried because he was doing the things which his master had told him not to do.

When Po asked his master to forgive him, the other masters said that this was not Po's fault. They told Shifu that Po was not listening to him because of his failure; it was Shifu who had not trained him well, and that was why Po was doing something that was wrong. And the master took the punishment upon himself for what Po did.

As Christians, the world is watching us. We may not realize it, but the world is watching you and me. And sometimes when you do things which are wrong they don't think that it's you who's doing wrong but they think, "Oh, look at him. He was following Christ, and this is what he's doing." So, they ridicule the master or ridicule the parents for something that children do or something that adults tend to do when they follow Christ but they don't do what God wants them to do.

Are we like that? Are we more curious and more and more

tempted, more and more led by the things of the world, or are we trying to do the things which please God?

Jesus is not saying, don't be like Martha, and He's not saying, don't be like Mary either, but He's saying, what is the better thing to do? We all need to do the things that Martha had to do but then not to overdo it, because some things can wait. We must prioritize and do the things that are more important - the things that our Master wants us to do.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”  
Philippians 4:6, 7

So, we are not alone. Our God listens to us. We can sit by the feet of Jesus and listen to Him. If you're anxious, don't be. If you are distracted, don't be. We have a Master that we can follow, but the question is, are we really doing that?

*[Note: Jesus is not to blame when we sin, but when we Christians sin, the world might attribute blame to God.]*

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## **ROCKY THE FISHERMAN**

a true biography of a Hebrew Palestinian

Shimhone ben Yoelah grew up in an industrious fishing town on the north-east coast of Lake Geleel, named Beythsayth (The Abode of Nets)

Lake Geleel, nestled in the northern mountains of Palestine, is at its extremities only six miles across and thirteen miles long. Looking over that placid water on a calm day it is hard to realise that it can suddenly be turned into a boiling cauldron by winds funnelled down the steep gorges that surround it, striking terror into the most experienced fishermen.

When we first meet Shimhone he is a married man living with his

wife and her mother in a fairly large house near Kaparnaoum (the city of Nahum) on the northwest shore of Galeel. Rumour has it that they had at least one child, a daughter. This part of the country being very Grecian, it was fashionable for Hebrews to give their children Greek names and Shimhone's brother was named Andreas. These hardy fishermen worked on lake Geleel with their partners Yhaqove and Yoenah ben Zevadtheyoh and their hired hands.

Life was hard and living under Roman occupation was to say the least unpleasant. The Hebrew people lived hoping for the promised Mashiyach<sup>1</sup>, who would liberate their nation, ("ch" is pronounced as in the Scottish word "loch"). Because of predictions made hundreds of years before, by their esteemed prophets, they expected Him to appear at any time. He was to be preceded by the return of the notable, long dead, austere prophet Eliyah.

They had had no prophets for over three hundred years. Excitement mounted at reports from the south of a prophet Yoenah, campaigning in the semi-desert by the river Yardayn. Shimhone, Andreas and their companions joined crowds flocking to see this new prophet from all over the country. There were people from all walks of life: peasants, artisans, intellectuals, soldiers, even tax-collectors. Prophet Yoenah claimed that he was sent by God to introduce an even more notable person, decidedly superior to himself. Then they must leave Yoenah to follow Him.

One day Prophet Yoenah pointed out to the crowd an ordinary looking man of about thirty years old saying: "Look! God's lamb, who takes away the world's sin!" Without delay Andreas brought his brother to the stranger saying "We have found the Mashiyach!" Some rocklike characteristic in Shimhone prompted the stranger to rename him Kefas, an Aramaic word meaning rock. Aramaic was their mother tongue.

The stranger, Rabbi Yashuah, gained numerous followers. Shimhone, Andreas, Yhaqove and Yoenah became part of a small group, specially selected to go with Rabbi Yashuah as he



travelled the country telling folk that God's Kingdom was imminent. He called these men His envoys. Was then that prophet Yoelah the predicted reappearance of the esteemed prophet Eliyah and was Rabbi Yashuah going to be king of liberated Israel? Imagine their excitement when they heard Rabbi Yashuah preach to huge crowds, that many of them would not die before experiencing the inception of God's kingdom. Surprisingly the people most upset by His preaching were not the Roman occupation forces but their own religious elite. But that is another story.

Kefas, without hesitation, declared his conviction that Rabbi Yashuah was the Mashiyach, even the living God's only Son. Rabbi Yashuah commended him saying that He would build His society on this firm foundation, that is on the conviction that He, Rabbi Yashuah is the Mashiyach, the living God's Son. Then He decided to tell His envoys that He would be arrested, executed and afterwards rise from the dead. Kefas could not accept this. To him it seemed nonsense that God's chosen Mashiyach would suffer defeat. He was so shocked that he had the effrontery to rebuke his Rabbi: "This cannot happen to you." Rabbi Yashuah, called him an hindrance, telling him to get out of His way, because Kefas was wanting to do things man's way, not God's.

Daily Rabbi Yashuah's popularity with the common folk increased. Yet no freedom fighters were recruited. There was no rallying call to throw off oppression. In fact, Rabbi Yashuah discouraged resistance. He demanded goodness towards each other, and even that the enemies should be loved. Was he really God's predicted Mashiyach the liberator of His people? On the one hand He announced the imminent start of the kingdom and on the other hand of His arrest and execution. [Later, accused of treason, Rabbi Yashuah protested to the Roman governor that if His kingdom was to be an earthly one, His attendants would have tried to prevent His capture.]

Three years had passed and they were in the capital, Yerusalem,

to celebrate the annual Pascha feast, which commemorated their nation's deliverance from slavery, centuries before. There had been no servant to wash their feet as they entered the house, a common courtesy for weary travellers. None of them offered to wash each other's or even did their own. It embarrassed them when their Rabbi proceeded to do it. Kefas' reaction was "You will never wash MY feet". He felt he had more respect for his Rabbi than the others. Rabbi Yashuah told them that when He was in trouble, they would all abandon Him. Kefas blurted out that even if the others left Him, he never would, insisting that he would even die for Him. "Shimhone, Shimhone" said His Rabbi, "This night, Satan wants to sift you all like wheat, but I've requested that your trust, (Shimhone, in Me) does not fail and when you have done an about-turn, fortify your brother (envoys)" [words in brackets mine]. He also told Kefas that he would denounce his Rabbi three times. What was so wrong with Kefas that he had to do an about-turn? In what way then was Kefas rocklike? Had Rabbi Yashuah been mistaken in calling him Kefas, Rock?

That very night Rabbi Yashuah was arrested. Loyal Kefas gained entry to the precinct outside the interrogation room but his northern accent gave him away. Three times he was accused of being "this man's" accomplice. Each time he emphatically denied it, the third time saying he didn't even know "the man", reinforcing it with oaths and curses. Glancing up, he saw Rabbi Yashuah passing by under escort, looking at him. Recalling his Rabbi's stern prediction, Kefas fled outside and sobbed bitterly, his self-image shattered. - What had he done? - Even though everything had seemed to be going so terribly wrong, he was now even more convinced that his Rabbi was genuine. Who else could have foreknown his downfall in such detail? He was indeed the Mashiyach.

After the resurrection, The Lord Jesus<sup>2</sup> confronted Peter<sup>3</sup> with the question "Shimhone ben Yoenah, are you devoted to me more than the others?" He always called Peter by his ordinary name, Shimhone, when Peter's opinion of himself was in question. Peter could only reply "You know I admire you." The next question was

more emphatic. “Shimhona ben Yoeha, are you DEVOTED to me”. He still could only reply with the word “admire”. The third question cut him to the quick, because his Rabbi used the word admire; “Do you ADMIRE me?”. In a new found humility Peter replied “You know everything. You know that I admire you. Nothing is hidden from you.”

His opinion of himself had proved unstable. His rocklike confidence in the Lord Jesus had sustained him. His confidence in the right place, that is in the Lord Jesus Christ, he was now ready to tend “lambs”, to care for “sheep” and to strengthen his brothers who had gone through the same devastating trauma of those crucial hours, the arrest and execution of their hero.

Who could see in the degrading execution of the Lord Jesus - God triumphant? Myriads of people down the ages have! Those whose hearts have been won by it to Him. Repenting of their past, they have buried their old life in the water of immersion<sup>4</sup>, a graphic demonstration of their conviction in His historic death, burial and resurrection. From it they rose to walk a new life with Him. Those who wish to be His, must in humility take up their cross and follow him.

Will you renounce self and unreservedly trust Him, be buried with Him in immersion and start a new life with Him?

#### NOTES:

1. “Mashiyach” is the Hebrew word from which we get the word Messiah, which means the same as the word Christ.
2. “Yashuah” is the Hebrew word from which we get the name Jesus.
3. “Peter” is from the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic word “Kefas”.
4. “Baptism” is an anglicized Greek word. It is from Baptizma which means immersion.

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