

The **SCRIPTURE STANDARD**

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

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THE LIKE FIGURE

Last Sunday, congregations using the "Scripture Reading Cards" would be reading from Genesis Chap. 7 and would be reminded of the saving of Noah and the great flood. In keeping with a fairly general atmosphere of scepticism among the clergy, the Flood (with its mention of a very large ship of gopher wood containing all forms of animal, insect and bird life, and equipped with only one door and window) is something not readily acceptable to many modern theologians. Nevertheless, apart from well documented geological and other scientific evidence of the great flood, the mention of Noah (and the flood) is not confined to Genesis. Isaiah, for instance, (54:9) records God's reiteration of His promise that "As I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I should not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee."

Ezekiel also mentions Noah and warns that when God decides to wreak destruction on Israel and Jerusalem, nothing, and nobody, will be able to influence the matter, and adds, "Though Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter, they shall deliver but their own souls by their righteousness." (14:20).

Jesus believed in Noah and the flood. Indeed He makes reference to the suddenness with which the wicked antediluvians perished in the waters, and says, "But as the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark. And knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." (Matt. 24:37).

The apostle Paul also not only believed in Noah: but placed him with the other O.T. worthies in 'Faith's Hall of Fame' in Heb. 11. He says, "By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

The apostle Peter also believed in Noah and, referring to the gross disobedience of the antediluvian population, says, ". . . when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:20).

I draw attention to these quotations to emphasise the fact that those theologians

(eminent or otherwise) who cannot accept the account of Noah and his ark, not only reject the veracity of Moses who wrote the Genesis, but also cast doubts upon the enlightenment and discernment of Christ and His inspired apostles. In such circumstances their 'theology' would seem of doubtful value.

THEM AND US

My purpose in this article is to look more closely at the last of the above quotations: i.e. I Peter 3:20 where the apostle draws a remarkable link between the saving of Noah and baptism.

Peter's statement is in the context of an exhortation to his brethren to remain faithful regardless of what may befall them, and irrespective of how small in number and insignificant they may seem to be. He says, (and I paraphrase to save space) "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and His ears are open to their prayers." He asks "Who is he that will harm you if ye follow that which is good" and adds that they should be happy if they suffer for righteousness sake. He urges them that they should live righteously and so put to shame their critics, and points out that even Christ suffered unfairly, the Just for the unjust, put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit. And, says Peter, it was through (or by) that same Spirit that Jesus preached to the disobedient in Noah's day (the spirits in prison) while God waited patiently for their repentance and while the ark was, nevertheless, being made in preparation for the flood. Noah's preaching was largely ignored and when the flood came "only eight souls were saved, by water, The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us . . ." Peter draws a certain link between THEM (the antediluvians) and US (those who have obeyed the gospel and have been baptised). The link is WATER (Peter could have mentioned other links for there are some other links), but the link he chose was that of water. Water saved Noah and his family: likewise baptism (immersion in water in the name of Christ) will save those who call upon His name. Peter comments not so much upon the many thousands who perished in the flood but rather refers to the only positive outcome: that eight souls were saved. This was doubtless intended to show Peter's brethren that as God went to great lengths to save only eight souls He was obviously interested in small numbers, even in the two's and three's. I was reading in a church magazine from the USA, the other day, how that many brethren are leaving small congregations and joining the huge ones so that they might enjoy the benefits of scale, but God, it seems, does not overlook the little groups and the faithful minorities. (In passing, on the question of Christ preaching to "the spirits in prison," some believe that Christ, between the time of His burial and resurrection, preached to the lost in Hades, indeed the R.C. church bases its doctrine of purgatory on this verse. If this was so, why should Christ confine His preaching only to the wicked who died in Noah's day. It seems clear that Christ preached to the "spirits in prison" in Noah's day through the Spirit and, as the Spirit never preaches in person, He preached through God's servant, Noah. (Likewise in N.T. times, the Spirit preached through the apostles.) People are bodily free to move, but their spirits are "in prison". Indeed James came to give liberty to the captives and to set the prisoners free. Isaiah describes (figuratively) how kings and other eminent "shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in a pit, and shall be shut up in prison." (24:22).

SAVED BY WATER. HOW?

As mentioned earlier, when Peter recalled the circumstances involved in the saving of Noah, he could have attributed Noah's salvation to several factors. First and foremost Noah was saved by the ark for without the ark he would, like the masses, have perished in the waters. Originally God had decided to destroy the whole creation "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Thus we could say that Noah was

saved by his own good character; or by his own stability and perseverance for he was six hundred years old when the flood came. Again Paul, in Heb. 11 eulogizes on the **faith** of Noah and says that it was "By faith" that Noah made an ark, condemned the world and became an heir of righteousness. Noah was also saved by the grace and mercy of God. However, notwithstanding the complete relevance of all these factors Peter selected, for his present purpose, the saving factor of the WATER. His purpose was clearly to highlight type and antitype. Water saved Noah and water saves us. And how does water save us? When it is employed in the form of scriptural baptism. Those who dismiss and denigrate the purpose, and value, of N.T. baptism should ponder well these words of the inspired apostle. Peter links the two words "Water" and "Saved" and indicates that just as water saved Noah, just as certainly does baptism save men today: "**The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us.**" We all encounter, from time to time, those who, with a Bible in their hands, are quite prepared to assert that baptism "is not necessary for salvation" and to declare that baptism is simply an option to be taken up or left alone. The apostle Peter shared no such dangerous and erroneous notion.

While there may be many 'theologians' who cannot accept the Biblical account of the flood, there are very few, if any, Bible Commentators who do not accept the fact, and who also accept 'Peter's teaching on baptism. I could fill this magazine with examples of the same, but, in the interests of space, will give two at random. The first is from James Macknight, in his *Apostolic Epistles* and he says, "building the ark, and entering into it, Noah shewed a strong faith in the promise of God, concerning his preservation by the very water which which was to destroy the antediluvians for their sins, so, by giving ourselves to be buried in the waters of baptism, we show a like faith in God's promise, that though we die and are buried (Rom. 6) he will save us from death, the punishment of sin, by raising us from the dead on the last day."

The second quotation is from Calvin himself. He said, ". . . the design of this case is to shew that we ought not to be led away, by wicked examples, from the fear of God, and the right way of salvation, and to mix with the world. This is made evident in baptism, in which we are buried with Christ, so that being dead to the world, and the flesh, we may live to God. On this account he (Peter) says that our baptism is an antitype (**Antitupon**) to the baptism of Noah . . . As Noah there obtained life through death, when in the ark, he was enclosed not otherwise than as it were in the grave, and when the whole world perished, he was preserved together with his small family: so at this day the death which it sets forth in baptism, is to us an entrance into life, nor can salvation be hoped for, except we be separated from the world. (From Calvin's Commentary on I Peter 3:21).

Before moving on to the final (summing up) paragraph, mention should be made of Peter's explanatory words on the baptism he had in mind. He said that the purpose of baptism was not the "**putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,**" or as it is rendered in the R.S.V. "**not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience . . .**" Peter is writing to Jews who knew that immersions under the law were always for the ceremonial cleansing of the body and from defilement. The Jews were constantly engaged in ceremonial washings because of defilement from dead bodies, brushing against certain buildings or classes of people, and Peter has to make plain that Christ's baptism is not just another addition to these regular washings. Peter also means that there is no inherent value in the actual water in baptism: rather it is the **obedience to God** that counts. When Naaman the leper was told to dip seven times in the Jordan (2 Kings 5) his leprosy left him only after he had obeyed; i.e. there was no special mineral in the water. Once God had instructed Naaman to dip seven times in the Jordan, Naaman could have been cured in no other way; and in no other river and under no other

circumstances. Similarly strict obedience is the important element in baptism. With regard to **“the appeal for a clear conscience”** it is evident that those, in N.T. times, having all their sins washed away in baptism, had every reason to enjoy a clear conscience, and many “went on their way rejoicing.” Indeed, when a sinner is convicted of sin, and learns that Jesus requires him to be immersed, he will certainly have no easy conscience until he has obeyed. It should appear obvious to most Bible students that if Peter was afraid that baptism might be confused with a bath in water to remove dirt from the body; he could not have equated baptism with ‘sprinkling’. Clearly the sprinkling of a few droplets of water on the head could never be regarded as the means of washing dirt from the body, and so, the baptism to which Peter refers could never involve ‘sprinkling’.

CONCLUSION

Noah’s Ark has sometimes been likened to the Church, and certainly there may be some similarities. One builder: Noah. Likewise Jesus, who said, “I will build My church.” One material: gopher wood. The Church is made of “Living stones.” The ark contained one family. The church is the family of God: children of one Heavenly Father and thus brothers and sisters. The ark had one source of light: one window. The Church has the Bible: the entrance of Thy words giveth light. The ark had one entrance door and so has the Church. Jesus said, “I am the way: I am the door: no man cometh unto the Father but through Me.” There may be other similarities. Certainly this analogy that Peter draws (between the water of the flood and baptism) would seem to be another. “The like figure” whereunto baptism doth also now save us. This was not some fanciful product of Peter’s imagination, of course, but was an inspired utterance of the Holy Spirit, and one borne out by many other scriptures. Jesus, Himself, before ascending into heaven, charged His apostles that they should, **“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised will be saved.”** As has already been mentioned, Noah was not saved by water only, but by God’s grace and mercy; by the ark; by his faith and by his own righteousness. This, however, does not weaken in the slightest degree that he was also most certainly saved by water. Likewise, Christians are saved by God’s grace; by His mercy; by their own faith and by their own works, but again, this does not weaken in the slightest degree the fact that they were also saved by baptism. Jesus, in the quotation above, also linked baptism with salvation. He said, **“He that believeth AND IS BAPTISED shall be SAVED.”** Do we hear Him?

In the flood, **the same water** separated those destroyed from those saved. Indeed **the same water** of the Red Sea saved the Israelites but destroyed the Egyptians. Similarly the waters of baptism will separate mankind into two groups. Those who balk at the bath of immersion will ever be separated from those who, in faith, have welcomed it. The baptismal bath separates those ‘born of water’ from those still unborn; it separates those ‘translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son’ from those not so translated; it separates those who have ‘risen to walk in newness of life’ from those who have not yet agreed to be buried; it separates those ‘who have washed away their sins’ from those who have not, as yet, had their sins washed away; it separates those who have the interrogation of a good conscience towards God from those who can not have a good conscience on the matter. Even Saul, who was later to become the apostle Paul, was instructed to **“... arise and be baptised and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”**. (Acts 22:16). If baptism does not save us, then Noah and family were not saved in the ark.

I do hope that any reading this article, who may presently be of the view that baptism is some unimportant religious appendage, or even a frivolity, will think seriously again, and study deeply and humbly the words of the apostle Peter. May they

be like Naaman, who with the encouragement of some true friends overcame his natural antagonism to the words of God's prophet, and eventually went willingly and dipped himself in conformity to God's word, emerged pure and clean. May they not, like the Pharisees and lawyers, '**reject the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptised of him**'. (If this was said of those who refused John's baptism, what shall befall those who reject the baptism of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ). Another baptism is yet to come — the baptism of fire. We may deride the baptism in water but we shall not sidestep the baptism of fire. Let us urgently embrace the baptism in water so that we may surely escape the baptism of fire. let us be *born of water* as well as the Spirit. Let us be washed in the bath of regeneration that we might truly rise to walk in newness of life. Noah was saved by water, says Peter: and this is a true likeness of how baptism doth also now save us.

EDITOR.

GLEANINGS

"Let her glean even among the sheaves." (Ruth 2:15)

TO THEE

"My joys to Thee I bring,
The joys Thy love hath given,
That each may be a wing
To lift me nearer heaven.
I bring them, Saviour, all to Thee,
For Thou hast purchased all for me."

F.R.H.

AN HIGHWAY FOR OUR GOD

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." (Isaiah 35:8)

THE GOSPEL IN PERSON

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:16.

"God loves me. Christ died for me. God loves you. Christ died for you."

**A LOVE — GOD SO LOVED — A GIFT — THAT HE GAVE — AN OFFER
WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH**

Whosoever believeth . . . Personal . . . Perfect
. . . Attention. He loves me — I am not lost in the "whosoever."

I am not merged in the multitudes, so that He does not see me as an individual. Yet, I am so glad for that word "Whosoever."

It gives me great pleasure in remembering that I had the privilege of having 22 articles printed in the *Scripture Standard*, on the Twenty Third Psalm, under the Title *It is my Psalm — Is It Yours?* from November 1974 to September 1976. No. 13, December was under the heading *Perfect Attention* — "Thou anointest my head with oil." (verse 4).

During a visit to my sister-in-law (Edith Hazleton), she said the article had "brought rich blessing to her soul." Do you know why? Because she was lonely. She yearned to be loved. She had lost her husband by death, and her son at the same time was living away.

In that article the theme was Perfect . . . Personal . . . Attention.

Let me quote from the article: "Have you ever considered how many individuals our Lord dealt with; shall we mention a few: Nicodemus; the Samaritan Woman; the Nobleman; the Impotent Man; the Leper; Matthew; the Man with Palsy; the Man

with a Withered Hand; the Demoniac; Jairus; the Woman who touched the hem of His garment; the Syrophenician Woman; the Boy in the valley; the Condemned Woman; the Lawyer; the Man Born Blind; Martha; Mary; the Young Ruler; Zachaeus; Bartimaeus; the Widow at the Treasury; the Dying Thief; Mary of Magdala; Thomas . . .

PERSONAL . . . PERFECT . . . ATTENTION . . .

"Thou Anointest My Head With Oil"

William James said: "The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be important." Edith, through reading that article realized that she was important.

You are . . . or can be . . . important. Jesus knows your innermost thoughts, desires, aspirations, yearnings, for a deeper and fuller life. He can meet that need. You can have peace within, you can have the inner glow of a quiet joy, these things can be yours, if you unconditionally surrender your life to the Lord Jesus. Oh, the glory of this blessed fact, we have said it before, we say it again: "He sees us at our worst, and He loves us with His best. Bring your depression, faint-heart, doubts, fears, anxieties, frustrations, want of courage, lack of confidence, self-distrust, and allow the Shepherd to anoint you with the oil of the Grace, Love, Peace, Joy and the Power of God.

YEA, I HAVE LOVED THEE

"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."

Jeremiah 31:3.

WHOSOEVER

"For God so loved this sinful world, His Son He freely gave,
That whosoever would believe, Eternal life should have.

I was a wayward wandering child, A slave to sin and fear,
Until this blessed promise fell, Like music on my ear.

The "whosoever" of the Lord, I trusted was for me:

I took Him at His gracious word, From sin to set me free.

Eternal life begun below, Now fills my heart and soul:

I'll sing His praise for evermore, Who has redeemed my soul."

C.H. Morris.

"LET 'EM ALL COME"

A young lad's definition of "Whosoever" — "Let 'em all come."

WE QUOTE — HENRY DRUMMOND

"The greatest thing," says someone, "a man can do for his Heavenly Father is to be kind to some other children." I wonder why it is that we are not all kinder than we are? How much the world needs it. How easily it is done. How instantaneously it acts. How infallibly it is remembered. How superabundantly it pays itself back — for there is no debtor in the world so honourable, so superbly honourable, as Love. "Love never faileth." Love is success, Love is happiness, Love is life. "Love, I say," with Browning, "is energy of Life."

"For life, with all it yields of joy and woe

And Hope and fear,

Is just our chance, Oh the prize of learning love —

How love might be, hath been indeed, and is."

"Carlyle said of Robert Burns that there was no truer gentleman in Europe than the ploughman-poet. It was because he loved everything — the mouse; and the daisy; and all the things, great and small, that God had made. So with this simple passport he could mingle with any society, and enter courts and palaces from his little cottage on the banks of the Ayr."

WE QUOTE - REGINALD WALLACE

"A Quaker lady was once asked the secret of her beautiful complexion. She said, "I use truth for my lips; for my voice, prayer; for my eyes, pity; for my hands, charity; for my figure, uprightness, and for my heart, love. These heavenly cosmetics are worthy of trial, and are supplied free to every applicant to the Throne of Grace."

LOVE NEVER FAILETH

"I Corinthians 13, the agape of the New Testament, is embodied as we well know, in the life and death of our Master. It knows no unkindness, no envy; never parades itself; knows no jealousy. It is never puffed up with pride. It never behaves itself in unseemly fashion. It is always courteous. It never seeks its own things, but the things of others."

James Holmes.

**A LOVE — GOD SO LOVED — A GIFT — THAT HE GAVE — AN OFFER
WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH**

Leonard Morgan.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE PASSOVER

Much of the confusion arising about the passover stems from a lack of understanding of the Jewish concept of time. Officially our day begins and ends at midnight. The Jewish day however, begins at sunset in the evening (approximately 6 p.m. in our reckoning) continues through the hours of darkness and daylight, and ends at sunset in the following evening.

Whereas we tend to think of the evening as occurring at the END of the day, since it comes at end of the daylight hours (although there are still some hours to midnight) the Jewish evening occurs at the BEGINNING of the day. So in Gen. 1:5, **"The evening and the morning were the first day"**.

The Jews divided the period of daylight from sunrise to sunset, into twelve hours. Jn. 11:9. The third hour corresponds to our 9 a.m.: the 6th to 12 noon: and the 9th to 3 p.m. Matt. 20:3. It should also be noted that part of a day was deemed equivalent in calculations to a whole day. i.e. **"a day and a night"**. These factors are important in this study, and once this is known, we are in a better position to appreciate a sequence of events attending the Lord's keeping of the passover before the crucifixion.

The instructions for the observance of the passover are given in Exod. 12:-

- v. 2 **"In the tenth day of the first month . . . they shall take a lamb"**.
- v. 2 **"And ye shall keep it up until the 14th day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation shall kill it in the evening"**.
- v. 8 **"And they shall eat the flesh in that night: roast with fire, and unleavened bread"**.
- v. 10 **"And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning"**.
- v. 17-18 **"And ye shall observe the feast of the unleavened bread. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth (21st) day of the month AT EVEN"**.

We must note in particular, that the passover lamb was to be slain on the 14th day AT EVENING. But which EVENING? Suppose we consider the evening to be that at the end of the daylight hours on the 14th day. It is immediately evident that the eating of the paschal lamb in the following night would put the observance of the passover on the 15th day of the month according to Jewish reckoning, and this plainly is an impossibility. We therefore cannot but conclude that the evening of the 14th day referred to, is the evening at the BEGINNING of the 14th day, commencing at sunset at the end of the daylight hours of the 13th day of the month: The evening in question being from SUNSET TO NIGHTFALL, in that period of time, the lamb would be

slain, gutted, skinned, cleaned, skewered and roasted in preparation for the passover feast in the following night, which would still be the 14th day.

The time for observing the ordinance is clearly given in the law of Moses, and it is highly unlikely that the Lord would depart from the Divinely ordained practice. Matt. 5:18. There is nothing in the gospel records to suggest otherwise. Matt. 26:17-19, "Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus saying, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?" . . . **"Now when the EVEN was come, He sat down with the twelve"**. Lu. 22:7-15, Mk. 14:12-17. **"Then came the day of the unleavened bread when the passover MUST BE KILLED"**. **"And in the EVENING He cometh with the twelve"**. (For considerations of space, subsequent events are largely cited in brief):-

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Jn. 13:2 **"The supper taking place, the devil having put into Judas' heart to betray Him"**. J. 13:30. Judas receives the sop at the end of the passover feast, and immediately leaves the upper room before the institution of the feast of remembrance of the New Covenant, **"AND IT WAS NIGHT"** Matt. 26:30 They proceed to the Mount of Olives; Jn. 18:3 His enemies come with lanterns and torches; Jn. 18:2-3 The betrayal and arrest; Jn. 18:13-15 Jesus led to Annas and to Caiaphas; Jn. 18:28 Taken before the council and then to Pilate, early in the morning; Lu. 23:7, From Pilate to Herod; Lu. 23:11, Sent back to Pilate, Matt. 27:31, Jn. 19:18, Delivered to be crucified; Mk. 15:25, **"And it was the third hour (9 a.m.) and they crucified Him"** Matt. 27:45, Darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour (Noon to 3 p.m.); Matt. 27:50, Death of Christ; Matt. 27:60, Jn. 19:41-42, Burial.

From this we have a continuous record of the events on the day of the passover, from sunset at the end of the daylight hours of the 13th day, until late in the afternoon of the 14th day of the month which is also identified as "the preparation" for the sabbath day following.

Jn. 19:31, **"The Jews therefore because it was the preparation that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day (for that day was an high day) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and they might be taken away"**. Pilate agreed to this request, but Jesus was found to be dead already.

If, (as some concluded) the Lord observed the passover a day early, that would mean the Jews killed the lamb and observed the passover on the 15th day of the month; and since Jesus was crucified on the day of preparation for the sabbath, the Jews would have kept the passover on the sabbath day; all of which is impossible.

Strictly speaking, the word "passover" refers to the 14th day of the month, and to the feast in which the lamb was eaten on that day. But it is also evident that the term was applied in a general sense to the entire eight day period from the 14th to the 21st, inclusive. So in Jn. 13:29, when the disciples conjectured that Jesus had directed Judas to, **" . . . Buy those things that we have need of against the feast"**, They were not thinking about the passover for that was practically ended, but to the feast of unleavened bread which would commence on the sabbath (the 15th day). Preparation for this feast had to be made before the sabbath began (i.e. before sunset at the end of the daylight hours on the day of the passover, the 14th).

This also explains the statement in Jn. 19:14 when Jesus stood before Pilate, that it was **"The preparation of the passover"**; and the statement in Jn. 18:28 that the Jews (on the preparation day) would not enter Pilate's judgement hall, **"Lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover"**, (i.e. the feast of unleavened bread, here called the passover).

The sabbath being referred to here as an **"high day"** means that it was **"of great moment, weight and importance, solemn, sacred"**. THAYER. It was so called because it was the one sabbath of the year which occurred at the passover, and was also the

first day of the feast of unleavened bread. Exod. 12:15-16, **“Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread . . . and in the first day there shall be an HOLY CONVOCATION, no manner of work shall be done in them . . .”** See also Lev. 23:5, Numb. 28:16.

The time of the burial of Christ is pinpointed in Mk. 15:42, **“And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath”** (and therefore before SUNSET on the evening at the end of the daylight hours of the day of preparation) **“Joseph of Arimathea begged the body of Jesus, and placed it in the tomb”**. v.46. Matt. 27:62, **“Now the next day”**, that day that followed the day of preparation (i.e. the sabbath) the chief priests and the Pharisees came to Pilate with the request, **“Command that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day: lest His disciples come BY NIGHT and steal Him away, and say, he is risen from the dead”**. They evidently came just after sunset at the end of the day of the passover. They were anxious to see that the disciples would not steal the body of Jesus in the coming night.

From the foregoing information, it is evident that the sequence of events from the Lord sitting down to keep the passover with his disciples, to His burial took place in their entirety in the space of a single day, the day of the passover, also referred to as the preparation, the 14th day of the month, and that Jesus was buried sometime before that day had ended, i.e. before SUNSET at the end of the daylight hours of the 14th day of the month.

THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS

We now have to consider how long the body of the Lord lay in the tomb:-

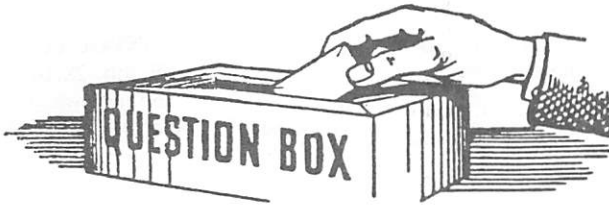
Luke 23:5 tells us that when He was buried, the women followed afar off and saw the sepulchre and returned (home) to prepare spices and ointments . . . and rested the sabbath day, according to the commandment. The preparation of these things must have taken some time apart from the time taken to go home from the tomb. Some significant time must have elapsed between His burial and the sabbath day. Matt. 28:1, **“In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary to see the sepulchre”**. See also Mk. 10:1, Lu. 14:1, Jn 20:1.

The body of Jesus therefore was laid in the tomb (a) some time before sunset on the 14th day, (b) lay in the tomb throughout the entire period of the 15th day (the sabbath), and (c) rose early on the morning of the 16th day, the 1st day of the week; That is some hours after the day had begun at sunset at the end of the sabbath.

By Jewish reckoning, the period (a) before sunset on the 14th day is deemed to be “a day and a night” (b) The entire period of the sabbath is “a day and a night (literally), and the period (c) from the beginning of the first day of the week, (sunset at the end of the sabbath) to the resurrection is deemed to be “a day and a night”. Therefore, by Jewish reckoning, the body of Jesus lay in the tomb for “Three days and three nights”. There is no other method by which the time which the body lay in the tomb can be equated with the prediction in Matt. 12:40.

We must therefore conclude that the Lord kept the passover feast with His disciples in common with all other Jews at the appointed time, i.e. on the 14th day of the month; that He ate the paschal lamb with them the following night, was brought before Pilate in the morning, was crucified at the third hour (9 a.m.) and died at the 9th hour (3 p.m.) and was buried before sunset on the same day; lay in the tomb till early on the 16th day, or first day of the week, according to the sequences of events as they are presented to us in the gospel records.

John M. Wood,
19 Venturefair Avenue,
Dunfermline KY12 0PF.



Conducted by
Alf Marsden

“I was reading from John’s Gospel Chapter 16 just recently. Would you say that the world has been convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of a coming judgment ?”

Many readers will know the words of Jesus as recorded in John 16, where He says, **“When He is come He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment”** (16:8). The ‘he’ who should come is, of course, the Holy Spirit. A brief explanation of that section of John’s Gospel will, I think, help our understanding.

Jesus was coming to the end of His earthly ministry; He was about to finish the work He had come to do. He had warned His disciples about this, but it is quite evident from the scripture that they did not understand the full implications of what He was saying. Naturally, they were sorrowful about His impending departure; we all feel the same when we are about to lose someone on whom we have come to rely. Jesus knows and understands their sorrow, but makes them a staggering promise, **“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send Him unto you”** (16:7). In John 14:16 Jesus indicates to them that the presence of the Comforter will be of a permanent nature, **“And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever”**. Jesus here fulfils His promise that He will not leave them comfortless. There is to be another Comforter like Himself, **“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive”** (14:17). This Comforter will abide with them for ever. He (indicating personality) will guide them into **all truth. Because** He is the Spirit of truth, He will be eminently qualified to reprove regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment to come. So, having briefly set the scene, we must now turn our attention to the main part of the question, and see how He, the Holy Spirit, will reprove (convince) the world.

OF SIN

He would be a bold man who would say that the world is convinced of sin; as a matter of fact, people seem to be convincing themselves that there is no sin, not in the way the Christian understands sin, anyway. In this they seem to be aided and abetted by a weak clergy who seem to spend much of their time explaining it away. In actual fact, the true meaning of sin is defined quite explicitly at this point in the scriptures; sin, as defined for us by Jesus, is **“a refusal to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ of God, and the Saviour”**.

It is this refusal to accept Him which causes Jesus deep distress. You will remember that He wept over Jerusalem. **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate”** (Matt. 23:37,38). It is sad enough to be rejected, but to be rejected by one’s own people is quite another dimension of sorrow, especially when one has come to lay down his life for them.

I wonder if we are urgent enough in our presentation of the Christ? Perhaps we put Him forward as one would an article of clothing on a market stall, and in effect say, “Well, He’s there; take Him or leave Him”. One would hardly class that as an aggressive promotional technique. Jesus used the word ‘desolate’ when referring to His rejection by the nation of Israel. Perhaps we should be trying to portray to others the utter and complete desolation of being without Christ. Perhaps we should try to

paint a picture of a person wandering in desert wilderness, no compass, no water, the sun beating down relentlessly and no hope of shelter from it, entirely alone and lost, and only the stark reality of death beckoning. Isn't this what the arid waste of sin is like, metaphorically speaking. Oh, I know that the world disguises it by the insistent demands of selfish ambition, pleasures, and the glittering tinsel of the so-called good life, but at the end of it all, when the soul realises that it has been seeking dross, what remains if we do not have Christ? Only the certainty of the domain prepared for the Devil and his angels, hell itself. Have we ceased to believe **that**? Is it too severe to be told to people? That sort of desolation was envisaged by Christ Himself relative to His rejection. Have we any right to minimise the consequences of the rejection of Jesus? The Holy Spirit works through us, and the consequences of the rejection of Christ is what He wants to convince the world of.

OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

I like the translation in the Jerusalem Bible concerning righteousness, "**And when He (the Comforter) comes, He will show the world how wrong it was . . . about who was in the right, proved by my going to the Father, and your seeing me no more**" (John 16:8-10). Have you ever chosen the wrong side? I'm quite sure you have. Isn't it disappointing and embarrassing when that happens. But stop and think for a moment. Suppose you've gambled with your eternal destiny, and you've staked **everything** on the wrong side. You will have, you know, if you haven't chosen Christ and given your eternal destiny into His hands.

Jesus was **proved** to have been in the right. Why? Because He was utterly vindicated in His claims to be the Son of God and the Saviour; the very fact of His resurrection from the dead, and of His ascension to the right hand of the Father in Heaven testifies to God's approbation of all that Jesus said and did. Well might those who had been instrumental in His death cry out in despair when they heard the condemnation by Peter on the Day of Pentecost, "**Now therefore the whole nation of Israel must know beyond the shadow of a doubt that this Jesus, whom you crucified, God has declared to be both Lord and Christ**" (Acts 2:36. J. B. Phillips). To their credit, many of them did what Peter commanded them to do, and so formed the first community of believers.

Isn't it a wonderful thought that God established **His** righteousness in Christ. Even more amazing, and surpassing in wonder, is the thought that we can participate in this righteousness; Paul puts it like this, "**How he (God) hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (Christ)**" (2 Cor. 5:21. The words in brackets are my own). Jesus, the righteous One who never sinned, bore our sins on the Cross, so that in **Him** we might also become the righteousness of God. What a sacrifice! What a Saviour! And what benefits and privileges are ours when we choose him to be our champion. He was **proved** to be right, and so shall we if we choose Him as Saviour. Today, the Holy Spirit, through the word of God, the Bible, reproves the world because of its standards, and because of its rejection of Christ as the righteousness of God. Choose the world, and you've chosen the **wrong** side.

OF JUDGMENT

It's never easy to accept judgment — especially adverse judgment — on your performance, even when such judgment is true. I remember carrying out appraisals during my working life, and if you had to say to someone, "You didn't do very well in that area, did you", one could see the hackles rising and the excuses formulating. "I did as well as I could with what was available. Why don't you try using the equipment I was provided with". And so it went on.

That God has a right to judge His creation surely cannot be in dispute, but rest assured, a **righteous** God will make a **righteous** judgment. Generally speaking, we are

judged according to well-established standards; from God's point of view, His standards are contained in the Bible. As we have seen, we **must** start by accepting His standard of righteousness, Christ Jesus His Son. When we have done this, it would be wrong to think that Christ in some mysterious way, would **automatically** ensure our **future** righteousness; no, the Christian has to work at his own salvation with fear and trembling. He has to go on, all through his life, **adding** to his initial faith in Christ. In this, he will be helped by the in-dwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, and by close attention to the Bible. The 'once saved, always saved' theory is alien to the Bible.

What I am saying, of course, is that we shall be judged according to the lives we live while here on earth; when we die it will be too late to change things. There will be no purgatorial re-furbishment. If we go through our lives not choosing Jesus, then the judgment will be to condemnation, because Jesus says, "**And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men preferred darkness rather than light**" (John 3:19). Jesus is referred to as 'the light of the world', and who would say that this dark and benighted world doesn't need His light. It is no use striking out blindly and blaming God and His Christ for all the world's ills. The plain fact of the matter is that **man** is responsible for the way he manipulates people and things. God **has** intervened, and He has illuminated the standards by His Light, Christ. If man chooses to ignore those standards and **set his own**, then he can have no quarrel with the judgment of God. The prince of this world, Satan, has already been judged **and vanquished**; do you want to spend eternity in the place prepared for him and his angels? If so, be content to remain in his domain now. You can, however, choose Christ, and this is what the Holy Spirit through the word encourages you to do. But **it's your choice**. As for me, I shall continue to follow the One who has been **proved** right.

(All questions, please, to Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way,
Winstanley, Wigan. WN3 6ES).

HAVE YOU BEEN CONVERTED ?

Conversion, whatever else may be said of this word, always produces marked changes. And these changes are not only evident in outward acts, but in inward thoughts as well. Our future goals and plans will be affected by whatever it is we have been converted to. Surely no one would dispute this, and yet many Christians claim to have been converted to Christ, but the only difference in their life is that now they attend church services, whereas before they didn't. Is this all there is in true conversion to Christ?

The truly converted Christian is one who has surrendered himself totally to Jesus. Jesus speaks of this very thing in John 11:25. Jesus said that anybody who loves his life will lose it, and anybody who hates his life in this world or age will preserve for eternal life. When speaking of love for self, Jesus uses the word *phileo*, the passionate, affectionate type of love. In other words, anyone who clings to his life with a passionate attachment will lose his life. The converted Christian is one who has let go of his own ego. Jesus isn't saying to be his disciple you must hate yourself, but rather He is demanding to be first. And being first must even include you! Jesus must come before yourself. This is the first step in true conversion.

The person who has truly given himself to Jesus will be different. And the difference will be noticeable. One of the key thoughts in the Sermon on the Mount is, "**Be not therefore like unto them . . .**" But being different outwardly is just not enough. Jesus is calling for a radical change among his followers. True spirituality is inward, with the outward reflecting the inward difference. In Matt. 5:20, Jesus taught that our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. In other words, they have outward conformity to the law, but you must have an inward conformity to the law.

The scribes and Pharisees really got into the Scriptures; they were good theologians, but they never allowed the Scriptures to get into them.

Notice throughout Matthew 5, the teachings of Jesus which support an inward conformity to the law. In his teaching on murder, Jesus didn't stop just with the act. He was more concerned with the thoughts that might eventually lead to the act. Jesus taught that not only was it wrong to murder, but it is just as wrong to hate in your heart. These thoughts are the real cause of murder. And whether or not you commit the act, having hateful thoughts is equal to murder in the religion of Jesus. The truly converted have a cleansed heart.

Have you been converted? Since you've become a Christian do you think differently? Do you have new goals? Do you have new attitudes? Are you a better person? Or are you essentially the same person who now attends church services. Maybe you've given up a couple of bad habits, but what have you become? Have you been converted?.

D. Boswell.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Dec. 5	Isa. 53	Matt. 27:26-44
Dec. 12	Psalm 22:1-21	Matt. 27:45-66
Dec. 19	Psalm 16:	Matt. 28:
Dec. 26	Deut. 30:	Galatians 1:

THE CRUCIFIXION

Crucifixion was a method of execution borrowed by the Greeks and Romans from the Phoenicians. In Roman times only slaves, provincials and the lowest types of criminals were crucified, but rarely Roman citizens. It was the Emperor Constantine who abolished crucifixion in 315 A.D.

Jesus was crucified outside the city walls of Jerusalem at a site called Golgotha or Calvaria — the place of a skull. He was taken there by a group of soldiers, one of whom carried a board stating the crime of which he was guilty. Afterwards the board was fixed to the cross. The placard read, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (27:37). Luke tells us that it was written in three languages — Greek, Latin and Hebrew (23:38). John tells us that Jesus' enemies protested over what was written. We read: "Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate. Write not, the King of the Jews, but that He said. I am the King of the Jews. Pilate answered. What I have written I have written" (19:21-22).

Jesus was crucified between two thieves as a common criminal. The Lord was mocked by many including these very thieves. However, it is wonderful to read that one of these men was later saved (Luke 23:39-43).

Darkness was over the land from midday to 3 p.m. (27:45). It must have been a frightening time for many. We wonder what the Jews made of the fact that the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom (27:51). This was the veil or curtain that separated the holy place from the holy of holies. Albert Barnes has commented: "The most holy place has been usually considered as a type of heaven and the rending of the veil to signify that the way to heaven was now open to all — the great High priest, the Lord Jesus, being about to enter in as the forerunner of His people. However, about the design of the rending of the veil, the Scriptures are silent and conjecture is useless".

THE RESURRECTION

Dying on the cross, proved Jesus was the Son of man; rising from the dead, proved He was the Son of God. The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the grave is the greatest fact in history. This fact is the basis of hope among His followers. Paul later wrote to the Corinthian saints: "If Christ is not risen then

neither our preaching nor your faith has any meaning at all. Further it would mean that we are lying in our witness for God, for we have given our solemn testimony that He did raise up Christ — and that is utterly false if it should be true that the dead do not, in fact, rise again! For if the dead do not rise neither did Christ rise and if Christ did not rise your faith is futile and your sins have never been forgiven. Moreover those who have died believing in Christ are utterly dead and gone” (15:14-17. J. B. Phillips translation).

Satan, through the wicked Jews, tried to spread the rumour that the body of Jesus had been stolen away while the guards slept. Indeed the soldiers received “large money” for participating in this dangerous plot (20:12). Matthew reveals to us about the rumour: “. . . and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day” (28:15). If Satan can get people to swallow a lie then he is happy.

“*Who moved the Stone?*” was an outstanding book written on the subject of Jesus’ resurrection by Frank Morrison. He actually had set out in his investigations to write a very different book to the one that was eventually published. The facts concerning the resurrection of the man from Nazareth proved, so overwhelming to him. For example, he wrote: “Personally, I am convinced that no body of men or women could persistently and successfully have preached in Jerusalem a doctrine involving the vacancy of that tomb, without the grave itself being physically vacant. The facts were too recent; the tomb too close to that seething centre of oriental life. Not all the make-believe in the world could have purchased the utter silence of antiquity or given to the records their impressive unanimity. Only the truth itself, in all its unavoidable simplicity, could have achieved that”.

Thomas was the disciple who doubted Jesus’ resurrection. “**Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of**

the nails and thrust my hand into His side I will not believe” (John 20:25). Of course, on seeing the risen Master, he did believe. But Jesus said unto him: “**Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed**” (20:29). Personally, I am so glad that I am numbered with the blessed ones. Dear reader, how about you?

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Jesus said to His disciples: “**All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go you, therefore, and teach (make disciples) of all nations, baptizing them in (Greek eis into) the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world (age). Amen**” (28:18-20). Please note from this passage that the correct translation is “*into* the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. The Greek *eis* signifies action from without to within. The word *name* means more than a mere designation or title. As one commentator has said: “It relates to the character and attributes of those under consideration, and here it implies that we are immersed into a state where we share the divine nature, that is, eternal life, the life of God”.

Alexander Campbell had something interesting to say about this great commission. “‘Cleanse the house, sweeping it’; ‘cleanse the garment washing it’, shows the manner in which the command is to be obeyed, or explains the meaning of it. Thus, ‘Disciple the nations, immersing them and teaching them to observe’, etc., expresses the manner in which the command is to be obeyed. If the apostles had only preached and not immersed, they would not have converted the hearers according to the commission: and if they had immersed and not taught them to observe the commands of the Saviour, they would have been

transgressors. A disciple, then, according to the commission, is one that heard the gospel, believed it, and has been immersed. A disciple indeed, is one that continues in keeping the commandments of Jesus".

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

AUTHOR: the apostle Paul.

DATE: probably around 53 A.D.

TO WHOM ADDRESSED? "... unto the churches of Galatia" (1:2)

GALATIA: a Roman province in Asia Minor.

PURPOSE: assert his apostolical character and authority and oppose Judaistic teaching. "Here he was dealing with an impulsive and impetuous people, descendants of the headstrong and volatile Gauls from whom the country is named. W. Carl Ketcherside.

THE GOSPEL

Paul wrote: "**But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed**" (1:8). What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news, the glad tidings, the joyful announcement of the justification by faith in Christ Jesus. It is the welcome communication from heaven that by trusting in Jesus in complete surrender and commitment. God will regard us if we were without sin, since we are in one who is in that state. The gospel we preach today must be the same gospel that the apostle Paul preached in his day. Surely this is very clear in reading chapter one. Some are out to pervert the gospel, but may we all work to convert through proclaiming the one, true gospel.

Ian S. Davidson,
Motherwell.

OBITUARY

Beech Hall, Wigan: It is with much sorrow that we report the sudden passing on 8th August, 1993, of our dear sister Mabel Bruton (nee Day).

Mabel was a very active member of the Church and we thank God for her

life, her faithfulness and her untiring efforts for the church at Beech Hall. Mabel died while on holiday at her daughter's in Hastings. The funeral took place at Beech Hall on 13th August: the service being led by Bro. John Morgan (Hindley). On Sunday afternoon 15th August a Memorial Service was held and Bro. Vernon Eaton from Platt Bridge Church took the service. Mabel will be greatly missed by all who knew her, but we look forward to the time when we shall meet again, when the Lord calls us home.

Sister A. Fenton.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Longshoot, Wigan: Once again we are joyful to report the addition of another soul to the Lord's body. David Marsden, son of Kathryn, and grandson of Alf and Edna, expressed his desire to follow Jesus and was immersed on Sunday, 22nd August.

We thank God for the power of the gospel which continues to attract through preaching and example. We know that David will be helped and encouraged as he endeavours to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God's word, and trust that he will be a long and faithful servant of the Master.

D. Melling.

Newtongrange: Our Annual Social was held in the meeting-place on Saturday, 9th October, 1993. Bro. John Kneller opened the meeting with prayer and thanksgiving.

The Chairman for the Social was Bro. John Wilson, Newtongrange, and the speakers were Bro. Bill Cook, Dunfermline and Bro. John Wilson, Slamannan. Both speakers gave excellent addresses leaving the gathering with much food for thought.

During the Social solos were sung by Sister May Wilson and Sister Fay Hughes, and recitations were given by Sister Jean Halliday and Bro. Ian

Davidson. Bro. Robert Hughes closed the gathering with prayer and benediction.

The Church here was most appreciative of all the Churches who notified us of the numbers likely to be attending as this greatly assisted our catering arrangements. A grand time of fellowship was enjoyed by all.

Joe Currie, Sec/Treas.

Kentish Town, London: On the weekend of October 2nd we held our 122nd Anniversary meetings. Despite the very wet weather we were pleased to welcome a good number of visitors, some travelling long distances. We thank them for joining with us. Bro. Tony Styles gave us two very encouraging messages on the Saturday and again on the Sunday. We trust that the time was a spiritually uplifting and helpful to our visitors as it was to us.

Dorothy Proud (Sec).

COMING EVENTS

TRANENT SOCIAL
19th March, 1994 at 4 p.m.
Loch Centre.

GHANA APPEAL

We are pleased to inform the readers of the *Scripture Standard* that Baby Gideon has made a full recovery and the parents have written to say thank you for the gifts which made this possible. In the past month we have sent £600 out to Ghana to be split between two congregations for their building programme. In the past few weeks we have received some very generous gifts which have accumulated to £700 in the account. We will send this out to assist some brethren that have long term medical needs and for gospel work. It may interest some to know that since this appeal began £40,878.34 has been collected from 471 gifts and all of this except the present £700 (mentioned above) has been transferred to Ghana. The brethren in Ghana certainly appreciate this. Thank you Anon, for the £100 note received on 7th October, 1993 it has receipt No. 468 and was allocated to Medical Aid. By the time this article is read, all clothes and spectacles received up to 11th October, 1993 will have been sent to Ghana. If anyone wishes to help in this work please contact me, Graeme Pearson, 13 Fairways, Dunfermline, Fife. KY12 0DU (Tel. No. 0383 728624). Cheques should be made out to "Graeme Pearson (Ghana Appeal).

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