

Scripture Standard

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Pleading for a total return to New Testament principles.

contend earnestly for the faith
Jude 1:3

Scripture Standard
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PROPHECIES ARE NOT SNATCHED OUT OF CONTEXT

Critics claim that quotations made in the Old Testament, which Matthew applies to Jesus, had already been fulfilled long before He was born. Examples are "I have called my son out of Egypt " and "A voice was heard in Rama, lamentations and weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted because they are not" [Matthew 2:15,18 Hosea 11:1, Jeremiah 31:15]. In both cases Matthew uses the word "fulfilled". To counter this, some claim that such prophecies had double fulfilment: their first fulfilment in Old Testament times and then the Messianic fulfilment after Jesus was born. The problem with this is that the word "fulfilled" means: crammed, filled up, completed,* So what the prophets had in mind had either already been filled to the full or not filled up until the events recounted by Matthew. They could only be filled full once. *[Greek πληρωω. Strongs 4137]

A dear brother once said that if a rabbi quoted a statement from the Hebrew Scriptures it would bring to the mind, of those learned in the Scripture, the whole passage and its context. This is one of the most valuable lessons I have learned.

They would not assume that it had been taken

out of its context. Neither should we. Indeed we must go to the context, the immediate context and the larger context, to understand and grasp hold of what the prophet is talking about. We should also consider it in the overall context.

The whole universe was created by Jesus:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. John 1:1-3

Everything was created for Jesus:

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by him, and for him.** Colossians 1:16.

The whole of the Old Covenant Scriptures, either directly or indirectly have something to do with the coming of the Messiah:

1 Peter 1:10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come to you: 11 Searching what [time], or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that would follow.

Jesus is the reason for everything, for the whole of creation, its existence and purpose.

So we do have to examine the context, but this must be done bearing in mind that the underlying scenario behind all the Old Testament scriptures, from Genesis to Malachi, was the coming of the Messiah to set up His kingdom.

The next issue's editorial "Rachel's weeping" should help to make this clear.

COURAGEOUS PARENTS

Lisa Ashurst, Byron, GA.

“Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.” Psalm 34:11

The apostle Paul tells us in Romans 15:4, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” It is good to be reminded of Biblical examples of those who showed courage and faithfulness. Though we are barely introduced to Moses’ father and mother (Amram and Jochebed), the life of Moses speaks volumes to the credit of his early upbringing. In Hebrews 11:23 we read, ‘By faith Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.’

At the end of Genesis, Jacob’s family had left Canaan and moved to Egypt due to a severe famine. Many years later, Jacob’s descendants, the Israelites, had greatly multiplied. The new Pharaoh in Exodus 1 did not know Jacob’s son Joseph, who saved Egypt from starvation through God’s intervention. Fearing the Israelites might revolt, Pharaoh ordered the baby boys to be killed.

Exodus 2 introduces us to the Levite couple who have a baby boy and decide to hide him. However, when he becomes too big to conceal, his mother Jochebed has a plan. She makes a sealed basket for him and puts him amongst the reeds of the Nile. The baby’s sister Miriam watches from a distance, and when Pharaoh’s daughter discovers the baby, Miriam offers to find a Hebrew nurse. Jochebed is given the job to raise her own child until he is old enough to be brought to the palace! The princess names the baby Moses, because he had been drawn out of the water.

The Talmud says, 'Who is best taught? He who has first learned from his mother.' There is also a Jesuit maxim that says, 'Give me a child for the first seven years, and you may do what you like with him afterwards.' During the short time that Moses' parents raised him, they must have taught him about the true God of Abraham and the promises of God's blessings to his descendants (Genesis 12:2-3)

The words that Moses later wrote might reflect the type of upbringing he had:

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." Deut. 6:5-7

Hebrews 11:24-27 confirms what an exemplary job his parents did:

'By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.'

When we consider that this young man rejected all the treasures of Egypt and the leadership of a world empire, it makes us admire his early training even more. Let us therefore look to these Old Testament examples and impress upon our children and grandchildren how awesome our God is! Then, as Isaiah 54:13 says, 'All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children.'

“THE STEADFAST LOVE OF THE LORD NEVER CEASES; HIS MERCIES NEVER COME TO AN END” (Part 1)

James Lim, Lavender, Singapore.

The book of Lamentations is associated with moans and groans. It is little known and hardly studied. The few verses many of us are familiar with are from chapter 3 mostly because of two songs which are found in our hymn book: “The Steadfast Love of the Lord” and “Great is Thy Faithfulness”.

Like Jeremiah we live in a disruptive age of VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity). In despair and great sufferings, Jeremiah found hope. Perhaps we can learn to be more hopeful as we face 2017.

“Lamentations” comprises of 5 laments or poems written in an acrostic style. Each poem is a dirge (funeral song). Note the number of verses in each chapter. Do you see a pattern?

In the Hebrew text, each verse starts with a Hebrew alphabet, thus making 22 verses except for chapter 3 where every 3 verses start with an alphabet. Thus 3 x 22 verses. An acrostic format aids in memorising. An example of a modern acrostic version of Lamentations is as follows: DIRGE. Each alphabet is the start of a high level summary of each chapter respectively.

Chapter	Summary
1	D estruction of Jerusalem announced
2	I srael’s misery is lamented
3	R eminder of God’s mercy
4	G rimness of Israel’s sin
5	E xiles pray for mercy

Jeremiah’s name is not mentioned but the detailed descriptions suggest an eyewitness at the scene and not a scribe recording

someone else's account.

Chapter 1 uses a weeping widow to describe the utter despair and total destruction. Chapter 2 is about the national sin and how God Himself is the destroyer of all their hope and glory of the people e.g. the temple. Chapter 3 is Jeremiah's personal despair and hope. Chapter 4 is the consequence of sins at a very personal level experienced by the people. Chapter 5 is when they cried out to God as God intended the outcome to be. (Jeremiah 29:12-13)

Why was it a book to be memorised and recited? It is a reminder of what had happened and may happen again when we do not obey God and the consequences when He removes His protection and grace.

Lamentations 2:17 The LORD has done what he purposed; he has carried out his word, which he commanded long ago; he has thrown down without pity; he has made the enemy rejoice over you and exalted the might of your foes.

What did the Lord command long ago? The warnings and detailed consequences are found in Deuteronomy 28. In Lamentations you will find almost a one-to-one matching of the utter horror they experienced for not obeying.

To prepare for part 2, read the highlighted Scriptures below. They show the consequences of not obeying God's early warning. God removed His firewall (Zech. 2:5) and evil came in.

Lamentations 1:1-5; 2:5, 21; 3:1-8; 4:4-10; 5:10-13.

As you read these, do some of these descriptions remind you of modern day siege of Aleppo?

TO BE CONCLUDED

LOOK AT THE BIRDS

Jonathan Ashurst, Byron, GA.

A wonderful way to relax and regain perspective is to go outdoors. Even on a cold or rainy day, there are so many lessons to be seen in nature. How much more fitting for us to spend time outside when the weather is glorious!

The other day, upon spotting some bright red flowers in bloom on a tree, I was reminded that God is both powerful and generous. It was a simple moment that brought profound reassurance. These reminders are all around us, if we only stop to consider them.

The Lord Jesus did much of his teaching outside. He often used examples from nature to illustrate spiritual truths to his followers.

“And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them...” - Matthew 5:1-2 (NKJV)

During this sermon on the mountainside, he spoke on many subjects, including the futility of worry.

“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” - Matthew 6:25

Jesus called his disciples to look around at nature and consider the lessons God teaches us through the flora and fauna. First, Jesus told his listeners to look at the birds.

“Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?” - Matthew 6:26-27

Birds are amazing creatures. They fill the morning with song. Sometimes I watch them fluttering around the birdbath. During

walks, I notice them on tree limbs, power-lines, or posts. What can we learn from the birds? We can learn the power of God to provide food for his creatures.

Birds do not have agricultural societies. They do not build large storage places in which to keep their food. But the Lord still enables them to find sustenance for themselves and their young. If God has provided a way for such small creatures to eat, why would we doubt his ability to provide for us?

Jesus also mentioned the flowers as an example of God's generous provision:

“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?” – Matthew 6:28-30

How amazing that King Solomon himself, who had lived in legendary luxury, was outdone by the breathtaking beauty of the lilies!

Manchester, England, was once a world-famous textile centre. Cotton was processed and prepared for use in clothes for people around the world. But even though flowers cannot produce clothing in the same way we can, they are clothed with radiant splendour. How? Because God has clothed them. If we trust our lives to Him, why would we doubt his desire to provide us with necessary raiment?

Jesus reassured his followers that they need not be anxious. God is aware of our needs. Are we aware of his promise to provide for the basic needs of his children, day by day?

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What

shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." - Matthew 6:31-34

Spend some time today enjoying the beauty of nature. Live in the peace of the Lord, allowing Him his rightful place of King in your life. Thank Almighty God for the way he reminds us of his provision through the birds and the lilies.

THE GOOD "INFIDEL"

A religious lawyer, to put Jesus to the test said, "Professor, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied, "What is written in the Torah? What have you read in it?"

The lawyer responded to this by saying, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbour like you love yourself." So Jesus said to him, "You have answered correctly. Do that and you will live."

But the lawyer, intending to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"

In reply to that, Jesus said, 'A particular man was going from Jerusalem down to Jericho and he was ambushed by robbers, who stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and went off leaving him half dead.

By coincidence a certain priest came down that road, but when he saw him, he went by on the other side.

Also when a religious attendant came to that place, seeing the wounded man, came and looked at him, and even he went by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, arriving on the scene, went to the wounded man, and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion.

He got down, bandaged up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and lifted him on to his own animal, and brought him to an inn, and looked after him.

Next day, as he left, he took out two denarii, gave them to the host, and said to him, "Take care of him; and when I come again, whatever extra expense you incur, I will pay you back."

So - Which of those three men, do you think, was like a neighbour to the man who was ambushed by robbers?'

The religious lawyer said, "The one who took the trouble to help him."

So Jesus said to him, "You go and be like he was."

[Luke 10:25-37]

Edited from:

<http://www.simplychristians.eu/muqaddas/d4web4sm/muqaddas/goodsamq.htm>

OBITUARY

Mary Cox

I'm sorry to be the one to report the death of Sister Mary Cox. Mary had reached the age of 100 years on the 10th of July and yet she was a regular attendee at church; in fact, her last attendance was the 27th of November.

Mary was a member of the Church of Christ from the age of seven. She was immersed into Christ when she was 13 years old, and had been a regular attendee all of her life. She was a Sunday School teacher; in fact, she was my Sunday School teacher. When I introduced her to visitors as my Sunday School teacher, she would comment, "I used to teach Bill, now he teaches me," and yet there was not much I could teach Mary. She was still able to lead the singing to most hymns.

She was always helping in her community, being a founder member of the Gill Singers, a choir that was formed in the 1940s. She took lace making, cooking, sewing, and upholstery (of chairs mainly). Mary was also active with Meals-on-Wheels; again she commented that some of the people she was serving were younger than she was. Mary did her best wherever she was needed.

Her funeral was on the 16th of December in the Church of Christ building that she helped to construct and maintain. In her day she was Treasurer, part time Secretary and was the mainstay of fellowship meals.

I took the funeral because that is how she requested it. I didn't have a lot of planning to do; she had already left instructions on the hymns she wanted. There were four hymns. Of the Bible readings there were two: One was Ecclesiastes, no chapter specified (I read the first chapter); the second reading was Psalm 139.

There were about 70 people who attended; 25 of these were her "family" (her nieces and their children). I was expecting more, but as some one commented Sister Mary had probably out lived many of her friends.

by Bill Thistlethwaite

NOTICES

STRETFORD, Manchester.

The Green Hut, 538 Kings Rd. **M32 8JT**

Saturday Meetings, 2017

1:00 pm Lunch

2:00 pm Message

March 25th

May 20th

October 7th

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John Purcell: Tel. 0161-439 1758

Map: [www.eusebos.eu/eusebos/
d4web-4s/longford.htm](http://www.eusebos.eu/eusebos/d4web-4s/longford.htm)

EASTWOOD, Nottinghamshire.

Seymour Road, **NG16 3ND**

Saturday Meetings, 2017

6:00 pm Refreshments

7:00 pm Message

May 13th

August 12th

November 11th

Contact:

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