

Scripture Standard

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Pleading for a total return to New Testament principles.

contend earnestly for the faith
Jude 1:3

“GODLINESS”

a confusing word.

Adjectives ending in "-liness" mean: having the quality like something, as in the words: beastliness, worldliness, kingliness, steeliness.

So does the word “godliness” in the King James translation mean: being godlike? A nice thought, and there are ways in which we should try to be like God, e.g. Leviticus 11:44 - "... be holy, for I am holy."

But He has authority we could not possibly have. So, are the passages where the word "godliness" occurs, really about mimicking God? Let us examine the original Greek words.

In the KJV, it is translated from θεοσεβεια (theosebeia) and εὐσέβεια (eusebeia)

However the word θεοσεβεια. (theosebeia) means: **reverence for God**, not being like God.

It is from θεος meaning deity, and σεβομαι meaning to revere. Similarly εὐσέβεια (eusebeia) is from εὐ meaning profound and σεβομαι means: **profound reverence**, piety, i.e. towards God.

Please do consider deeply in the following passages where the word "godliness" is replaced in bold letters with literal meanings. In places the difference is profoundly arresting, sometimes deeply moving and even startling. Persevere and be blest.

θεοσέβεια [Strongs 2317] its only occurrence is:

1Timothy 2:10 but (which becomes women professing **reverence for God**) with good works.

εὐσέβεια [Strongs 2150]:

1Timothy 2:2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all **profound reverence** and honesty.

1Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of **profound reverence**: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

1Timothy 4:7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto **profound reverence**.

1Timothy 4:8 For bodily exercise profits little: but **profound reverence** is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

1Timothy 6:3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to **profound reverence**;

1Timothy 6:5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is **profound reverence**: from such withdraw thyself.

1Timothy 6:6 But **profound reverence** with contentment is great gain.

1Timothy 6:11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, **profound reverence**, faith, love, patience, meekness.

2Timothy 3:5 Having a form of **profound reverence**, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Titus 1:1 Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after **profound reverence**;

2 Peter 1:3 According as his divine power has given to us all things that pertain unto life and **profound reverence**, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

2 Peter 1:6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience **profound reverence**;

2 Peter 1:7 And to **profound reverence** brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

2 Peter 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and **profound reverence**.

Acts 3:12 εὐσέβεια is here translated **holiness**:

And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or **profound reverence** we had made this man to walk?

**So "godliness" is about having piety,
i.e. a profound reverence toward God our Saviour.
This we should have in everything.**

The Sign over the Cross (Part 2 – Languages)

Jonathan Ashurst, Lexington, Kentucky

In the last issue, we compared the Tower of Babel with the sign on the cross. We saw that Jesus was able to do what the rebellious tower builders failed to do, because only he could bridge the gap between earth and heaven. (Genesis 11:1-9; John 3:13-15)

Let us now examine more closely the languages that Pilate

ordered to be used for the inscription over Jesus' head, as well as the conditions of the classes of people who used those languages at that time.

Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross.

And the writing was:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

John 19:19-20

The notice was posted in three languages: Hebrew/Aramaic, Latin, and Greek.

Aramaic	was used by the local Jews	the language of the oppressed	Matthew 27:37 THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS
Latin	was used by the Romans	the language of the oppressors	Mark 15:26 THE KING OF THE JEWS
Greek	was used as a common tongue	the language of the observers	John 19:19-20 JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS

Luke 23:38 THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS

Like his fellow Jews of the day, Jesus was suffering oppression. On the cross, he identified with all who endure injustice. In addition, through his suffering, he would provide true freedom. (Matthew 5:10-12; Luke 4:18-19; Revelation 2:10-11)

He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed

Like the Romans of the day, Jesus was a mighty ruler. However, his kingdom is not based on worldly principles, but on heavenly ones. He came to establish true righteousness and peace, in a kingdom that would stand forever. (Daniel 7:13-14; John 18:36; Acts 2:36; Acts 17:6-7)

His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Like the observers of the day, Jesus sometimes felt overwhelmed by the pain and injustice that he witnessed. Nevertheless, his analysis always brought clarity, hope, and true understanding. He not only observed; he took action to improve people's lives. (Mark 9:19; Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:1-5; Mark 6:34; Luke 24:18-27)

And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.

Ironically, Pilate's disparaging warning sign drew all kinds of people to Christ. Jews from abroad were in Jerusalem for Passover and would have heard of the resurrection at Pentecost; they eventually took the message back home with them. As the crude multi-lingual placard clearly demonstrates, Jesus' message is universal. (John 12:32; John 19:19-20; Acts 2:36-39)

- Today, there are still many people being oppressed around the world. Jesus came to save them.
- There are many people acting as oppressors. Jesus came to save them.
- There are many people observing the chaos of the world. Jesus came to save them.

Whoever you are and whatever you have or haven't done...

Jesus came to save you. His message is for all.



Image from:

http://www.simplychristians.eu/eusebos/printable_files/DOCUMENTS/a%20RghtPat h/a7%20The%20Passion%20of%20the%20Christ.pdf

Response to the Coronavirus

Jamie McIlroy, Stretford

I'd like to share some words of comfort during these uncertain times.

Leaves rustle in the trees, tall grass dances in the meadows, and waves break on the surface of the sea. We can see the effect of the wind on our environment without actually seeing the wind; just as we can see the devastating effect of the coronavirus without actually being able to see the virus itself.

Just because we can't see something, doesn't mean that it isn't there. Similarly, just because we can't see God, doesn't mean that He doesn't exist. The Bible is filled with truths about an invisible reality; Heaven, Hades, Angels, Eternity, and of course - God Himself.

An atheist once asked a question about the visible and the invisible during a debate with a Christian. He said,

“If angels are made of spiritual matter, and a pen is made of material matter, and if spiritual matter displaces no space, how many angels can you fit on the tip of a pen?”

This is, of course, a stupid question because the term “spiritual matter” doesn’t make any sense. However, there is a lot of misunderstanding about the difference between the spiritual and the physical that it is no surprise that such questions come up. Not all questions are genuine of course - and could be used to try and ridicule us, but some maybe. Who are we to judge that behind the facade of a bold question hides someone earnestly searching for the truth?

The question drew a snigger from the crowd. A divided lecture theatre came alive, as supporters from both sides of the debate, leaned forward in their seats to hear the answer. A sense of anticipation filled the air as the one being asked the question slowly rose to his feet. He tapped the microphone to check that he could be heard from the back of the room. He paused... Was he stalling for time? Did he know the answer?

The atheist spoke again, interrupting the silence.

“How can it be that a spiritual force can have an impact on a material universe to create it?”

“That’s two questions,” the Christian replied calmly. “Which one do you want me to answer?” They had only just begun the debate and already the tension was mounting. The rules were supposed to be one question at a time. Five minutes for one to ask a question followed by five minutes for the other to answer - and so they would continue until the allotted time was over.

“I want you to fill in the story of the rest of the beginning of the universe. God, spiritual matter, impact on physical matter.”

Let’s imagine for a moment that we are being bombarded with these questions, standing alone on the stage, all eyes staring towards us, waiting eagerly to hear our answer. What answer would you give?

“How many angels can you fit on the tip of a pen?” Spiritual

beings, such as God and angels, are not physical beings created from matter. This question is as ridiculous as, “How many jelly beans will it take to fill an infinitely sized bucket?”

The question, “Can spiritual beings interact with physical beings?” is more interesting. The Bible says in Hebrews 1:14 that angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation. The word minister simply means to attend to our needs.

In Luke 22:43 we can read about how angels came to strengthen Jesus on the night before His crucifixion. We don’t know how they did this, but know that they did help Him when He most needed it.

In the previous verse, Jesus had just called out to God in prayer saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”

Sometimes God answers our prayers by removing a problem. (See Elijah’s prayer for rain in 1 Kings 18, also mentioned in James chapter 5.) Other times God answers our prayers by strengthening us to be able to cope with our problems. And I think this is an important truth for us to realise, as we are all caught up with the problems surrounding COVID-19.

God hears ALL of our prayers and will provide each of us with the strength to get through our situation, whatever that may be. There is no doubt about that.

Throughout the past few weeks, I’ve read comments on social media asking why God doesn’t step in and prevent the virus from spreading further. We can surmise all we like about why thousands of people are dying from COVID-19; just as we can surmise as to why God permits other NATURAL disasters, wars, and poverty to happen. The book of Job is a stark reminder that surmising the will of God is a foolish exercise. He speaks directly to Job saying, “Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him?”

Psalms 135:6 says, “Whatever the LORD pleases He does, In heaven and in earth, In the seas and in all deep places.”

Remember, this is the same God; the God of love, we read about in the Scriptures. Even though we may not understand it now, we can rest assured that God is always good! And most importantly that it is His goodness that leads us to repentance - Romans 2:4.

This truth is the common thread running throughout the entire Bible. Ever since the fall of man in Genesis 3, God is calling all of humanity to repentance. He loves all humanity so much that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life - John 3:16. This verse has become so familiar that perhaps we've missed the significance. Jesus said in John 15:13-14, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."

Any earthly injustice is not pleasant by any stretch of the imagination, but our lives are a vapour when placed alongside the unimaginable blessing of an eternal life spent with God in heaven. If we want to be a friend of Jesus, then clearly, we must pay attention to whatever He has commanded. The LORD is a God of justice - Isaiah 30:18. That doesn't mean that He will continually step in and remove all of the injustice from the world. After all, He didn't prevent Jesus from suffering on the cross, or the brutal murders of the early Christians at the hands of Nero. His justice reaches far beyond the limitations of His creation and our imagination.

God's inaction to remove our suffering doesn't mean that He doesn't care. He is sovereign and remains in charge even in the face of evil, suffering and injustice; but to believe that God wills these terrible things to happen would be a mistake. This is why in the Lord's prayer we are told to pray, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." God's will is done in heaven but not always on earth.

In Psalms 115:16 we are told that the heavens, are the LORD's; But the earth He has given to the children of men.

This means that we are permitted to live freely on the earth making our own decisions and mistakes. God doesn't

micromanage everything that we do. The COVID-19 outbreak began in a "wet market" in Wuhan China, where dead and live animals were being kept in close proximity to each other. Disease spread from animals to humans. So, for anyone to suggest that God brought this great plague into the world as some form of judgement, has no Biblical grounding. He has already spoken to us by sending His son Jesus.

Even in the midst of this disaster, God's good character is being reflected in humanity all across the world.

- People are uniting against a common threat.
- Neighbours are stopping to talk and help one another more now than before.
- An appreciation for doctors and health-workers, was literally ringing out across the land the other night, as people stopped to salute the National Health Service (NHS).
- And more importantly, Christians are praying to God more than they were before this crisis started.

And this is how it should be. We are instructed in 1 John 4:7-8 to love one another, "for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

We may be trapped at home surrounded by an invisible danger outside, but we are never alone. The Bible tells us that we have an Everlasting, All-powerful, Heavenly Father.

- Exodus 3:14 speaks of a Father who has no beginning or end to His existence. There was NEVER a time when He didn't exist, and there will never be a time when He doesn't exist. This means that He is still very much alive and approachable today. We can call on Him for help through our mediator Jesus Christ - 1 Timothy 2:5.
- Revelation 19:6 speaks of a Father who is all-powerful and relies on nothing outside of Himself in order for Him to be. We can imagine the power of the ocean, a volcano, or even the devastating power of the microscopic coronavirus. And yet all of these things are nothing by comparison to the

unlimited power of the Almighty God - El Shaddai.

- John 4:24 speaks of a Spiritual Father whose presence is invisible, yet the physical impact of Him is visible for all to see.

If the atheist believes that a spiritual force can't have any effect on a physical body, then how does he explain things like emotions such as love, hatred, envy, jealousy, and rationality? If his brain is just a collection of chemicals arranged by chance over billions of years, then how can he trust his own reasoning and thoughts? Where did he get the ability to think?

In James 1:17 we are reminded 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."

When times are hard and our faith is being severely tested we can get great comfort reading from God's Word. Jesus assures us in Hebrews 13:5, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" and in Matthew 28:20, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Without regular spiritual food, our faith can become weak with worry when problems arise. Maybe we will get sick with the coronavirus or lose a loved one to this terrible disease. Maybe we'll lose our job and wonder where next week's meals will come from. But let's not forget how powerful our loving God really is. Paul recognised this when he spoke the bold words in Philippians 1:21, "as far as I'm concerned, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." There is no gain in death outside of Christ, but for us, when it eventually comes, it will have no power over us.

So, if you are worried about coronavirus or anything else for that matter, then open your Bible, and go right back to the very beginning of the book of Genesis and remind yourself just how amazing God is.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

When the Christian in the debate, finally spoke, his answer took my breath away. He said,

If you have MATTER and no SPACE (even for a microsecond), then where do you put it?

If you don't have TIME (even a nanosecond) then when do you put it?

- These three - TIME, SPACE and MATTER all had to have a beginning.
- They all had to have exactly the same, precise, instantaneous beginning!

He then highlighted something from verse one that I had never noticed before - a trinity of trinities.

In the beginning - Time: past, present & future
God created the heavens - Space: length, width & height
and the earth - Matter: solid, liquid & gas

Surely, there is only one Being who is capable of designing such a feat of infinite accuracy. The one who is identified in the book of Revelation as the "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!" A trinity of holy's to describe the holy trinity of God.

Some people call the instant arrival of Time, Space and Matter, the Big Bang, and some insist that it happened by chance - a mathematical term that describes nothing more than the probability of something occurring. There is NO chance that time, space and matter could have come into existence simultaneously without the All-powerful God.

When we ask the question "Where did God come from?" then we are thinking of the wrong god. Because the God of the Bible is not affected by time, space or matter. If He is affected by them, then He is not God. God couldn't have come from anywhere, because He is everywhere.

This study really made me think about my personal response to the coronavirus. How is it affecting me? Am I honestly worried

about it? Do I truly believe that all things work together for good to those who love God?

The spread of the coronavirus reminded me of sin, or more precisely, the systemic, pervasive nature of sin. We don't realise it's there until it is pointed out to us. We may be asymptomatic, walking around thinking that we are fine, unaware of the destructive effect our sins are having on others. We may think that we are invincible and immune from our sins. Yet, just as the Royal Family and the Prime Minister are not immune from the coronavirus, nobody is immune from sin. Romans 3:23 assures us of that.

We place our trust in the health service to rid us of the virus, and yet they don't know the cure. But when we place our trust in Jesus Christ to rid us from our sins, we are confident that He is the cure. When we turn to Him and obey His gospel, all our sins are washed away and we are continually justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Him - Romans 3:24.

As we enter into another week of confinement due to the coronavirus, let's continue to enjoy the freedom that we have in Christ Jesus.

Reach for your Bible and take comfort from the Scriptures. Read Psalm 91, about the safety of abiding in the presence of God. No matter how the weeks and months ahead will unfold, rest assured that those who trust in the Lord, have no need to fear evil.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Scripture Standard received £3,000 from the proceeds of the sale of the church building in Haddington, Scotland. We are grateful to the charter members for thinking of this work as worthy of support when they distributed the proceeds. We look forward to being able to increase our free circulation to parts of the world where there is a hunger for spiritual material.

Obituaries

Honouring the Memory of Loraine Pearson

By Graeme Pearson, Dunfermline

It is with great sadness I announce the death of my dear wife **Loraine Pearson** who went to be with her Lord on 25th March 2020.

Loraine was baptized in Kirkcaldy in October 1974. She was part of the group of six that started the meeting in Dunfermline in 1976. For four years she attended Motherwell when my work took me to Glasgow. She continued to be active in Dunfermline from 1988 until the Lord took her home having faithfully completed the race to the finishing line. She was actively involved in assisting the brethren in Ghana for sixteen years, visiting them twice. Loraine leaves behind Gary, Agnes, Karen, Drew, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. The burial took place on the 3rd April with only six permitted by law and the service was taken by Brother Ian Davidson from Motherwell. Loraine will be greatly missed by all who knew her. I was blessed to have her as my wife for fifty one years.

In Loving Memory of Joseph Bowden

Allan Ashurst, Stretford, Trafford.

On the 2nd of May, after much suffering, our brother Joseph Bowden went to be with our Lord and Saviour, in Paradise, where there is no suffering but peace and joy.

Joe was married on the 24th June 1972. He leaves behind his wife Barbara, four children: Clare, Matthew, James, Marina, grandchildren: Charlotte, Brandon, Oscar and a baby granddaughter, Leila Josephine.

As a young man he served in the Medical Corps in the Far East. He loved nature, studied horticulture, and worked for the RSPCA.



He was commended for risking his life rescuing a dog from the River Mersey. Also, he took part in the Stockport aircraft disaster rescue operations. He worked in the archives of Stockport library, where he learned that John Wesley had immersed believers in the Mersey. Later he became a landscape gardener. On retirement, he worked with Barbara at Disability Stockport.

He was brought up a Jew. From birth, he learned to love God from his mother, and the Scriptures in depth from his uncle, a rabbi. He valued the Old Covenant Scriptures, loved the 23rd Psalm, and becoming a Christian came to know the Shepherd. The church that met in Bloom Street, Stockport, where he had been baptised, is now closed down. He took up membership with us about 50 years ago.

He lived and taught the Word. Even though he latterly suffered exceedingly, he was strong in faith to the end, always praising and expressing gratitude to his Lord.

Joe loved everybody and he was much loved by his neighbourhood and all who knew him. In loving appreciation, neighbours and friends lined the length of the street as Barbara and family went on their way to the funeral. We have lost a wonderful brother, but only temporarily. Barbara and the family have expressed their appreciation for the church's support. Please remember them in your prayers.

CHURCH OF CHRIST DENNYLOANHEAD GHANA FUND

The Church is very appreciative of the generosity of sister churches and individual brothers and sisters to the Ghana Fund. Since 2012 the fund has disbursed £31,600 for the Lord's work in Ghana. This provision has included significant support for evangelising and teaching, and for medical aid and other specific requests. We are grateful to Brother Wisdom Kpehor for his advice and guidance in meeting these requests.

From 1 January 2020 donations should be sent to:
Donald Scobbie, 23, Princes Street, Bonnybridge FK4 1BJ
e-mail: donald.scobbie@blueyonder.co.uk

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Reading Cards are available from John Kneller:
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