Scripture Standard

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Pleading for a total return to New Testament principles.

No New Truth

I will never neglect reminding you about these matters. though you perceived, and have been grounded in, **the present truth.**

2.Peter 1:12

New Testament Principles - 4

Bible documents were written in the ordinary Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek of the time. Yet many translations still have 'churchy' words like bishop, deacon, pastor, minister and baptism. However the NIV translates 'bishop' (Greek: EPISCOPOS) correctly, by the ordinary English word "overseer," but adds the footnote: "traditionally *bishop*." The original Greek word does mean "overseer/supervisor."

In Titus chapter 1 verses 5 and 7 it is evident that the word "bishop/overseer" refers to the same role as the word "elder" (Greek: PRESBUTEROS). "Elder" refers to the overseer's maturity [cp. 1.Timothy 3:6]. Many will be surprised to learn that several elders were appointed in each congregation [Acts 14:23]. The practice of having one bishop over several churches, with archbishops etc., is digression from the original faith. This striving for control troubled churches even in New Testament times [3.John 9, 2.Thessalonians 2:3-4,7, Acts 20:29]. Persecution kept it in abeyance but it 'came out of the woodwork' when 'Christianity' was decreed to be the official religion of the empire and pagan temples were handed over to churches for worship.

Another surprise might be that an "elder" is also a "pastor." The word "pastor" [Greek: POIMËN] means "shepherd." The elders had to "feed the flock" over which they were overseers [Acts 20:17,28, 1.Peter 5:1-4]. You will have observed that their jurisdiction did not extend beyond their own congregation, and also that an overseer (bishop), is the same as an elder, and as a shepherd (pastor).

The Model Prayer

Derek L. Daniell - Tunbridge Wells

Jesus' disciples, seeing Him pray often and effectually, and seeing the power of prayer in His life because of the intimate relationship He had with His Father, said, "Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11;1ff).

The popular version of this prayer is recorded in Matthew 6:9-13, So what can we learn about prayer and how we can apply it to our daily lives.

"After this manner, therefore pray ... "

Matthew's account indicates that Jesus meant what follows is a model for prayer, rather than something to memorize and routinely recite [**see vv.5-8**].

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed is Thy name" How we address God is of primary importance because He has bestowed such love on us, "That we should be called children of God" (1 John 3:1). We should respond by calling Him "Father" [Galatians 4:6] and praise His high and holy name [Psalm 111:9] by expressing the reverence which is due Him. This will help us to be mindful of the gravity, as well as the privilege of prayer.

"Thy kingdom come"

The apostles were to pray for the kingdom to be established as God had promised through such prophets as Daniel, Micah and Isaiah. It is also important that we express our hope in the fulfilment of the promises of God. We know that His kingdom has long been in existence [Mark 9:1, Colossians 1:13, Revelation 1:9], but we can pray, "may your kingdom be extended."

"Thy will be done in earth, as in heaven"

We should also express the desire that our lives and the lives of others conform to His will. Since God "desires all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1.Timothy 2:1-4), we should pray to this end.

"Give us this day our daily bread"

Rather than worry about what we eat, drink, wear, etc, we should recognize our daily dependence upon God, remembering that, " Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17). If we "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness ... all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). This involves "casting all your care upon Him, for he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"

If we are seeking forgiveness of our own sins against God, we must forgive the sins of others against us. We will do this if we want to obey the second great commandment, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:39-40).

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"

We are to follow God wherever He may lead and we are to "count it all joy when [we] fall into various trials" (James 1:2). However we are permitted to ask Him to keep these to a minimum because God "will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able; but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that we may be able to bear it" (1.Corinthians 10:13). We should however, pray for the wisdom to recognize the way of escape when trials come [James 2:5].

"For Thine is the kingdom, and power, and the glory forever" We must always remember that the kingdom belongs to God not us. We cannot add to or take from the things concerning the kingdom. We must always keep in mind that He alone has the power to command and enforce obedience. We should continuously give Him the glory that He alone deserves for the good that is accomplished through our efforts and those of others, for "without Him we could do nothing"

Amen.

The Apostle James (son of Zebedee) Jonathan Ashurst - Byron, GA

James (the son of Zebedee) was one of the first followers of Jesus; he was also the first of the twelve apostles to be martyred for his Lord. This James (not to be confused with James the Less, or James the half-brother of Jesus) was one of Jesus' closest friends and witnessed many special events. James left everything in order to follow Jesus and proclaim Him to the world.

One day, while Jesus was walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw James mending fishing nets with his brother John and his father, Zebedee. Jesus called James and John to come and follow him. As Matthew 4:22 reports, "they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him."

[to become "fishers of men" compare Mark 1:19; Luke 5:10]

James and John were partners with Simon Peter, another fisherman who followed Jesus. After seeing Jesus work a miracle involving a miraculous catch of fish, James was among those who were "astonished" at Jesus' power [Luke 5:9-10]. He would have many other opportunities to see Jesus' mighty works.

James was in the house when Jesus healed Peter's motherin-law of a fever. He also saw Jesus heal many other people that same evening [Mark 1:29-34]. Later, James was one of the three apostles who witnessed the resurrection of Jairus' daughter from the dead [Mark 5:35-43; Luke 8:49-56]. He, his brother John, and Peter, were also the only three apostles to witness the transfiguration of Jesus

[Matthew 17:1-2; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28-29].

James is listed along with the other apostles that Jesus sent out to preach and work miracles [Matthew 10:2-3; Mark 3:17-18; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13]. In one particular instance, James became angry with a Samaritan town that rejected Jesus. He and his brother John asked Jesus whether they should call down fire from heaven upon the town, as Elijah had done long ago to the armies of Ahaziah. [**2 Kings 1**]. Jesus rebuked James and John, saying:

"Ye know not what spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

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(Luke 9:51-56).
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Because of this incident, Jesus gave James and his brother the nickname "Boanerges," which is translated "The sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17-18).

Not long before His death, James and his brother asked Jesus if they could sit at His right hand and His left hand in his kingdom. Jesus told them that they did not know what they were asking. He asked them the following: "can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?" They said that they could. Jesus replied, "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptised withal shall ye be baptised: but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." The other apostles were indignant when they heard about the request. Jesus reminded them that his kingdom was to feature a new type of leadership: "whosoever will be great among vou, shall be vour minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." James, along with his brother and his mother, learned that it is an honour to be a servant in Christ's kingdom. [Mark 10:35-45, Matthew 20:20-28]

Just before his arrest, Jesus asked James, Peter, and John to pray in the garden of Gethsemane. They fell asleep three times and thus were not prepared for the events that followed. [Mark 14:33-42]

Imagine their grief over Jesus' death.

Imagine their joy at His resurrection!

Just as Jesus prophesied, James did suffer for the name of Jesus. At the beginning of Acts 12, we read that Herod the king had James killed with the sword. In his death, James honoured his Savior and proclaimed the victorious truth of the gospel. At the end of the chapter, we read that Herod was smitten, but that "the word of God grew and multiplied" (Acts 12:24). Like James, let us show to the world the victorious truth of the gospel.

Romans Chapter One

James Neil - Skelmersdale

There is so much contained in this chapter that would be a great guide to anyone who is seeking to please God. Paul tells in great detail the whole purpose of the Gospel and the importance of it. He makes clear that obedience to the Gospel is the only way by which we can have the relationship with our heavenly Father we should be seeking and tells us in no uncertain terms what will separate us from God.

After his initial salutation and the declaration of his own commitment to the Gospel. Paul goes into much detail as to what pleases God and what angers him and also provides us with vivid detail as to the huge contrast between the reward of those who are faithful to God and the reward of those who commit the things which will alienate them from Him.

Throughout scripture we have warnings about offending God and over and over again we are told what offends God.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Yes - man has been shown time and again that he has to choose between The way of the Lord and the way of Satan.

Pose this question to someone you know who claims not to believe the scriptures: If there is a Heaven and a Hell, in which would you sooner spend eternity?

It would appear that common sense would dictate that the answer would be "in Heaven" and if we include those professing to be Christians in this, then I cannot dream that anyone who considers themselves to be a Christian would prefer to go to hell, but sadly, can any of us say that our life always reflects our answer?

Man seems to have in the greater part, a death wish, knowing what offends God and yet often seeming to have very little compunction about doing that which he knows will lead to his destruction.

Why Then Do We Sin?

This may seem a simple basic question and indeed ... it is. It is the answer which is difficult!

Imagine being confronted with a sign which says:

BEWARE – ESCAPED WILD LION.....

Would people ignore this sign?

Then what about this sign?

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (1.Peter 5:8)

WHICH SIGN WOULD YOU SAY PEOPLE ARE MOST LIKELY TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS AGAINST?

Most people today seem to treat the idea of the devil as a big

joke and this suits him just fine.

We Might well ask "Why do we sin?" for the reasons are many, perhaps we do not see certain things as SIN or maybe we harden our heart against sin and see them as being in some kind of league maybe we think that God has a list of sins and that list is like a sliding rule....

Maybe we do not like to think about sin and are not fond of being told we are sinners ? If so we need to take a long hard look at Romans chapter 1 because it is just as needful for us to be able to recognise sin in our life as it is to know what we must do to be saved.

Paul tells us that there can be no excuses but maybe we get that little bit complacent at times.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. (Romans 1:18)

Also Paul also shows that God allows us to live as we choose.

Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

A great chapter....but Paul pulls no punches. Lets read it again and again because it certainly puts scripture into context and makes the Question: **"WHY does man sin?**" into a personal question for each of us to think seriously about.

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

(James 1:13-15)

A LIVING FAITH

Anonymous

Real faith, even as small as a mustard seed, is adequate to give access to God's marvellous grace. But simple belief in the existence of God is not enough. One must see the whole context of what living faith requires.

REAL FAITH MUST INCLUDE:

Knowledge

We must know God. His deity and divine power can be known to us by observing His creation, but FAITH comes from hearing His Message as He and His will are revealed to us in Scripture and through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God.

[John 17:3; Romans.1:20; 10:17; John 1:18; 2.Peter 3:18]

Action

Belief in the existence of God can and must grow and bring about the obedience of faith [Romans.1:5; 16:26]. The WORD must become incarnate in us as we become living epistles. Without appropriate deeds (dynamism) faith is dead! This activity must involve obedience to the message of Christ crucified! Faith becomes alive when it is made complete by deeds of obedience.

[1.Peter 1:22,23; Luke 17:5,6; Mark 9:24; 2.Corinthians 3:2,3;

James 2:14-26; 1:22-25; Hebrews 5:9. James 2:19]

BELIEVING IN THE EXISTENCE OF DEITY, AS DO THE DEMONS, IS NOT LIVING FAITH!

Trust

The walk of faith is not one of sight. It does not find roots in empirical proof, but in total confidence in God's faithfulness. Faith sees the invisible and accepts with complete assurance things that are not seen! Faith knows that God keeps His promise to intervene in our lives, to answer our prayers, to reward us when we seek Him, and to abide with us forever.

[2.Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:1,6, 27; Philippians 4:6,7,19; 2.Thessalonians 3:3]

Love

There is a faith dynamic enough to move mountains, but worthless when it lacks proper motivation (1 Corinthians 13:2). From the beginning God has wanted us to practice real love. Faith without that fundamental element is barren and useless. We must love God, the very object of our faith, and love our neighbour as ourselves. Obedience that is not from the heart can not receive divine approval. What counts is faith working through love. With this faith we can have access to His wonderful grace! [Romans 5:1, 2; 6:17,18; Galatians 3:24-29; 5:6]

But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

(James 2:20)

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. (1.Corinthians 13:2)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

(Galatians 5:6)

Does the Bible matter?

Rose M. Payne - Kentish Town

When the Anglican Church recently voted to allow women to become bishops, one of the few women who disagreed complained that "The Bible doesn't matter any more." Unfortunately she was correct. Many people in the denominations consider that our modern Western ideas about the "rights" of certain pressure groups, such as same-sex marriage, are more enlightened than the scriptures.

None of us have any "rights" in the sight of God, and any good thing He grants us is a blessing not an entitlement, so we cannot demand any rights in His church. The guidelines laid down for meetings of the church were wisely designed to accommodate people of all centuries, all nationalities and all parts of the globe. We should be seeking to win souls everywhere and not to ask them to accept current politicallycorrect Western ideas.

There are a number of commands set down to make sure Christian meetings are conducted in an orderly fashion so as not to discourage seekers after the truth. Members are not to speak out of turn [1.Corinthians 14:33], not to use foreign languages for no good reason [1.Corinthians 14:23] not to despise the poor [James 2:1-3], not to be drunk or gluttonous [1.Corinthians 11:21-22], and women are not to speak in the assembly [1.Corinthians 14:34-35]. We would agree that most of these instructions are still valid, so why not the one relating to the position of women? Paul gives reasons why they must not teach: "for Adam was first formed, then Eve and Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in transgression. " (1.Timothy 2:11-14).

Women should of course teach privately but not in the assembly [**Titus 2:3-5**] (and it is surprising how many of the hymns we sing were written by women). But we women

should beware that the pursuit of equality does not lead us into competitive and selfish attitudes rather than promoting the spread of the Gospel in all parts of the world.

Does the Bible have anything to say about equality, then? Yes, men and women are described in 1 Peter 3:7 as "heirs together of the grace of life." Then there is the often misapplied passage:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

This means that none are excluded from salvation, but it does not imply that everyone can take on every role in the church.

Some men cannot become elders or deacons because their circumstances do not fit **1.Timothy 3** and **Titus 1**, and that also disqualifies women. Anglican bishops are supposed to be the equivalent of elders but they receive a salary, which is presumably one reason why women and some unsuitable men agitate to join them. The Archbishop of Canterbury welcomed the women because his church does not have enough male candidates to fill all the vacant positions. If that denomination would return to the scriptural system of choosing several elders and deacons from each congregation and allowing any capable man to speak in an orderly way **[1.Corinthians 14:26]** and not just the "ordained" clergy, then this problem would be solved. The Bible does still matter, because the old ways are still the best.

Strive for The Genuine Original.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write to you, and exhort you that you should **earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered** to the saints. (Jude 3)

A Child Is Born

Gretchen Ashurst, Stretford, Manchester.

How did you feel when you woke up this morning? Despondent, depressed, disorganised, remembering horrendous pictures of man's inhumanity to man? Does it seem that all over our beautiful world there is a feeling of fear that things are getting worse, more violent, more dangerous, the innocent suffering aggression? And we ask 'WHY'

Are there problems nearer home, worries about job losses, cuts and benefits, debts, how we can stretch our money to support our families, the poor wondering where the next meal is coming from and the rich scared that their millions can suddenly become useless.

The devil is crafty and knows our weaknesses, he tries to make us panic, feeling alone in the big bad world - when the truth is that outside our little island where we are truly blessed, churches are growing very rapidly and hundreds of congregations are facing persecution in many ways, gathering together on Sundays to worship, sing, rejoicing, and during the week to learn more about a loving God and thanking him for a future with hope.

In Nepal a young widow with two children meet in their little home, the mum was a Hindu who learnt the truth was baptised and now her children are Christians too. Soon local people heard about Jesus and were invited to worship with the family. The eldest son is now teaching the gospel. the wonderful news is that the local brothers who were very opposed to meeting with them have begun to help in any way they can. Please pray for them all and for brethren around the world who meet in dangerous conditions. God's kingdom stretches from shore to shore and this thought binds us together.

When we pray do we pray for strength to do every thing possible to live in the way our heavenly loving Father would

have us live, caring, sharing, comforting those who need us. He taught us to love others in this way.

Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. 'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31)

"Therefore whatever you desire that men should do to you, do also to them." (Matthew 7:12)

The parable of the good Samaritan vividly illustrates this.

(Luke 10:25-37)

Is it that we feel shy or unable to overcome our lack of understanding about people who come from all over the world, and are our neighbours. If we visit them, we know we will not be alone. He said "I am with you always," And by us visiting them they will come to know that Christians love them and Jesus loves them too. People want love and joy and peace in their lives.

At this time of year, we are being reminded of a little baby being born in Bethlehem. This good news is gradually spreading around the world.

What wonderful riches we have to offer to everyone we meet. The good news is being broadcast around the world in many ways, to a huge variety of religions, faiths and belief, even to millions who have never heard of God or Jesus and know nothing of their love for them. So God can use us here to tell them that this little boy, who came into this world grew up living the life as a man, was really the son of God, and gave his life as a sacrifice.

"Behold, the virgin will be with child, and bear a Son, and they will call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God

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with us." (Matthew 1:23)
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A child born into poverty but bringing riches into all the world, the riches of love joy and peace. We are truly blessed to know this comforter and friend who can, and will, also give love, joy, peace to them, in their lives.

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. (John 14:23)

He will be with us always.

Jesus ... spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Therefore Go and instruct all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

What an amazing promise!

For to us a Child is born, To us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called: Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

Hallelujah!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.

These three terms express different aspects of the same role.

The one man bishop and one man pastor systems are digressions.

In the early church qualified mature men (elders) were appointed in each congregation to supervise the spiritual welfare of their flock providing spiritual food like shepherds (pastors). Their qualifications are outlined in 1.Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

to be continued

NEWS AND INFORMATION

STRETFORD, MANCHESTER.

Saturday Gospel Meetings. 2015

7.00 pm The Green Hut 538 Kings Road, M32 8JT March 28th.

September 19th. October 17th.

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Allan Ashurst. Tel. 0161-865 4242 John Purcell. Tel. 0161-439 1758 **Map:**

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Contact:

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There are many Bible based topics on www.simplychristians.eu web site.

BIBLE QUESTIONS

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

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