

#### Volume 89-1 March 2022

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Pleading for a total return to New Testament principles.

contend earnestly for the faith Jude 1:3

Scripture Standard www.ScriptureStandard.eu

### Yashua the Craftsman THE CREDIBILITY OF YASHUA THE CRAFTSMAN

When Manchester, England, applied to host the Olympics, the media reported Londoners as saying "We should hold the Olympics in the head office - not in a branch office", "Manchester has no style", "I don't care anything about the North". Palestine also has had its North-South divide.

A Jewish boy called Yashua grew up in an insignificant northern town in Palestine. The view held of anyone from his community, is reflected in one Northerner's candid statement, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

Yashua was known as the son of Yusef and Miriam. He was an ideal son. There is only one record of him being rebuked. It was a misunderstanding, but that is another story. He gained respect, being a kind person of impeccable character. His stepfather, a craftsman, died early and no doubt, from a young age, Yashua worked to support his mother, brothers and sisters. Having learned his skills from his stepfather, he became known as Yashua the craftsman.

Being a conscientious craftsman, he would ensure his houses had solid foundations. He would carefully shape his yokes to fit comfortably on the oxens' shoulders, work which required firm and sensitive hands. Yashua had hands of compassion. He empathised with people's distress. In sympathy for a widow's sorrow, he touched her son's funeral bier: something the average Hebrew would cringe at the thought of doing. People's disadvantages were generally thought to be God's judgement on them. Despite that, Yashua's compassion drove him to gently touch a blind man's eyes, even to touch lepers.

However, his townsfolk could not stomach it when "the boy next door" claimed to fulfil prophesy. One day, in the local synagogue, Yashua read a passage out of the ancient sacred scroll of their venerated prophet, Yesha'ya. He then claimed it was a prediction about himself. Their reaction was, "Isn't this Yusef's son? Isn't this the craftsman, Miriam's son, the brother of Yaqub, Yusef, Y'hudha, and Simeon? Aren't his sisters present, here?" They were angry and outraged at his apparent audacity.

At about thirty years of age, he began to travel around, teaching and healing. There was nothing outstanding about this inconspicuous Jew's appearance. Yet curious crowds would throng him, so much so that his friends found it embarrassing. As for his faith healing, his own brothers rejected it, saying sarcastically "Go down South and show your fans there what you can do."

The opinion the southern religious elite had of him was even worse. They said: "This man is possessed by the Devil himself" and "It is the demons' ruler who enables him to exorcize demons." However, the intelligentsia could not deny the miracles he did. They were too well publicized. They could not be explained away. A dead girl brought back to life. A man raised after being dead for four days. The religious elite despaired of stopping his influence. In frustration they blamed each other saying "See! Your efforts to stop him are not having the slightest effect. Everyone is under his spell." Yashua challenged them openly: "Believe me because of my achievements." How could they counter that?

Yashua cured a man who had been blind from birth. They said to the man "Give GOD the glory. We know this fellow is bad." He

answered, "I don't know if he is bad, but I do know one thing. I was blind and now I see." The cure was conclusive evidence! Then came a snide remark about Yashua's humble background. "We know that God spoke to Mosah (one of their highly venerated prophets). But as for this fellow, we don't even know where he is from." The man's amusing response to these religious sages was "Now isn't that amazing. You don't know where he is from, and yet he has opened my eyes. Did anyone ever heal a man born blind? Never since the beginning of the world has anyone heard of any man opening the eyes of someone born blind. If this man wasn't from God, he couldn't do a thing."

An active supporter, Yohanan, had been thrown into prison whilst championing Yashua's cause. Yohanan's prospects were bleak. He sent his friends to ask Yashua if he was really what he claimed to be. Yashua said ... "Tell Yohanan what you have seen and heard. The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, encouraging news is being preached to the poor. Anyone who is not put-off by me is blest."

Despite all this evidence, what did the elitist Jews do to the craftsman's hands: the hands of compassion. They had nails driven through them! Spiking him to a gibbet. The shame of degrading public execution.

Granted, he wasn't the type of prestigious religious society Messiah the Jews expected, but the miracles should have made them think. They had caused a prominent Jew, a Sanhedrin councillor, to think. And that was right at the beginning, when Yashua first began to teach and heal. "Rabbi," the councillor said to him, "We know you must be a teacher from God, for no-one can do these miracles unless God is with him."

Shortly after Yashua's execution, one of his close companions, Kefas, made a spirited public speech in the forecourt of their national temple. He amazed the gathered crowd with these words: "You men of Israel" he said, "Yashua of Nazareth, was a man whom God approved to you, by the miracles, wonders and signs, as you yourselves know. You had him spiked to death, but God has raised him up."

The humble, compassionate craftsman was disparaged, maligned, and vengefully executed by MAN. But GOD powerfully vindicated him, raising him from the dead. The Lord Jesus (as we know him in the west) is not in a tomb. The tomb was empty! Because the Messiah is risen! Jesus the Messiah is now at the right hand of God! Praise the Lord!

But why did he have to die? Seven hundred years before these events, the prophet Yesha'ya made this prediction about him:

"He was despised and rejected by men; ... and we esteemed him not. Surely, he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows; vet we esteemed him stricken, ... by God, ... But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; ... and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. ... as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? ... although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to bruise him: he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, ... he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

You see, he was God's sacrifice for us. The innocent for the guilty. "All WE like sheep have gone astray; WE have turned everyone TO HIS OWN WAY; and the LORD has laid ON HIM the iniquity of us all." He sacrificed his life for our sins, was buried in the heart of the earth and rose in triumph. So, we must REPENT of our sins, BURY our old life with him in the waters of baptism and rise with him to live A NEW LIFE WITH HIM. [Acts 2.37-38, Romans 6.1-4]

Some folk might be inclined to reject these things because they seem foolish to them. The LORD God said "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8-9

The Lord Jesus said: "Whoever is not put-off by me is blest."

See, from His head, His hands, His feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down! Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small; Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Isaac Watts

Find this article online at

http://simplychristians.eu/muqaddas/d4web4sm/muqaddas/a1yashua.htm

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### STRAIGHT TALKING

Jamie McIlroy, Stretford Manchester

The following is edited from a lesson given to the congregation meeting at the Green Hut at Stretford. You can hear more lesson on YouTube at Church of Christ Stretford

If we were in a conversation and I was to turn towards you and say something like, "I'll be honest with you...", or "I'll tell you the truth....", you wouldn't think that everything I'd said up until that point was a lie would you?

I think that you would recognise that I'm using a common turn of phrase to drive home a point, seeking to remove any doubt or ambiguity about the subject of our conversation.

Straight talking can be refreshing at times but it can also be quite

hard for us to hear, especially if we are being told something that makes us feel uncomfortable. But you know, Jesus was a straight talker, often asserting Himself to tell the truth even when it made Him unpopular.

A lot has been said in the past on the subject of truthfulness. You'll have heard many preachers tackle the question, "What is Truth?", this same question that was put to Jesus by Pilate, during His trial before the crucifixion in John 18:38. And you'll also likely have read or heard about Jesus telling His disciples that only He is the way, the truth and the life in John 14:6. I know you're familiar with these scriptures.

Instead, having accepted Jesus' truthfulness, I want to focus on some of the things that He actually said. Truths that He considered to be of such great importance for people to hear, that He punctuated them with the phrase, "Most assuredly I say to you". Truths that are just as applicable today as they were when Jesus first revealed them.

If He were speaking today, Jesus might say "Trust me when I tell you...".

In John chapter 5, it's the Sabbath, and Jesus has just healed a man at the pool of Bethesda, by the Sheep gate in Jerusalem. The man was well known in the area and had been sick for 38 years.

But even though Jesus made the man well, all was not well with the Jewish leaders who came to hear about what had happened. Jesus' miraculous healing power caused quite a stir amongst them, to the point where, as strange as it may seem to us reading about it today, there were some people who wanted to kill Him as a result!

Their reasoning was because Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath. A day that was appointed by God as a day of rest when no work should be done by the nation of Israel. It's all explained in Exodus chapter 31. You can look it up for yourselves later. But for now, we'll read from John chapter 5 picking up the story from verse 16. For this reason, the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." Therefore, the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. John 5:16-18

In the NKJV we read "Most assuredly, I say to you" and if reading from the KJV, "Verily, verily, I say to you". The modern equivalent might be 'trust me when I tell you'... Other translations will use similar phrases to highlight the sincerity of certain points that Jesus is making.

When Jesus says, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working", it tells us that God is continually active. He never stops working in accordance with His purpose.

These words reminded me of the narrative surrounding Jesus' ascension

So then, after the Lord had spoken to the disciples, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Mark 16:19-20

So, even though Jesus has now ascended into heaven, He hasn't stopped working. God the Father worked through Jesus when He was here on earth and Jesus is continually working through His earthly body, the church, today.

If Jesus was the sort of person who was work shy, then what a sorry state we would all be in. I thank God that He worked on me and is still working. I know most assuredly that He hasn't given up on me, and that He hasn't given up on you either. None of us are flawless. We all sin. We all make mistakes. We all say things we shouldn't. We all do things we shouldn't. But does this mean that He doesn't care and that we should stop praying for strength and give up the good fight? Jesus promised,

He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son." That applies to me as much as you. Revelation 21:7

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." John 5:19

Both Jesus and God the Father were working together in unison. This statement places Jesus in a position of ultimate authority. He's not just declaring that He is equal to God, He's emphasising this fact, as proven by His ability to perform miracles. He and the Father are one and the same God. God the Father, God the Son, where it is impossible for one to do anything apart from the other. Jesus is making the ultimate claim of deity and unity with the El Shaddai.

Just imagine how this would have sounded to a Jew at that time. Blasphemous!!

He is most assuredly telling them that the Lord YHWH, who led their ancestors out of captivity in Egypt, has a Son. And that, He, the man standing before them, is that Son! No wonder they wanted to kill Him!

And yet, Jesus would later prove to everyone, without any reasonable doubt, through His own resurrection from the dead, that everything He ever said was true.

Sometimes we can be too quick to judge people. I know I can. There have been times when I've seen someone behaving in a certain way or saying certain things that, as a Christian, I found deeply offensive. And yet, I have to constantly remind myself that the only reason why I see things differently now is because of my knowledge of Jesus. If it wasn't for the time that I've spent reading and studying about Him in the Bible, then surely, I would be no different.

And so, the question is, do we allow Jesus to work with us to deal

with such situations? Or do we try to go through life alone?

Jesus continues,

For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. John 5:20-21

When we take on the name of Christ by being added to His body, the church, Jesus grants us eternal life. There is, and can be, no life outside of the body of Christ. It is by His grace that we are saved, none other. He is in charge.

Because the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. John 5:22-23

Jesus walked in our shoes, experienced first-hand life on earth. He has faced our trials and temptations. No, He has faced more than this, much more...

Have we endured the kind of suffering that Christ endured? I certainly haven't. I may have been sneered at for my beliefs from time to time but I've never suffered as Christ suffered. He alone is worthy of the honor to judge mankind.

And again, with even more emphasis, Jesus says,

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

John 5:24

Jesus is promising more than just physical life for a time. A life in Christ, is a life everlasting that is overflowing with blessings of peace. There is nothing else that even comes close to the richness of a life in Christ.

The Apostle Paul understood this when he wrote to Timothy saying,

"I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." 1 Timothy 1:13-15

Sometimes, it seems to me, people misunderstand the purpose of Jesus' ministry. Yes, He performed a lot of miracles such as healing the man at the pool of Bethesda, even raising Lazarus from the dead! - but that wasn't what He came here to do. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Sinners like you and me.

Anyone who hears the gospel and believes in Him who sent Jesus to this earth, has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

We don't receive everlasting life some time in the future. We receive it from the moment we put on Christ in baptism, as told by Paul,

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ Galatians 3:27

and by Jesus,

He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:16

Now, there are many Biblical scholars and religious denominations that will try to dispute this fact today, saying that baptism isn't necessary for salvation. But I make no apology for what I have read and understood from the Bible.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

Romans 6:2,3

Paul further explains in Romans chapter 6 that when we are

buried with Jesus in baptism into His death, we are set free from the sin that separates us from God. Such that, our sins are completely washed away and we receive God's gift of eternal life in Christ from that point onwards.

And so, most assuredly, I say to you.... everything you have read today is true!

### **QUESTION BOX**

Allan Ashurst, Stretford

### Two Commandments to Love

A QUESTION

In Matthew 22:34-40 why did Jesus say that the second commandment is "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" when it does not appear as second in Exodus 20?

A good and important question.

AN ANSWER

The Exodus 20 gives instructions on how two distinct commandments should be fulfilled.

The first commandment, verses 2 to 11, details how to love God.

The second commandment, verses 11 to 17, details how to love mankind.

Pharisees versed in the Law would understand it this way when Jesus said

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Matthew 22:40.

### The Soul after death

A QUESTION

In John 14:2 Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you". Was this a place only for the apostles or for all his faithful followers?

### AN ANSWER

Although addressed to the eleven, by extension, it applies to all the faithful and is reassuring and comforting in times of stress.

Jesus' reassurance

### John 14. 1 Let not your heart be troubled; you believe [πιστεύετε plural] in God

believe [πιστεύετε plural] also in Me. 2In My Father's house [οἰκία singular] are [εἰσιν there are, plural] many [πολλαί plural] mansions [μοναὶ dwelling places/homes, plural]; if it were not so, I would have told you [plural]. I go to prepare a place [τόπον singular] [ὑμῖν for you, plural] 3And if I go and prepare a place [τόπον singular] for you [ὑμῖν for you, plural], I will come again and receive you [ὑμᾶς you, plural] to Myself; that where I am, there you [ὑμεῖς] may be also. 4And where I go you know [οἴδατε plural], and the way [ὁδόν one way, singular] you know."

**2 Corinthians 5:1** For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

# John 14:2 if it were not so, I, would have told you, I go to prepare a place\* for you.

\*monēn μονὴν a home N-AFS

"I go to my Father, and your Father."

1.--[Let not your heart be troubled.] Bear in mind that there is no break between the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th chapters. Our Lord is continuing the discourse He began after the Lord's Supper and the departure of Judas, in the presence of the eleven faithful disciples. A slight pause, there certainly seems to be, since He turns from Peter (to whom He had been speaking directly) to speak to the whole body of the apostles and addresses them all, but the place, the time, and the audience are all one.

READ CHAPTER 13 FIRST.

Jesus washed the disciples feet, INCLUDING JUDAS!

The disciples had no idea why.

### As far as they were aware, Judas was one with them.

What a shock awaited them!

Jesus was preparing them. "Let not your heart be troubled. You do believe in God **so**....?" The shock of the betrayal, the arrest, the trial, the execution in the next few hours would fill them with despair, horror and fear. Would it be them next? Terrified they secluded themselves in the upper room with the door barred. Would they also be shamefully executed? - Dead. - No saviour! .... Hell?

**So,** He is reassuring them! You do believe in God **so** believe in me!

"Fear not...!

They could not contemplate having doubts about God so ...

having intimately witnessed Jesus for 3 1/2 years, why doubt Him – now!!!

So, the same assurance extends to the faithful till the end of the age!

May God bless you

## THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD

The Scripture Standard has been in publication since January, 1935, over 87 years. The first Editor was Walter Crosthwaite.

Walter Crosthwaite January 1935 - June 1955 Carlton Melling July 1955 - January 1974 James R. Gardiner February 1974 - September 2002 Robert Marsden October 2002 - April 2009 Allan Ashurst June 2010 to present

The Scripture Standard's first editorial is reprinted below from The Scripture Standard website www.ScriptureStandard.eu.

(This website of archives is well worth a visit.)

## The Scripture Standard

'What Saith the Scriptures,' (Rom. iv. 3.)

VOL. I. No. 1.

**JANUARY**, 1935.

### Watchword for the New Year,

'Remember your former leaders—it was they who brought you God's message. Bear in mind how they ended their lives, and imitate their faith. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME yesterday, and to-day: yes, and to the ages to come. Do not be drawn aside by all sorts of strange teaching.'—(Hebrews xiii. 7-0, Weymouth).

## Editorial.

CONSIDERABLY over a century ago, believers in many parts of the world, sick at heart of sectarian strife, weary of the imposition of human doctrines and commandments. erected a standard around which they hoped to rally those who were 'jealous for the Lord,' and 'valiant for the truth upon the earth,' on the ground on which the Church of Christ stood at the first. In face of tremendous opposition, and from the human standpoint slenderly equipped, they triumphed gloriously, demonstrating that, as of old, God can use the weak and despised for the accomplishing of His purposes.

It was claimed that, as a result of this movement, there were some twelve thousand Churches, with more than a million and a quarter members, pledged to this restoration plea, and that, as stated by a great newspaper, there was not a religious body that had not been modified in spirit and influence by their teaching.

Well we may ask, 'What hath God wrought?'

But it is common experience in all movements that succeeding genera-

THE pressure on our space for this first issue is such that we have had to increase the number of pages beyond what was first intended, and what we can hope to do in subsequent issues; at least, just yet. tions either do not know, or else forget, the price at which their freedom has been purchased, and so lose interest in, and zeal for the faith of their fathers; and in many cases, entirely abandon the ground so dearly bought and defended.

The history of humanity can be summed up in the word 'apostacy.' God has ever said, 'This is the way, walk ye in it'; and for a time, His people have been content to tread the narrow yet divine way. But in all ages, there have been those, who, claiming to know better than God, have pointed out what they declared to be an easier and quicker way to the desired goal. Bunyan's pilgrims left the king's highway, turning into the seemingly more pleasant and. smoother By-path Meadow, and captured by Giant Despair were thrown into Doubting Castle. So,, many have turned from the old paths and given up the faith of their fathers. Some of these have reached the logical terminus and are now avowed sceptics. Others have fallen into the sectarian pit from which they were digged; and are now struggling to build again the things they destroyed, thus making themselves transgressors.

Our purpose in erecting THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD is to endeavour to rally once more the loyal-hearted to 'contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.' In two senses, the Scriptures are a standard: as a fixed rule or model, and as an ensign of war. We shall •endeavour to keep these two meanings in view, seeking to test all things by the 'Scriptures of Truth;' and making them the God-given banner to be displayed as the rallying ground for those who desire to 'fight the good fight of the faith.'

We hope to be the fearless foes of all evil and error; these and not persons will be the object of attack. We shall use the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, for defence and attack, believing as David said of the sword of Goliath, 'There is none like it.'

We intend to publish articles by well-known brethren bearing on our position and plea; notes on Bible readings; answers to questions of general interest, and helpful items for preachers.

We shall welcome reports from Churches, and items relating to coming events.

We ask contributors (and will try to observe this rule ourselves), to be as concise as possible. Now we ask for the earnest support of those, and there must be many of them, whose hearts are saddened by modern departures, and who desire to defend, and hand on the faith to faithful men. A glorious heritage and opportunity are ours. Pray that the Lord may guide us, so that we may not fail Him. 'Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?'

Slightly adapting the stirring lines of Frances Ridley Havergal, we would say,

Unfurl the Scripture Standard! Lift it manfully on high,

And rally where its shining folds wave out against the sky 1

- Away with weak half-heartedness, with faithlessness and fear,
- Unfurl the Scripture Standard, and follow with a cheer! ,
- In God's own name we set it up, this Standard brave and bright,
- Uplifted for the cause of Christ, the cause of truth and right,
- The cause that none can overthrow, the cause that must prevail,
- Because the promise of the Lord can never, never fail!

In that faith and on God's lines we go forward. 'Who is sufficient for these things?' 'Our sufficiency is of God.'

In the article above the editor asks, for the earnest support of those, and there must be many of them, whose hearts are saddened by modern departures, and who desire to defend, and hand on the faith to faithful men.

Much as we would try to deny the passing of time, the time has come to find one of those faithful men to take on the editor role of the Scripture Standard.

Allan Ashurst has been faithfully serving as editor as one of those faithful men for 12 years. We thank him for the wonderful job he has done and pay tribute to his service.

At the age of 88 Allan has decided that the torch must be passed to a new generation.

If you are such a faithful brother in the UK who is interested in this work, please send an email to ScriptureStandard@gmail.com for our prayerful consideration.

### GHANA APPEAL

The Church of Christ at Dennyloanhead is very grateful to all sister churches, individual brothers and sisters who contribute to the Ghana Appeal. Please send donations to:

Donald Scobbie, 23 Princes Street, Bonnybridge, FK4 1BJ E-mail: donald.scobbie@blueyonder.co.uk

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