

Scripture Standard

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Pleading for a total return to New Testament principles.

NOTES:

1 e.g. baptism is immersion or overwhelming. see Romans 6:4 "buried." and Matt.20:22-23.

2 e.g. 'εις αρτος means: one loaf. 1.Cor.10:17.

New Testament Principles - 3

Translating documents is not plain sailing. "Equivalence" can be difficult to achieve. It follows that there is no such thing as a perfect translation, not even of the Bible. Also, theological and cultural biases tend to come through in Bible translations.

Even so, of the translations in general use, I recommend the King James Version (known to us in the UK as the Authorised Version. AV) as still the most accurate. The choice of text was wisely thought out, but, there are some translation mistakes, it has ecclesiastical bias and the language is archaic. However our seniors taught us how to handle these problems.¹ This does not seem to be happening now with newer translations. This needs to be rectified.

The New King James Version was an attempt to re-vamp the Authorised Version into modern English, but even that has several changes in meaning.

The various editions of the New International Version are probably the most popular. That might mainly be because they are easy to read. In some places it is more accurate than the King James,² but are we aware of NIV problems and can we handle them.

I do not know any newer translations in general use that do not lean heavily on the "Alexandrian" texts, particularly on the "Sinaiticus." Also several of the newer translations, being liberal paraphrases, are unsuitable for serious Bible study. So I am suggesting that in our studies we compare the AV with the NIV and if there are serious differences we should try to find out what is correct.

To be continued.

Benevolence

James Lim, Lavender, Singapore

Benevolence is a word not found in the Bible but there are ample laws and examples which encourage God's people to be compassionate to the weak and the poor.

Israel was unlike other pagan nations. It was a theocracy for many years before they started itching for a human king. God gave them laws so unique that like a beacon on a hill, they were to draw the attention of the pagans to Jehovah.

Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding **in the sight of the peoples** who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'

(Deuteronomy 4:5-6)

People are watching us.

The intended response from the pagans:

For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? (Deuteronomy 4:7-8)

Wow! How did this bunch of ex-slaves from Egypt think of such laws to organize themselves?

Such queries would naturally lead to the ultimate question: What kind of God do they worship? In Matthew 16:15 Jesus asked, "But whom do you say that I am?"

The laws of Moses given by God were for both the Israelites and non-Israelites who lived in God's community.

You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I am the LORD your God.

(Leviticus 24:22)

A. The OT laws pertaining to benevolence:

1. Excess crops for the poor:

You may own the harvest but do leave some behind for the poor and allow them to pick any leftover

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God (Leviticus 19:9-10)

2. Excess crops for widows, fatherless and aliens:

Do not deliberately squeeze maximum profit or yield for yourself.

When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. (Deuteronomy 24:19-22)

Why?

See verse 22: And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing

Remember we were once slaves too. Remember we were once lost in sin as well.

3. How should the underprivileged respond?:

Gather only what you need. Just as the well- endowed should be considerate, so the poor and the weak should reciprocate as well. The underprivileged are also expected to be reasonable and responsible. Poverty does not excuse us from greed and covetousness

When you come into your neighbour's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure, but you shall not put any in your container. When you come into your neighbour's standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbour's standing grain. (Deuteronomy 23:24-25)

4. Lending to the poor:

No usury was allowed in God's community

If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you. You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit. (Leviticus 25:35-38)

Why?

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

We should not make profit out of the misfortune and misery of our brethren. Whatever we have is from God who brought us out of our spiritual Egypt and blessed us bountifully in our spiritual Canaan, land of milk and honey.

Who is our God? See Psalm 68:5 "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation."

B. In the New Testament:

5. Pure religion

Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (James 1:27)

6. Concerns of the apostles

and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we

should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do. (Galatians 2:9-10)

Are we as eager?

Examples in Prayer

Derek L Daniell

The Bible is filled with accounts of people whose lives seem to have been filled with prayer. Seeing how they and others benefited from their communion with God will help us to better appreciate the greatest force on earth, and will assist us in praying more frequently during our own earthly sojourn. Let us consider some typical prayers.

The Exemplary Entreaty of Abraham [Genesis 18:23-33]

Abraham is a good example of an intercessor. In his dialogue with God concerning the fate of Sodom, he implored Him to spare that wicked city for the sake of ten righteous people. The Lord promised that he would but unfortunately ten could not be found. However when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, **“God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow”** (Genesis 19:29). Thus it appears that Lot was spared, at least in part, because of his uncle’s intercession.

Moses Atoning Prayer for Israel [Exodus 32:30-35]

Moses pleaded with God not to reject Israel for their sin in worshipping a golden calf. Fearing that God would reject His people he prayed that God would forgive them. **“But if not, please blot me out of the book that you have written”**(v32). God assured Moses that his name would not be blotted out and that he was to lead His forgiven people to the land He had promised them.

The Pitiful Plea of Hannah [1 Samuel 1:9-16]

Hannah is the model for earnest prayer, “In bitterness of soul”

she “*prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore*” because she was barren and wanted a child, A woman of a sorrowful spirit she poured out her soul before the Lord,” speaking “*out of the abundance of complaint and grief*”. Truly she was among the “poor in spirit” of whom Jesus said, “theirs is the kingdom of heaven” [Matthew 5:5]. Hannah’s plea did not fall on deaf ears for the Lord heard her appeal and gave her a child. That child became one of Israel’s greatest judges and anointed two kings.

The Royal Request of Solomon [1 Kings 3:5-9]

When God told Solomon to ask whatever he wanted, it was implied that the request would be granted. Solomon, of course, asked for wisdom. In doing this he became a pattern for us. God has also Promised to give us whatsoever we ask of Him, [Matthew 7:7-11], and He has specifically said that we can ask for wisdom [James 1:5].

The Positive Petition of Hezekiah

[2 Kings 19:14-19; Isaiah 37:14-20]

Hezekiah characteristically took his problems to God in complete reliance upon Him, which is not only to be admired, but also imitated. God will always answer petitions that are in harmony with His promises. God had promised Hezekiah protection [19:7] so the king had His word as the foundation of his faith. So it is even today, when our prayers are based upon the promises of God, they will be answered [1 John 3:21-22].

The Contrite Confession of David [Psalm 51]

David points out in this Psalm (which was probably written after his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah), we must be broken hearted over our sins, if we would petition God for pardon [v17]. Here we have the ideal request for mercy, one that includes an admission of guilt.

The Intercession of Jesus [John 17]

Knowing of His imminent death on the cross, Jesus shows His concern for his disciples. He prays to His Father to **keep and**

guard them from the evil one [vv12-15]. Jesus has the same concern for all those who believe in Him [John 10:28-29]. Jesus also asks that they be sanctified in the Truth, that all those who believe in Him may be one, as He and his Father are one [vv20-21]. That all His disciples can share His glory [Colossians 3:1-3; 1 John 3:2].

Security in Christ Jesus [part 2 of 2]

Izu Egege. Sheffield.

WHY IS THERE SO MUCH SUFFERING?

It is a question many ask, if our God is real and good as we claim, why does He allow so much suffering and wars? Firstly, God created us as free moral agents with free will. The problem is, we do not want to accept the consequences of our silly decisions in life. We tend to push the blame to someone else or pick on God for our own faults or failures. No one takes an aeroplane to 400 feet above the ground, knowing that it has no fuel to bring him down, unless he is on a suicide mission. It is natural that the laws of God will force the aeroplane down and could certainly result in fatality. Do you turn around to blame God? Also, sometimes things happen to the glory of God. We are frail and fallible. We get ill and generally, things happen to us and we sit back and wonder why.

Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him (John 9:3).

Yes, some events in our life ultimately bring glory to God.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28).

When trouble comes, we are taught to lean on God's unchanging hands, trusting that he will certainly make all things to work out to His glory. Suffering and bad times remind us all of a better home where we should all be working hard to be. Paul wrote further:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18)

God wants us to fully depend on Him in all things and in all situations.

Finally, Paul reflecting on his own peculiar circumstances wrote:

³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." ³⁷Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

Therefore we urge all men everywhere to be just as we are: simply Christians. It is only in Christ Jesus that genuine and lasting security in this life and in the life to come is found.

The Eyes of Our Heart

J.W. Wealand. West Valley Church of Christ, Glendale, Arizona.

Jesus the Christ, could actually see faith because his human heart has eyes, and ours do too.

In the gospel story of Jesus healing people, Matthew tells us in Matthew 9:1-9 about faith being seen. How can God see our faith in the power of Christ? Did those people and the paralysed man know Jesus wanted to heal their friend? They believed he did and took action to show they believed. That faith in action motivated the heart of God in Jesus to respond with forgiveness, then healing.

The most important healing anyone can experience is spiritual. The human heart has a sin problem that infects us and

demands healing. The Apostle Paul prayed that the eyes of our hearts could be enlightened [Ephesians 1:18], the implication being that sin actually darkens our eyes and ruins our spiritual eyesight. God wants us to see faith because his life is based on faith [Romans 1:17]. He doesn't want us to miss out on real abundant spiritual life, which you too can see by believing in his word. Let Him instruct you in this beautiful sight.

Another great virtue that we have the ability to see is grace. Yes, the encourager Barnabas actually saw grace [Acts 11:21-23]. Grace was in the form of people becoming Christians through faith in the promise of God's word, instructing us and them to be baptised for the forgiveness of our sins, and to receive the gift of His Holy Spirit. Faith isn't something only Apostles can see. It is for us all to see. The words for "the eyes of our hearts" is plural, meaning all of us, have this capacity. Can you believe the words of God?

He is love and yes, we can see even love [1.John 3:16-18]. The only aspect of God's love that we can not see, is the absolute glory of His love. No man has seen God himself, but his nature and virtues belong to those who believe. Faith is our victory, [1.John 5:4]. The Apostles knew they needed their faith to increase, and they were not even sick. Their growth and life depended on faith growing [Luke 17:5].

Jesus had the courage to denounce his critics and label them with evil hearts for one single reason: it was because the Pharisees used his desire to forgive, as a rule to break, which in their eyes would sully his character, they used a law about having the right to forgive, against Jesus as if he did not have the authority to act or even speak on behalf of God. The critics of Christ today simply do not have faith in the love of God giving promises. The Pharisees believed Jesus dishonoured God, in claiming divine prerogatives or claiming to speak for God when he really does not have the right or power, which would be blaspheming God, If anyone brought God down to a

human level and made his work or word seem common, that was blasphemous to them. Yet the Pharisees knew as well as the friends of the paralysed man that Jesus was working miracles. They had already in their mind, ruled that if his power to work miracles was not from God, then it was from the devil. What is our faith truly like? Our faith emulates one of two things: it either emulates the word of God, as in the kind of faith the apostles had, or it emulates the word or actions of men.

The one Faith God is looking for today is described by Paul as "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism" (Eph. 4:5). Do you live by faith, or do you live by sight [2 Corinthians 5:7]. Do you see love in the promises of God? Our heart's forgiveness is more important than our body. The Bible teaches us that there are three virtues we can see with the eyes of our heart:

1. Jesus saw faith [Matthew 9:2]
2. Barnabas saw grace [Acts 11:23]
3. John saw love [1 John 3:16-19]

We have eyes that can see [Ephesians 1:18] if they are healed by Christ as our doctor [Matthew 9:12-13]. The healing of our heart is more important than the healing of our body. Do you believe this? The Spirit of God writes in Hebrews 4:13:

No creature is hidden from God but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.

What do you believe God sees?

Creation or Evolution; does it matter?

Kim J Boland, Abergavenny.

We are surrounded with evolutionary thinking. Good nature programmes will tell us that animals are the way they are because they evolved for millions of years and the world is the way it is for the same reasons. Does it make any difference whether we accept this teaching or reject it?

Clearly this teaching is not scriptural. Genesis 1 and 2 tells us that everything was created in six days, after which God rested on the seventh day. We may not ignore these two chapters as God reminds us of this creation often:

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

(Exodus 20:10-11). See also Leviticus 23:23.

The only reason to reject a creation of six days is to meet modern theories of evolution which try to suggest the world's "creation" took place over millions of years. Our question here must be; should we try to reconcile the Bible to Science or Science to the Bible? If we accept the Bible as being the word of God, we have no need to try to make the Bible fit Science. The Bible can be shown to have taught science beyond man's understanding. Douglas Hamp wrote: "The primary reason that there is any question regarding the length of the creation days of Genesis is due to many people's belief that evolution is a fact, and since it is a *fact*, then a literal reading of Genesis must not be valid." (The First Six Days)

Paul wrote to Timothy:

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; ⁵ holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power (2.Timothy 3:1-5).

Many seek to embrace evolution in terms of Genesis 1 and 2,

calling this Intelligent Design, Theistic Evolution; Progressive Creation; is this not denying the power of God to create the world in as long as six days (for God, this is surely a long time, done to create the example of working six days and resting on the seventh; for God could have brought everything into existence at once).

Two recent books are worthy of consideration for those interested in this subject; the first is “The Evolution of a Creationist” by Jobe Martin. A teacher of science, he held to evolution; when challenged by his students to prove evolution he set out to do it. He thought this would be easy to do, but found he could not prove evolution; he became a believer in creation.

The second book is “the First Six Days” by Douglas Hamp (available as a TheWord module, or free as an abridged version from Douglas Hamp’s website). In this book the writer (a teacher of Hebrew) shows the correct interpretation of the word “day” in Genesis 1 and 2 to only be a literal 24 hour day.

An atheist magazine wrote: “.evolution destroys utterly and finally the very reason Jesus' earthly life was supposedly made necessary. Destroy Adam and Eve and the original sin, and in the rubble you will find the sorry remains of the Son of God. If Jesus was not the redeemer who died for our sins, and this is what evolution means, then Christianity is nothing. (R. Bozarth 1979:30 “The Meaning of Evolution” American Atheist Magazine, quoted in *The First Six Days*; Douglas Hamp). Is it not strange that an atheist realised the importance of the creation record and its events in God’s plans for salvation?

This “fact” of evolution was developed to disprove creation: [“...we see that Darwin's aim was to replace a belief in special creation by a belief in evolution and in this he did succeed, as every modern biologist will readily admit.” Sir Arthur Keith, stated in the introduction to the sixth edition (1872) of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection*

In a recent online discussion on a “Christian” site (CCEL.org)

the majority of people supported evolution and therefore denied Genesis 1 and 2 because evolution is a “fact”. As Douglas Hamp explains: “The primary reason that there is any question regarding the length of the creation days of Genesis is due to many people’s belief that evolution is a fact, and since it is a *fact*, then a literal reading of Genesis must not be valid. Some have gone so far as to suggest that the ancient Israelites were simplistic and merely ignorant of true science..”

But even evolutionists accept it is a theory, a belief; L. H. Matthews wrote in the Introduction to Darwin’s (1971 edition) *Origin of the Species*: “The fact of evolution is the backbone of biology and biology is thus in the peculiar position of being a science founded on unproven theory. Is it then a science or a faith? Belief in the theory of evolution is thus exactly parallel to belief in special creation. Both are concepts which the believers know to be true, but neither, up to the present, has been capable of proof....”

Darwin himself saw the flaws in his own theory: “The number of intermediate varieties which have formerly existed on earth must be truly enormous. Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graduated organic chain; and this, perhaps, is the most obvious and gravest objection which can be urged against my theory.”

(Darwin 1902 (taken from *The First Six Days*: Hamp)

Hamp shows, some recent investigations suggest the age of the world to be around 6,000 years; he also shows considerable evidence of man living alongside dinosaurs, something that evolution cannot accept. My interest here, however, is not to rehearse the points put across in many places; that evolution has not been proved, but to explore whether a belief in creation or evolution makes any difference to us as individuals.

To read Genesis 1 and 2 as symbolic is to allegorise it, that is, not to take it literally; one writer (J. Dwight Pentecost in *Things to*

Come) has pointed out the dangers of doing this:

1. The first great danger of the allegorical method is that it does not interpret Scripture.
2. The basic authority in interpretation ceases to be the Scriptures, but the mind of the interpreter. The interpretation may then be twisted by the interpreter's doctrinal positions, the authority of the church to which the interpreter adheres, his social or educational background, or a host of other factors.
3. [...] one is left without any means by which the conclusions of the interpreter may be tested.
(Pentecost 1958: 5,6)

Allegory may be used, but needs to be explained as in Galatians 4:22-25:

For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. ²³ But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise. ²⁴ Which things are **an allegory**: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. ²⁵ For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. (KJV).

The question with Genesis 1-2 is whether we are able to accept it literally or need to allegorise it. In treating it as allegory we must say that God's foundational teaching did not occur: thus there was no first marriage, no first murder, which showed Adam what "death" really meant; nor could Jesus be the first Adam.

Paul believed in the Genesis history:

There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.

(1.Corinthians 15:44,45)

He shows how this led to our current state from which we are saved:

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (1. Corinthians 15:22)

I would suggest if we must allegorise Genesis 1 and 2, then we must allegorise all of the gospels and its teaching. If Adam did not bring death, how can we rely in God's word that Christ makes us alive?

Paul does indeed make reference to a small allegory in the story of Adam:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. (Romans 5:12-14)

Here the word figure is **τύπος tupos** (too'-pos) n.

(figuratively) style or resemblance

(specially) a sampler ("type"), i.e. a model (for imitation) or instance (for warning)

It is an instance for warning in the future. It may hardly be a warning or type if it itself is an allegory of a type, as argued by those who advocate progressive creation.

The first chapters of Genesis are foundational to understanding our place here on earth, and God's dealings with his creation. I believe to trivialise this into a "story" is both unnecessary and dangerous; if we treat the first two chapters in a relaxed way, what will we do with the rest of God's word. To underestimate the real history in Genesis 1-2 is to trivialise much that is criticised there; immorality, dishonesty are a result of treating the word of God too lightly.

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7.00 pm Message

November 8

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538 Kings Road, M32 8JT

September 20th.

Bill Thistlethwaite

October 18th.

John Morgan

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