

# The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

*Pleading for a complete return to Christianity  
as it was in the beginning*

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## HEBREWS, ISRAELITES AND JEWS

Most Bible students must, at one time or another, have wondered, as I have, why, in the scriptures, we have terms like "Hebrews," "Israelites" and "Jews" used in connection with, quite often, the same people. And when did these terms begin to be used, and from whence did they come? Certainly Jesus talked of "Jews" quite often, but when, for instance, He referred to Nathaniel He described him as "an Israelite indeed" (John 1:47). Why, we might wonder, should Nathaniel, although a Jew, be referred to as "an Israelite indeed"? Then again, we have in the N.T., an entire epistle addressed not to "Jews" nor to the "Israelites," but to the "Hebrews." Why should it be addressed to Hebrews in preference to Jews or Israelites, which were, after all, terms more in common use at that time. And then again, Paul (In 2 Cor. 11:22) gives the impression that there was, in his view, a decided difference between "Hebrew" and "Jew" when he challenged the Judaising Christians by asking, "**Are they Hebrews? so am I: are they Israelites? so am I: Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.**" And, of course, Paul assures us elsewhere, that he also considered himself a "Jew." Thus, we may wonder in what sense Paul considered himself an Hebrew, and an Israelite and a Jew, and what was the perceived difference between the three. Most Bible students will already be quite well aware of the derivation of those three terms, but for the benefit of those who previously may never have thought much about it, I offer the following comments for what they may be worth. It's certainly a subject I have never heard discussed previously, but hopefully it may be of interest to someone.

Obviously the first step in such an enquiry would be to discover which of the three terms was first to appear upon the scene, in the Bible. "Hebrew" is, it seems, the first to be mentioned (in Gen. 14:3); followed by "Israelite" (in Gen. 32:28) and very much later "Jew" is mentioned (in 2 Kings 16:6). This, I suppose, furnishes at least prima facie evidence of the fact that there were Hebrews in the world before there were Israelites, and that both of these were well-known long before Jews were ever so-called.

### HEBREWS

Since Hebrews seem to have been the first arrivals, let us look briefly at the circumstances. Abraham came to Canaan, as we know, all the way from Ur of the Chaldees. He came with a large retinue including Lot and all his following. Later, when Lot and his family were taken prisoner by Chedorlaomer and the other kings, (Gen. 14) we read, "**And there came one that had escaped and told ABRAHAM THE HEBREW, for he dwelt in the Plain of Mamre.**" Abraham mobilised his large number of servants into an army and recovered Lot and his goods. And so we see that, by this time in history at least, Abraham and his countrymen were referred to as

"Hebrews." The term "Hebrew" is acknowledged by most scholars to mean "those who had passed over," and in Abraham's case, those who had passed over the River Euphrates (to get to Canaan). Indeed the Septuagint (a translation of O.T. into Greek) employs the Greek *perates* which means "one who has passed over." Thus all those who "passed over" from Ur of the Chaldees to Canaan with Abraham would be considered to be "Hebrews" at that time. In short, they were "foreigners" who had come to Canaan from beyond.

By my humble, and rough, reckoning, it would be about 200 years later before an "Israelite" would ever be heard of, and so Hebrews were well and truly abroad in the world a couple of centuries before the term "Israelite" would ever cross men's lips. (And just to put things into perspective, it would be well over another thousand years before the world would ever hear the word "Jew").

So far, we have seen that all those who came with Abraham from afar to Canaan qualified for the description of "Hebrew." This would include Lot and all the others. However, as we know, all the blessings and promises bestowed upon Abraham would only pass to the world through Isaac and his son Jacob. As we shall later see, only the progeny of Jacob could be described as "Israelites" and so men like Lot, and his offspring, while yet being Hebrews, had no possibility of ever being "Israelites." (Indeed Lot's progeny became Moabites and the Ammonites - Gen. 19). Thus all Israelites would be Hebrews but not all Hebrews could be Israelites.

Understandably, the term "Hebrew" occurs oftener in Genesis and Exodus than all the other O.T. books put together. Accordingly, references to "Hebrews" thin out very early in the scriptures, and virtually disappear by Deuteronomy, in due course to be overtaken by the mention of "Israel" and references to "the Children of Israel"; "Princes of Israel" etc. Although to a great degree both terms ("Hebrew" and "Israelite") are used co-extensively (although obviously not always interchangeably) to denote the progeny of Abraham, yet when it was necessary to differentiate between the descendants of Jacob *and all other nations*, the title of "Hebrew" was nearly always used. It seems, when Israelites were talking amongst themselves they were "Israelites"; when dealing with other nations, they described themselves as "Hebrews." For instance, Joseph, who was certainly an Israelite, described himself to the dreaming butler as one **"who had been stolen away from the LAND OF THE HEBREWS"** (Gen. 40:15). Likewise, Jonah, (who was certainly an Israelite) when asked by the heathen mariners on the sinking ship to identify himself, did not say he was an Israelite, but said, **"I am an HEBREW"** (Jonah 1:9). Again, when Moses was found in the basket amongst the bulrushes, he was described by Pharaoh's daughter as **"one of the HEBREW children."** (Ex. 2:6). And so it would seem that "Hebrew" was a term which linked the descendants of Jacob with other nations, whereas "Israelite" was a term which separated them from other nations.

### ISRAELITES

It goes without saying that it could only be **after** Jacob's name was changed to "Israel," that any reference to "Israelites" could ever be possible. This change is recorded in Gen. 32:28, when the name "Israel" was conferred upon Jacob by the divine messenger: i.e. the Angel with whom Jacob had wrestled and had overcome. God's actual words to Jacob, were, **"You shall no longer be called Jacob but ISRAEL, for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed."** Jacob, as we know, went on to have twelve sons, and those sons went on to become the heads of the twelve large tribes of Israel. Once the sons grow to manhood we begin to hear terms like "Princes of Israel," and "Sons of Israel" and "The Children of Israel" in the scriptures. When Jacob and his family went down into Egypt they numbered only about 70 souls,

but after some 400 years, when they emerged from their captivity, they were numberless and as the sand on the seashore. The first reference to "Israelites" is in Ex. 9:7 when Moses was trying to rescue Israel from slavery in Egypt. "The Children of Israel" came, as a matter of course, to be termed "Israel." Indeed, "Israel" remained the normal and usual designation of Jacob's progeny right up until the kingdom divided itself (around 924 B.C. and described in 1 Kings 12:1-20). At the time of the division, when ten of the tribes broke away and formed the Northern Kingdom, leaving the residue (Judah and Benjamin) to form the Southern Kingdom, we find that thereafter the Southern Kingdom is called "Judah" and the Northern Kingdom "Israel." Because of persistent idolatry, Israel (the ten tribes) is taken into captivity by Assyria (724 B.C.). The gaps left in the population by their departure are filled, to some extent, by "colonists" sent from Assyria, later to be designated "Samaritans" and for ever to be detested by Israelites. It is thought that few members of the ten tribes ever returned to Israel, and, even today, a search continues for the "Ten Lost Tribes." Those who did not return, i.e. those who had, perhaps, set up good businesses in those foreign parts, often inter-marrying with the local native population, were considered in the eyes of many, not to be "true Israelites," and this perhaps has a bearing upon how some Israelites were regarded, both in O.T. times and also in the New.

Prior to this captivity, the two kingdoms (north and south) had co-existed, although occasionally at war, for some two hundred years. Thus, in the scriptures, the term "Israel" sometimes refers to Jacob himself; sometimes to the 12 tribes ("Children of Israel"); sometimes to those under Saul and Solomon, and sometimes to the Northern Kingdom, or the remnant which returned after the captivity, with hopes of national restoration. (Readers will understand that "The Dispersion" of the Jews) is a huge subject and any reference made to it here, is very broad generalisation).

### JEWS

The virtual disappearance of Israel (Northern Kingdom) into captivity in Assyria, meant that more focus, in relative terms, fell upon Judah (the Southern Kingdom) and it appears that the term "Judahite" or "Judeans" became common. And it's about this time, too, that we find the first mention of "Jews" (2 Kings 16:6) around 740 B.C. The English word "Jew" comes from the Hebrew word *yehudi*; the Greek *Ioudaios* or the Latin *Judaeus*, and its mention at this date means that it was some 1,300 years after Abraham was called a Hebrew. In 2 Kings 16:6 we read that "**At that time Rezin, King of Syria, recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the JEWS from Elath, and the Syrians came to Elath and dwelt there to this day.**" The term "Jew" is not, in actual fact, used a great deal in the O.T. and is more or less confined to Esther, Jeremiah, Daniel and used, understandably, in Ezra and Nehemiah in their efforts to get the Jews back to their former inheritances. The fall of the Northern Kingdom left Judah (and Jerusalem) the centre of national and religious attention and at the end of the captivity Judah played an important part in the reorganisation of national and religious life.

Thus the Judean term "Jew" enjoyed a much wider application and was adopted even by those of the former 10 Tribes, and in time, most Israelites accepted the term "Jew." For instance, Paul, although from the tribe of Benjamin, was happy to be called a Jew, and an Israelite, and a Hebrew (Rom. 11:1). Even the land of the Jews (Judea) was called "JEWRY" both in the O.T. and N.T. For instance, when King Belshazzar asked Daniel "**Art thou of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom my father brought out of JEWRY,**" (Dan. 5:13), he showed clearly that the Southern Kingdom was regarded as "Jewry" at that time. (Daniel was amongst the captives, of course, because, just as the Northern Kingdom had gone into captivity in Assyria (724 B.C.) so eventually did the Southern Kingdom go into captivity in Babylon: around 587 B.C.)

Again, when the crowd complained to Pilate that Christ **"stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all JEWRY, beginning from Galilee to this place (Jerusalem) . . ."** (Luke 23:5) we see that Judea was still regarded as Jewry, and geographically identified for us.

### CONCLUSION

How then shall we sum up? In terms of volume in the O.T., references to "Israel" and its derivatives, (over 700 of them) far exceeds the mention of "Hebrews" or "Jews." However, as previously mentioned, God is still occasionally spoken of as **"the God of the HEBREWS"**; Joseph was described by Potipher's wife as **"that Hebrew servant"**; the Philistines and the Egyptians always seemed to talk of "Hebrews" rather than "Israelites": in Moses' time we read of **"two HEBREW men striving together"** and Jeremiah mentions "Hebrews, Hebrewesses" and a "Jew" all in one verse (Jer. 34:9) during the Babylonian conquest for Jerusalem. These are but a few random examples.

When we come to the N.T. we find the three terms used quite freely but perhaps one or two instances deserve further comment. For instance, when Jesus described Nathaniel as **"an Israelite indeed"** He clearly referred to the fact that Nathaniel was not just an Israelite by accident of birth, but that he was worthy of the term by personal merit, piety, integrity, a true fear of God, a lack of hypocrisy, without guile, and a desire to do God's will. This could certainly not be said of all Jews then, or now.

Paul was forced from time to time, to assert himself as a Jew worthy of some honour. Many Jews in Paul's day were from foreign lands, where they had been born and brought up, who spoke Greek (not Hebrew) and who, like Timothy, perhaps had only one Jewish parent (i.e. they had inter-married with the heathen). True, they had been born into the commonwealth of Israel, but they were more Hellenists than Hebrews. This is the scenario in Acts 6:1 (see also Acts 9:29) where we read that **"a dispute arose over the neglected widows between the GRECIANS and the HEBREWS."** Here we have Jews described as "Grecians" and shows how some Jews were regarded in N.T. times. This is further illustrated by Paul's claim to some honour as a Jew. To those who tried to belittle him, Paul could claim that he was **"circumcised the eighth day, was of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee"** (Phil 3:5). And in Paul's address to the mob who were trying to kill him (Acts 22:2) he could say, **"I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city of Silicia. Yet brought up in this city (Jerusalem) at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers."** It should be noted that **"when they (the mob) heard him speak in the Hebrew tongue they kept the more silence."** Yes, Paul admits he was born abroad (Tarsus) but nevertheless he was brought up in the holy city (at the feet of Gamaliel no less) and was learned in all the law of Moses. He was also a "Hebrew of Hebrews" i.e. *both* his parents were Hebrew, and he was of the tribe of *Benjamin* (one of the more honourable tribes which did not join the ten in the breakaway). He could also speak the Hebrew tongue, a fact which had awed the mob.

And so, all of this seems to suggest that in N.T. times, although all three terms were in common currency it was understood that all were not quite the same. Some Jews were regarded as mere Hellenists (glorified Greeks), some were "Israelites indeed" and some like Paul, were true Hebrews, in the way previously described.

To be an Israelite, and to have been born into the commonwealth of Israel, could merely have been a quirk of fate, but to be a "Hebrew" was a mark of great honour and excellence, especially in view of the fact that the term had been *originally bestowed upon Abraham himself*, and thereafter upon all the patriarchs, and fathers, who followed him.

EDITOR.

## BARGAINING IN PRAYER

There are many misconceptions of prayer, one of which is to consider it as a means of bargaining with God - to make God as nothing more than a servant to satisfy every wish of man. But this is not its design. Its purpose, in the final analysis, is to seek God's will, to seek it so that it can be known and done. When the will of God is done, regardless of what His will may be, scriptural prayer is answered. "Thy will be done" are not idle words.

But to enable us to see the abuse of prayer better, let me quote from Charles Dickens who says of one of his characters in *Little Dorrit*, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, was a prayer too poor in spirit for her. Smite thou my debtors, Lord, wither them, crush them; do thou as I would do and thou shalt have my worship! This was the impious tower of stone she built up to scale heaven."

### WRONG ATTITUDES

A number of wrong attitudes in prayer show up in this quotation. For example:

1. *A proud haughty spirit is displayed.* The character had no need of God herself. She only needed God to act as her servant in carrying out her will. But the proper attitude in prayer is to cast oneself upon God for mercy and grace - to recognise one's own need of God. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit (opposite to the proud in spirit): for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). According to Luke, Jesus said, "**Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God (6:30).** He gives the opposite, "**But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.**" The context seems to bear out the fact that the poor are those who depend on God while the rich are those who feel no need of God. The poor are the ones who rely on God instead of self. The opposite are those who are self-sufficient and have no need of God in their own lives.

There is a perfect example of the poor and the haughty spirits in prayer given in the Bible. The Pharisee had no need of God: he had no sins, he was the standard of righteousness, and he was too good to be classed with other men. He did not seek God's help, but informed God of his goodness in contrast with the wickedness of other men. But the publican saw his need of God: he was unworthy and begged for mercy. Jesus adds, "**I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.**"

2. *A deep-seated hatred of men is revealed.* There is the disposition to crush and destroy rather than the proper attitude of lifting and saving. While hatred may be the motive for many prayers, God is not in the withering and crushing business. Prayer must seek to help; it must be constructive in nature. It was never meant to be a means of bargaining in nature. It was never meant to be a means of bargaining with God for the destruction of either person or property.

Before prayer can reach the throne of heaven it must come out of a heart filled with love. Jesus said, "**But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.**"

3. *God is offered a bribe.* "Do thou as I would do and thou shalt have my worship." This predicated service upon what one receives from God rather than taking into account that man is the steward of God - that all that man possesses belongs to God and that God owes man nothing. When we thus bargain with God we are saying in essence, "Lord if you do not do as I wish you will not have my service." What is this but offering a bargain to God - "I will give you so much for so much in return!"

But this misses the whole point of prayer. It seeks to use God rather than to be used of God; it makes a man's service an item of barter; it makes God purchase man's service with favours. This is a strange twist to prayer, but as odd as it may seem the effort to

bribe God is the heart of many prayers. "You do what I want done and I will serve you" is the wrong approach to God - in fact, it is the exact opposite of scriptural praying.

**4. God is seen as the servant of man rather than as the servant of God.** Before we pray, we need to determine who is to serve whom. Are we seeking God's will or are we seeking to have Him do our will? Are we bowing to His will or are we seeking for His help in filling our own desires? Prayer is the servant seeking a favour from the Master - seeking the Master's will. And to try to strike up a bargain in which service is rendered for favours is to forget the Master-servant relationship - to make the Master the servant. Thus when our stewardship is considered, we have nothing to offer God that is not already His by right of ownership. We, therefore, have nothing with which to bargain. All the gifts of God, including the answer to prayer, are by grace.

For this reason, we have the right to pray, we must first give ourselves to God, totally devoting our lives, our abilities, and our possessions to Him. That is, we must recognise Him for what He is, the Creator, and ourselves for what we are, the creatures. In so doing we can then have the attitude of Job when he said, "**Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.**"

I am not saying that man should never ask God for anything. Certainly not! Prayer is asking . . . and receiving. But it must be in the spirit of dependency rather than self-sufficiency; it must be to show love rather than hatred; it must seek mercy and grace rather than to purchase favours; and it must maintain a proper perspective as to the Master-servant relationship. In short, prayer is not a bargaining with God.

H. WINTERS.

## THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

If you stand on a busy street corner and watch the traffic go by and observe people scurry about, it seems everyone is preoccupied with their immediate tasks and business. It is thus easy to conclude that we live in an age which is increasing in its pace and movement. Problems which defy easy solutions loom ever larger before us. And people are often viewed solely in terms of statistics. Consequently, many individuals feel harassed and helpless in the face of this world's problems and their supposed loss of importance and value. With this in mind, can you share in the feelings of compassion which Jesus felt as he looked upon the crowds?

**"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every kind of disease and sickness. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."**

Jesus was a man who lived in the "real" world and became involved with its problems, ugliness and sin. The incarnation of Jesus reveals God's willingness to meet mankind's problems head-on through personal involvement. But although Jesus came to save all of mankind, He refused to adopt the attitude which viewed people only as numbers or "problems." Jesus cared for the *individual* soul. This also meant that He refused to restrict His involvement to one class or category of people. The Pharisees had conveniently divided people into two distinct groups: the Pharisee and the sinner! But Jesus refused to label individuals in this way. So He could associate freely with any "class" of sinner, whether it be a religious person like Nicodemus or a prostitute.

### IN "BAD" COMPANY

But Jesus was criticised for not selecting His company more appropriately as a religious teacher. It is always more secure and comfortable to limit our associations and friends among those who are "good" and pleasant. But Jesus intentionally sought fellowship with the blind, the lame, and those "grubby little people" who were full of

sin and evil. The Parable of the One Hundred Sheep in Luke 15:1-7 is just one indication of the compassion and zeal which Jesus had for the individual sinner. Jesus fully understood the pain and suffering which result from sin. So He considered it a part of His duty to reach out and grasp the hands of all sinners.

It was inevitable that Jesus' compassion would irritate the religious folk, for it seemed certain to them that the time and attention He spent on "those people" meant that He was soft on sin. Was not Jesus practically condoning sin when He dined with them and talked with them without violently condemning their actions? To be sure, Jesus taught about righteousness and the kingdom of God, but the manner by which He approached common sinners reflected an unheard-of compassion and understanding.

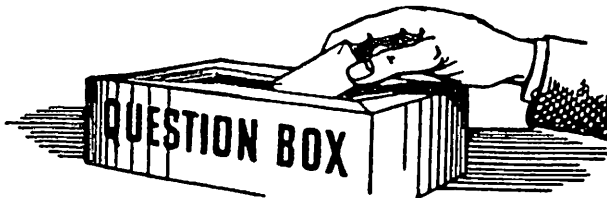
The woman brought before Jesus in John 8:1-11 had been caught in the very act of adultery. Yet how could Jesus gently tell her, "Neither do I condemn you; go your way; from now on sin no more"? Was Jesus "turning soft" on sin? As we have previously seen, many did accuse Him of this! Yet in actuality Jesus preached against sin and unrighteousness throughout His ministry. He died as a penalty for the sins of each of us. Jesus hated sin and evil with an aversion only divinity could manifest. But Jesus loved the *sinner*. Jesus' compassion for sinners like the adulterous was such that He saw no need to condemn them for "the mess they were in," for in most cases they already knew their lost condition. A man who has fallen into a pit does not need to be told how stupid he has been, or reminded that he had been warned before! He usually realises his condition, and instead of condemnation he needs a compassion which leads to rescue from his predicament. In the same way, Jesus refused to condemn sinners who deeply within realised their mistakes. Instead Jesus spent His time rescuing them.

#### OUR MISSION

Christians have an unique mission. The deliverance of the lost is to be an objective for each disciple. It is too easy to stand back and criticise, complain, and condemn the actions of others. If we are to follow Jesus' example, we must have the courage to seek those who are "obviously" sinful and become involved *personally* with their lives. Many do not want to "lower themselves" by associating with today's sinners and outcasts in society. Yet such an attitude reflects a hypocritical brand of Pharisaism instead of the love and compassion of Christ.

If we are to make headway with sinners, we must stand firmly against sin, evil, and injustice. But we must never stereotype sinners. We must value each *individual* as a potential brother or sister in Christ. Only a Christ-like compassion which hates sin but sympathises with the sinner (as a fellow-sinner) can be the proper basis for reaching the lost. We must never "become soft" toward sin, but we should always be gentle toward the sinner. Such is the compassion of Christ. This is the attitude each disciple should emulate as we seek and save the lost.

M. Houston




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Conducted by  
Frank Worgan

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*"In Romans 8:22, Paul says that 'the whole creation groaneth together until now'. What does he mean?"*

The recent controversy which resulted in the resignation of the coach of England's national football team, for reasons we need not detail here, has been a sensational and

confused affair. On the one hand, the media has persistently called Mr. Hoddle 'a born-again Christian' - (a peculiar expression which reveals both a careless use of the English language, since this designation is tautological, and in ignorance of scriptural teaching, since, unless one is 'born again', as **John 3;3-5** clearly teaches, he is not a Christian) and, on the other hand, Mr. Hoddle has apparently denied that he *is* a Christian anyway! I must say that, if his religious views have been accurately reported, I, for one, have no difficulty in accepting his denial.

### *A False Doctrine*

The theory which declares that fellow human beings are born either physically or mentally disabled as a punishment for, or as a result of, offences they are suspected of having committed in an imaginary former existence, has no place in Christian teaching, and I find it surprising that, among millions of words which have been written and spoken about the affair, very little indeed has been offered to explain what the Christian scriptures really do teach on the connection between sin and sickness.

### *What Jesus Taught*

As we think about this month's question perhaps this where we should begin.

In **John 9**, we read that, on seeing a man who had been born blind, the Lord's disciples asked him:

*"Master, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"*

Now, the fact that they had asked this question does not mean they were students of Mrs. Eileen Drewery, from whom Mr. Hoddle appears to have learned his theology. They asked, because among Jews of that period, there were Rabbis who tried to explain the problem of sickness and disability by declaring that human beings were born disabled as the result of sin committed in a former existence. The sin which caused the sickness may have been committed either by themselves or by their parents.

This theory is manifestly false, if only because the poor sufferer has no notion and no recollection of the sin he is supposed to have committed, and one would have thought that it is an essential element in the dispensing of justice, that the accused is given to understand of what offence he is guilty; and thus why he is being punished.

However, brought up to be familiar with this belief, the disciples of Jesus wanted to know where the responsibility lay in this man's case. Was he suffering as a consequence of *his own sins*? Or was it because of *the sins of his parents*? They obviously thought that the responsibility for his blindness lay with either the one or the other.

Apparently, Mr. Hoddle would have agreed with them. Since he believes in reincarnation, he would have said, *"The karma is working!"* He would have said the man's blindness was related to a previous existence.

**Verses 3 and 4 of John chapter 9** show that the Lord Jesus instantly dismissed this idea. Indeed, He did not even condescend to dignify it by offering an explanation, or by continuing the discussion! He stated bluntly, *"Neither this man nor his parents."* The subject - closed!

### *Punctuation!*

Sadly, there follows in verse 3, a statement that has been rendered in a way which I find quite impossible to accept and which, for me, creates a profound difficulty. More than that, I think it is misleading

The statement is, *'but that the works of God may be made manifest in him.'*

Now, according to this rendering, the man had been born blind and compelled to live in darkness for a considerable period of his life, in order that, when he reached manhood, God could work a miracle on him.

Think about this. If this rendering is accurate, it means, that as it stands, from birth to manhood, even though his affliction was *not* a punishment for sin committed in some imaginary previous existence, the man had been burdened with this distressing



handicap because God had deliberately inflicted it upon him, in order to use him as an object lesson.

It implies that his affliction was intended to play a part in some divine plan.

I suggest that this dilemma has been created because of the manner in which the passage has been punctuated. Look again at verse 3, and consider the following.

Remove the comma after the word '*parents*' in that 3rd verse and replace it with a period. Remove the period at the *end* of verse 3 and replace it with a comma.

This results in verse 4 no longer beginning a new sentence. Instead, it becomes a continuation of the Lord's statement and the passage reads very differently. This is what we now read:

*"Neither this man nor his parents.*

*But, in order that the works of God may be made manifest in Him, I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; night comes, when no one can work."*

The Lord is saying, in effect, *"This man was not born blind as punishment for anyone's sin. But, I must do what the One Who sent Me to do, whilst I am in this world, because the time is coming when My work will end."*

Please dismiss any suspicion that we are 'tampering' with the scripture when we render the passage in this way, because when the original Greek manuscripts were written *there were neither commas nor periods*. The punctuation, provided by the translators, is not divinely inspired and I suggest that, punctuated in the way I have indicated we have a rendering which is in harmony with the nature of a loving and gracious God.

*The 'Day'*

Notice the word '*day*'; '*while it is day*.' The '*day*' to which the Lord referred, was the duration of, or '*day*' of His earthly ministry. That ministry must be understood in the light of the statement He made in the synagogue at Nazereth, when, after having commenced His ministry, He first returned to the city in which He had been brought up (Luke 4:16-19).

That day in the synagogue He spoke about His mission. He was aware that the townspeople were curious to know why, after being baptised by John, instead of returning home as other young men had done, He had commenced a ministry of His own. The people had heard that He was preaching and performing miracles. Therefore, when He returned to the town, He explained His behaviour by referring them to the prophecy in Isaiah 61, commencing with verse 1.

But if you compare the two passages, you will see that He actually adds something to the prophecy!

*"The Spirit of the Lord GOD (Adonai YHVH) is upon Me, because the LORD (YHVH) has anointed Me . . . to bring good tidings to the afflicted" . . . and the recovering of sight to the blind . . . to proclaim the acceptable of year of the Lord."*

The words underlined are the Lord's addition to the passage in Isaiah. It was because this was His mission that, confronted with the man who had been born blind, the Lord said, *"I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world."*

In John 20:30-31, John, who records the miracle of the healing of the man born blind, explains that it is one of the '*many signs*' which Jesus performed in order to convince men that He is the Christ, the Son of God, so that, by believing, they might have life through His name, And, because the Lord was 'the Great Physician,' this blind man became the recipient of the grace and power of God, demonstrated by the Christ in the course of His ministry.

His blindness was not a divinely inflicted *punishment* for sin. We must accept this,

because Jesus tells us. But, of one thing, we may be sure, it was certainly a *consequence* of sin, just as, in the final analysis, is all the world's ills. This the scriptures *do* teach!

But the matter of suffering as a '*consequence of sin,*' and **Rom. 8:22**, I must regrettably - leave for the next issue, for lack of space.

*(The question Box is empty! If you want this feature to continue please send your questions to:*

*Frank Worgan, 5 Gryfebank Way, Houston, Renfrewshire, Scotland. PA6 7NZ).*

## FORGIVE

It sometimes seems that one of the most difficult abilities for the Christians to acquire is that of forgiving brethren that have offended them. At the same time, it is absolutely essential that we must develop this ability if we are to be accounted as righteous in the eyes of our heavenly Father. Jesus does not even encourage us to ask God for forgiveness of our own sins while we are holding grudges against others.

It is highly significant that He included this principle, in the sample prayer that He gave His disciples in response to their request that He teach them to pray. "**Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors**" (Matt. 6:12). That He was using the word "debts" primarily of unpaid spiritual or moral obligations is clear from the comment with which He immediately followed the prayer. "**For if ye forgive men their trespasses (sideslips, lapses or deviations, i.e. (unintentional) errors or (wilful) transgressions - Strong, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses**" (vv. 14,15), This contains no loophole or escape clause. Only those who forgive will be forgiven. No alternate route to forgiveness is acceptable.

In Mark 11:25,26, we find the thought expressed in the form of a positive command, followed with a warning of what will happen if we ignore the command. "**When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.**"

Nothing in the Scriptures suggest that our spiritual obligation to forgive those who offered us has any relationship to whether or not they deserve to be forgiven. Neither is there a limit placed on the number of times that the Lord expects us to forgive them. When Peter indirectly suggested that he thought that it would be going to a **generous extreme** to forgive the same person seven times, Jesus replied, "**I say not unto thee, not until seven times; but until seventy times seven**" (Matt. 18:22).

### RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION

Are you expected to be saved without having forgiven those that you feel have trespassed against you? As a precaution, it may be wise to make a long, thoughtful and prayerful appraisal of your attitude towards them.

The Apostle James pointed out an obvious but often ignored truth when he wrote, "**My beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God**" (James 1:19,21). Wrath and forgiveness are not compatible. They simply cannot dwell in the same heart at the same time, it is impossible for them to agree on a course of action. Wrath says of its object: "Hurt, punish, humiliate, destroy!" Forgiveness says of the forgiven: "Comfort, strengthen, guide, save."

Applying a pseudoscriptural euphemism to our anger in no way lessens its capacity to bring about evil results. Much that parades under the name of "**Righteous indignation**" is only old-fashioned anger trying to make itself respectable in the Christian Church. Indeed it is extremely difficult to find the term "righteous

indignation" anywhere in the Bible. The indignation of God is several times mentioned, and we know that He is always righteous in His ways. Unhappily the same cannot be said of the indignation of men. Indeed when the word is used in connection with the emotions of men, it is accompanied by evil companions. **"Unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil"** (Rom. 2:8). Indignation, wrath, anger, or vindictive acts never work the righteousness of God.

**"Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil"** (Eph. 4:26,27).

**"If you are angry, do not let anger lead you into sin: do no let sunset find you still nursing it; leave no loophole for the devil"** (N.E.B.).

"Never go to bed angry - Don't give the devil that sort of foothold" Eph. 4:26,27. (Philips Translation).

J. PHILLIPS.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

April 4	2 Kings 17:5-23	Luke 9:51-62
April 11	Amos 1:1-10	Luke 10:1-24
April 18	Leviticus 19:1-18	Luke 10:25-42
April 25	2 Kings 1:	Luke 11:1-26

### COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

Jesus had said to Peter and Andrew: **"Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets and followed Him"** (Matt. 4:19-20). The record also says: **"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him"** (Matt. 9:9). The same call was made to Philip, to which he was obedient (John 1:43). These chosen apostles were examples to everyone. But now we read of three would-be followers (9:57-62), who appear to have been half-hearted about their commitment to the Master. Half-heartedness has no place in the service of Jesus. I like the comments of one commentator: "The way for me Jesus! The truth for me is Jesus! The life for me Jesus! I want to walk in that way. I want to share in that truth, I want to love and live in that life. I shall rejoice in whatever may be His lot for me."

A lot of people think that Jesus was particularly hard on the man who said: **"Lord, first let me go and bury my father"** (9:59). I take from these words that the father was not yet dead. His saying most likely meant: "I will follow you after my father has died." "The claims of the kingdom are absolute and immediate. Those who are spiritually alive will react to the situation quite differently from those who are spiritually dead" (R. E. Nixon). Jesus, of course, once said: **"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who takes not his cross and follows after Me is not worthy of Me"** (Matt. 10:37-38).

### JESUS SENDS OUT THE SEVENTY

The seventy went out two by two (10:1). They were commissioned by the Master. An important statement by Jesus concerning them was this: **"He who hears you hears Me; and he who despises you despises Me; and he who despises Me despises Him who sent Me"** (10:16). Jesus gave them clear instructions to follow. They visited towns and places He Himself was about to visit (10:1). They helped prepare the way of the Lord. Some places would welcome them, some would not. It is incredible to me that not even miracles had the

desired effect. There is none so blind as he who will not see! There is none so deaf as he who will not hear!

Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum were all denounced by the Master (10:13,15). ". . . for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which had been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes" (10:13). If the Master said it, it must be true! He went on to declare: "But it shall be tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you" (10:14). I have often thought about these words. Do they reveal degrees of punishment in hell?

The disciple returned rejoicing (10:7). In Jesus' name they had cast out demons and the Lord had seen "Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (10:18). "It may mean that Jesus knew that the deathblow to Satan and all his powers had been struck, however long his final conquest might be delayed" (W. Barclay). A significant verse is this: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you: but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (10:20). A number of passages immediately spring to mind: Exodus 32:33; Daniel 12;1; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 21:27; 22:19.

#### THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

This is a parable well known to many, even those outside of Christ. Everyone is aware, of course, of the hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans in Jesus' day. Many Jews then would not see an ounce of goodness in any Samaritan. All the more surprising then that the Master chose a Samaritan to get across His message of true loving towards a neighbour. The priest and the Levite were found totally wanting in the narrative. The Samaritan put them to shame. "We hence see the beauty of religion. Nothing else will

induce men to surmount their prejudices, to overcome opposition, and to do good to those who are at enmity with them. True religion teaches us to regard every man as our neighbour; prompts us to do good to all, to forget all national or sectional distinctions, and to aid all those who are in circumstances of poverty and want" (Albert Barnes). I often wonder if the lawyer went on to do as Jesus commanded: "Go, and do likewise" (10:37).

#### JESUS' TEACHING ON PRAYER

It is interesting to note that prayer is a subject that can be taught. John the Baptist taught his disciples to pray and so did Jesus. The so-called Lord's Prayer is one that is familiar to many. I recall reciting it daily at school. Like everyone else, I do not remember giving much thought to its meaning. We all said it parrot-fashion, I am sorry to say. It usually came at the end of a Bible reading, which was more often than not, inaudible. (Religious Instruction at school in my day was handled quite appallingly). Jesus never intended this prayer to be recited parrot-fashion. It was given as a pattern of prayer to His apostles rather than a form of words for endless repetition. Indeed, why pray today for God's kingdom to come when it is already been established and all faithful saints are citizens within it? But still there are wonderful truths in the Lord's Prayer upon which we should meditate daily.

God knows our needs even before we bring them to Him in prayer. But this should not preclude us from opening up our hearts continuously to our heavenly Father. The need for prayer lies totally with us. To receive, we must ask; to find, we must seek; to have the door opened, we must knock (11:9-10). L. E. Wallace once wrote: "Some of us never think to pray unless we are sick or in trouble. Then we seek God's help by praying. But we have drifted so far away from Him in our prayer life that it is

difficult to return to where He is. God never leaves us. We leave Him. And we never realise how far away we are until something happens that causes us to need Him quickly. Constant prayer will help keep us from straying away. Paul said **"Pray without ceasing"** (1Thess. 5:17).

### JESUS AND BEELZEBUB

Beelzebub or Baalzebub ('lord of flies') was originally the name of the god of Ekron, a city of the Philistines. In the N.T. he is identified with the prince of the demons or Satan. The accusation against Jesus was that He was casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub. This, of course, was complete nonsense. Far more than that, it was an act of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, who Jesus referred to as ". . . the finger of God" (11:20). **"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgotten unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come"** (Matt, 12:31-32). "The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is to deliberately attribute to Satan the power by which Jesus performed His miracles, against all evidence and for the purpose of deflecting the hearts of humble men and women from faith in Him. The utterance of the slander is simply the result of a malevolent heart, conspiring to defeat the very purpose for which Jesus came in the flesh. It is a wilful decision to scatter what He has come to gather, and the statement is a lie born out of the will to deceive" (W. Carl Ketcherside).

Demonology is an important subject for all serious students of the Word. It is clear that demons in Jesus' time were very real. He must have manifested His power over them on numerous occa-

sions, as, for example, in the incident with the dumb man described here by Luke (11:14). We read: ". . . **and the people wondered**" (11:14). All should have led to the conclusion that Jehovah was with them in the flesh. Tragically, that was not the case.

IAN S. DAVIDSON,  
Motherwell.

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### TEST YOUR BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

1. With what disease was Miriam afflicted?
2. How many gold rings were fastened to the table of shewbread?
3. How many palm trees were there at Elim?
4. Which occupation did the Egyptians look down upon?
5. What fruit did the spies bring back from Canaan?
6. Who was the major prophet who prophesied in the reigns of Josiah, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah?
7. How many of the healed lepers thanked Jesus?
8. Who said: "We have found the Messiah"?
9. Who went into the tomb first, Peter or John?
10. Who replaced Judas Iscariot?

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### TREASURER'S REPORT

I have prepared the following Balance Sheet for your information. It shows that expenditure exceeds income by £516. However, over the last two years they are reasonably in line with the result that a smaller bank balance is carried into 1999. I will review the situation at the end of the year to see what action, if any, is needed for the future.

This report is a very brief comment on the magazine's financial standing. If any one would like further clarification I would be willing to answer any particular points raised.

**BALANCE SHEET FOR 1998**

<b>Income</b>			
Bank account 1/1/99		£1405.89	
Subscriptions	£3249.62		
Bank Interest	85.56		
Gifts	<u>1297.60</u>	<u>4632.78</u>	
		<u>£6038.67</u>	
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Printing	£4248.00		
Postage	848.40		
Reading Cards	<u>52.60</u>	<u>£5149.00</u>	
Bank account 31/12/98		<u>889.67</u>	
		<u>£6038.67</u>	

J. K. Kneller (*Treasurer*)

*I have examined the books, receipts, etc., and find them to be correct and in good order.*

J. H. Currie (*Auditor*),  
28/1/99.

## URGENT APPEAL FOR HONDURAS

Our daughter Sister Carole Ashurst is using her nursing skills in Danli, Honduras, helping brethren with relief work. The situation is desperately urgent. Below are extracts from her latest e-mail. Communications are difficult. Our contact is through Sister Linda Henry at the Baxter Institute in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Danli is some distance from Tegucigalpa. Because the method of getting moneys to Carole is complex I suggest that any cheques for Carole should be made out to me Allan Ashurst and be accompanied by a covering letter saying it is for Carole Ashurst's relief work in Honduras. Brethren in the Americas please contact our son Paul Ashurst in Byron GA by e-mail - Pash007@juno.com

Allan Ashurst, 60 Kenwood Road,  
Stretford, Manchester. M32 8PT  
Tel. 0161 865 4242.  
E-mail: ashursta@aol.com

Dearest all,

Having lived in Danlee since arriving the people there have become special, the needs of the displaced and disabled (especially the children) are urgent.

Linda expected a shipment of wheelchairs from "Healing Hands." I came here to sort them out but they are already claimed elsewhere, so sad.

The children I am working with and young adults spend their lives on filthy floors, with terrible chest infections and other diseases due to their living conditions. One lad I saw yesterday lives in a tiny dobie home with a family of 15.

Because I had raised the hopes of people that the Church was helping them with wheelchairs and because they do need them desperately, I have decided to do what I don't enjoy doing, asking you to tell everyone about the kids.

I will use a borrowed camera and send pictures. The money I have left is being spent on children's therapy at the centre, transportation, as they have none, doctor's reports and medication. I don't know if I can afford to stay here another 2 weeks. I may do as much as possible to set up care in the homes of the children, maybe spend one night in each home teaching massage and exercises, and then when I get back to the States try with God's help find an old ambulance vehicle and get wheel chairs down here, etc.

Love, Carole,  
Baxter Institute of Biblical & Cultural  
Studies, Apartado 1726 Tegucigalpa,  
Honduras.  
Tel. (504) 246-0099, (504)246-0068  
Fax (504) 246-0932

## OBITUARY

**Dalmellington:** It is with deep sorrow and regret that we report the passing of our brother William Black, on Friday, 5th February, 199. He was 87 years of

age. Our sympathy and prayers are with daughter May, George her husband and all the family, and indeed with all those who mourn his passing. A funeral service was conducted in the Old Folks Home at the Glebe, by the writer, assisted by Harry McGinn. The Service at the cemetery was conducted by Ian Davidson, Motherwell, assisted by John Kneller, Tranent. The Church at Dal-mellington, (now discontinued), began in 1935 at Pennyvenie, and brother Black was baptised on February 17th 1935. Willie was a faithful church member for 64 years, always at the meetings of the Church except when his work in the mines required him to be away. Over the last ten years, our brother had to be looked after, firstly in a Home in Patna and latterly at the Glebe where he was so well taken care of, and latterly died.

DAVID CHALMERS.

**Wallacestone:** It is with deep regret that we record the death of Sis. Janet (Jenny) Myles. Sis. Myles, wife of Bro. John Myles and sister of the late Bro. John McLuckie, was baptised at an early age, broke bread in her home with her husband John and her mother. In 1962, after being visited by the writer and the late Bro. John Baird, the family affiliated themselves to the Church at Wallacestone and continued faithful until she passed away early on Sunday, 24th January, aged 82. She was laid to rest at Camelon Crematorium on Friday, 29th January, the writer officiating at the service. We commend her 88 year old husband, John, to be with God, the Comforter of the bereaved. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

JAMES GRANT, Secy.

## REPRINT OF DAVID KING'S WORK

The "Memoir of David King" by Louise King, which comprises some

details of his life and many articles which he wrote on various subjects is now available on disk 234 pages - £1 inc. p&p.

Or 5 disks containing all the books, etc. - £3 inc. p&p

Miss R. M. Payne,  
1 Kenilworth Avenue,  
Reading. RG3 3DL.

## COMING EVENTS

### BUCKIE SOCIAL

SATURDAY, 1st MAY, 1999

*Details later*

### TRANENT SOCIAL

Venue: Loch Centre, Tranent

Date: 27th MARCH, 1999

Speakers: Bro. John Morgan,

Bro. Robert Marsden

## GHANA APPEAL

In November 1998 Loraine and I visited Koforidua the second church that we began to help in Ghana, some readers may remember we helped them buy their land in February, 1990. Their building programme has very slowly progressed over the past nine years. There have been many problems. In 1995 when they were ready to roof the building the materials were lost in a tropical storm. Recent money sent to this church was spent on purchasing roofing materials. We have seen the completed roof. The secretary of the church has written me a letter requesting aid to complete the floor as they were faced with a new rent agreement for the building which they have used for the passed 10 years. As they cannot afford a new rent agreement and the church is so close to completion the church have now moved into their new building but the

floor needs to be cement screeded as it is very rough after 10 years of weathering. There is a blind man who would like to read the Old Testament (he has a braille New Testament) but after making enquiries the Old Testament in braille is too bulky for this brother. If anyone has the Old Testament on cassette tape that they no longer use, this brother would appreciate it.

The Church continues to grow in Ghana. All the glasses, clothes, books and children's toys received in the past month have been sent out to Ghana to villages where we thought they could make the best use of them. Thank you for your continued support. I have placed a new order to purchase the necessary "Where Women have no Doctor" books and these will be sent out to churches without them in March 1999. This will cover every church with a postal address. There will be about 8 congregations that we will find a means of getting these books to (those without their own address) which will complete that task.

Please remember the following in your prayers:-

Some brethren are going to travel to the far North of Ghana to encourage the

remote churches by having a time of fellowship, preaching and support.

Fred Tamatey, a well known and much loved preacher who is ill suffering stomach ulcers.

We have been greatly encouraged especially in the last month having received some new contributions and once again thank everyone who are helping in this appeal.

Please make cheques payable to "Graeme Pearson (Ghana Appeal)" and send to Graeme Pearson, 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife, KY12 0DU. Tel: (01383) 728624.

- 
- 10. Mathias (Acts 1:26).
  - 9. Peter (John 20:5-8).
  - 8. Andrew (John 1:41).
  - 7. One (Luke 17:15).
  - 6. Jeremiah (2:2-3).
  - 5. Grapes with some Pomegranates and Figs (Numbers 13:23).
  - 4. Shepherding (Genesis 46:34).
  - 3. Seventy (Exodus 15:27).
  - 2. Four (Exodus 25:26).
  - 1. Leprosy (Numbers 12:10).

**ANSWERS**

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