

# Scripture Standard

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We deeply appreciate the years of service that brother Robert Marsden, as editor, sister Pat Moncrieff, as proof reader, brother John Kneller, as treasurer and distributor, have devoted to the Scripture Standard. We also realise what tremendous responsibilities we have to the brotherhood and before God in taking on this work.

Sister Rose Payne has kindly agreed to be proof reader, compositor and treasurer and brother John Purcell to be distributor.

Initially the Scripture Standard will be issued quarterly (not monthly). It might be that with experience we will increase this to bimonthly.

God willing, the Scripture Standard will continue to be devoted to Bible teaching. We invite brothers and sisters to submit a range of Bible related articles of about 300 to not more than 900 words. We want the magazine to cater for brothers and sisters of all ages, which will inform, strengthen and help us to bring others to know Jesus.

We thank all the brothers, sisters and churches who have contributed and subscribed to the Scripture Standard in the past. We ask for your prayers that we might fulfil our role to the glory of God.

Our love in the Lord

Allan Ashurst

on behalf of the new editorial team.

# CONTENTMENT

Derek L. Daniell. Tunbridge Wells

**Are you contented?** Sometimes, mostly, always? Maybe you are content when things are going well for you, but what about when life gets tough or starts going wrong? The apostle Paul probably endured more than most in his life as a servant of Jesus Christ. Read his experiences in 2 Cor 11:23-33. However, he wrote this:

“I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength” Phil 4:11-12 (NIV).

**Contentment** is “the state of mind that allows us to avoid the anxious concern surrounding the outward circumstances of life”. Contentment is **not** an ego that boasts we can accomplish anything we set our mind to. Neither is it ignoring a problem that demands our attention, or eliminating emotion or feeling for a loved one in pain or suffering. Contentment is **more** than an inner calm in walking away from an obligation or responsibility. We have to **learn** the secret of contentment.

**Contentment does not just happen, but has to be learned.** The apostle Paul had “learned to be content whatever the circumstances”. Paul could draw upon his personal experiences when life got tough or unfair. When he was in prison in Rome he could remember how God had provided for him on so many other occasions. In Corinth the Lord told him not to be afraid, “For I am with you, and no one is going to attack or harm you” Acts 18:19-21. In Jerusalem

Paul was assured that he would “testify for the Lord in Rome.” Acts 23:11; 27:21-25. cp. Acts 21:12-14; 26:17. Likewise our past or present difficult experiences can serve to teach us contentment when life’s pressures hit us. We can also ‘**learn**’ from the experiences of others to be content in all circumstances of life. Even in prison Paul could count his blessings that he could still successfully preach the gospel, even to the palace guard, Phil 1:12-13 cp 4:22 and that other disciples were encouraged by his example to preach the gospel more courageously, 1:14. Paul even rejoiced that those who stirred up trouble for him preached the gospel also, 1:15-18.

**Contentment does not depend on what we have or have not.** Paul had “learned the secret of being content in any and every situation” Phil 4:12. Opinion polls and peer pressure can make us dissatisfied with the status quo. Media advertising urges us to update our possessions, ‘keeping up with the Jones’.’ In 1 Tim 6:6-10 we are warned of the danger of putting our hope in wealth, see v17. Let us not be covetous, but be content with such things as we have, Heb 13:5.

**Contentment comes through serving Christ.** Paul concluded, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”, Phil 4:13. He exhorts us to make our requests to God rather than being anxious, Phil 4:6-9. We need to learn the same lesson. Jesus taught his disciples, not to be anxious about life, but to seek *first* his kingdom and righteousness, so that other things could be added to them, Matt 6:25-34.

**Contentment then is not so much a destination we reach, as it is a state of mind we apply in all our circumstances.** Our motivation in developing contentment is

the confidence that one day there will be eternal perfection, read Rom 8:18-21. Like Paul we need to “*learn the secret of contentment*” whether times are good or bad.

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## WHAT IS TRUTH?

Jonathan Ashurst. Byron, GA.

Recently, I was able to view the oldest known surviving fragment of the New Testament in the world (AD 125), kept in the John Rylands Library, the small papyrus piece is publicly displayed in a glass case. As I looked at the Greek writing, I reflected on how its message has changed the world. Here is the translation of the passage found on one side of the fragment:

“Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate sayeth unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find no fault in him at all.”  
(John 18:37-38)



Even this small fragment tells us the good news—our King has come! He was born so that he could be a witness to the truth! Many people wonder whether we can really know what the truth is. They struggle with the agnostic attitude

that Pilate showed. But Jesus said, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Finding the truth is not merely a logical journey; it involves a change of heart. (Mark 4:1-20)

Pilate did not even wait for an answer, because he had little interest in Jesus' message. Someone has said, how ironic that Pilate was standing in the presence of the Truth himself! As Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life..."

Is Jesus King of your life? If not, He's waiting for you with open arms! (Luke 15:11-24). If He is, you have the wonderful message about the truth to share with the world!

(John 4:34-36)

[ **EDITOR** - The John Papyrus (P52) was found in Egypt. Its early date is evidence that John's gospel was widely dispersed from the site of authorship (Ephesus). So this fragment is at least one step away the original document which means that the Gospel of John must have been written a few years earlier.

This discovery killed sceptical assertions that, because of its difference from the 'synoptic gospels, 'The Gospel of John' must have been written centuries later to allow for fable to arise.]

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## **WOMEN, A HELPER OF MEN**

V.Sujatha. Stretford, M/c.

Ephesians 5:25 says 'Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church.' Here wives are compared with the church, so wives are as honoured as the church. The Woman is the man's compatible helper. (Genesis 2:18). God made woman from the rib of the man (Genesis 2:21). Man being alone was 'not good' (Genesis 2:18). So man without woman is incomplete.

Women are to be honoured for they bear children. 1 Peter 3:7 says 'Husbands, likewise dwell with them with understanding, give honour to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life.' Yes, it says women are the weaker vessel so man should provide for and protect women. As she is equal with him concerning being heir of grace, she should be honoured. There are many examples of women of great value like:

Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:24-26)

Lydia (Acts 16:14,40)

Lois and Eunice (2Timothy 1:5)

Paul's helpers (Romans 16:1-4,6,13,15)

A woman is not allowed to have authority over a man or to lead public prayer with a man present (1Timothy 2:8-15; 1Corinthians 14:34,35), however if someone is teaching error, she can explain to him the way of God more accurately but not publicly, privately like Priscilla (with Aquila) did when Apollos was preaching in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-26). Here are a few things that women can do:

Profess godliness with good works (1Timothy 2:9,10)

Teach and train other women (Titus 2:3-5)

Lead others to Christ (1Peter 3:1-6)

Submissive (Ephesians 5:22-24)

Be a helper in Christ Jesus (Roman 16:1-4,6,13,15)

A women should submit and obey her husband because of the love and not for fear or compulsion. God commanded wives to submit and obey her husbands as well as commanding men to love their wives. (Ephesians 5:25-29). Obedience comes from love (John 14:15). Proverbs 31 verse 10 onwards talks about the virtuous wife and at the end in verses 30 & 31 it says:

Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.

What a beautiful verse!

Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.

**I think this verse holds a secret to a happy married life. The secret is appreciation. A little appreciation and recognition of a wife's work gives her encouragement and willingness to do more.**

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## QUESTIONS

### **Do elders rule and how should they rule?**

(the Greek word rule is *hegemai* from which we get hegemony)

Some have said that there is a hierarchy with Christ at the top followed by elders overseeing the local congregation thus ruling the flock by authority. I think it is more by example than authority because Jesus has authority yet he chose not to grasp it for pre-eminence.

### **My Suggested Answer**

Allan Ashurst

Elders must demonstrate their ability to rule their own family before they are appointed. Otherwise they might not be suitable for taking care of the church.

1 Timothy 3:5 (For if a man know not how to rule [*proistemi*] his own house, how shall he take care of [*epimeleomai*] the church of God?)

Elders who rule well should be given double respect.

1 Timothy 5:17 The elders who rule [*proistemi*] well must be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

'Proistemi' has the idea of leading from the front for others to follow.

Hebrews 13:7 Remember your leaders [*hegeomai*] who spoke to you the word of God. Observing the influence of their manner of life imitate their faith. [direct translation]

Members should observe their guidance because they are concerned about their spiritual welfare.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey those who have the rule over you [*peithsthe hegoumenois humwn* - Trust your leaders] and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

Note what Paul wrote in the next verse.

Hebrews 13:18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

Elders are not to Lord it over the membership

1 Peter 5:3 not, as it were, domineering it over property, but by becoming examples to the flock. [direct translation]

Note what Peter wrote in the next verse.

**4 And when the chief Shepherd appears you will receive the unfading crown of glory.** [direct translation]



# LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Ian S. Davidson. Motherwell

Joel Osteen in one of his books tells of an experiment researchers did with two rats. I quote: “The researchers wanted to see how the rats’ attitudes affected their will to live. They put one rat in a large tub of water with high sides so it could not get out. Then they put the tub in a dark room. They timed how long the rat would keep swimming before it gave up. The rat lasted a little over three minutes. Then the researchers put another rat in the same tub, but this time they allowed a bright ray of light to shine into the room. That rat swam more than thirty-six hours, seven hundred times longer than the rat with no light. “Now, we cannot ask each rat: ‘Why the difference?’” But I think the answer is obvious. No light for the first rat meant no hope. Why then keep on swimming? But the light for the second rat meant hope of survival, thus the thirty-six hours of unbelievable endeavour.

When we read the Bible we see there are really only two kingdoms in this world – the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. Satan rules over the former; Jesus reigns over the latter. Everything about the devil is darkness; everything about Jesus is light. The contrast between light and darkness is an important one in the scriptures. The good book speaks of physical light and darkness, spiritual light and darkness and eternal light and darkness.

## PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

There are so many passages to quote, but let me bring but a few to your attention. “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day“ (Genesis 1: 3-5). “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!“ (Isaiah 5:20). “In Him (Jesus) was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the

darkness; and the darkness has not overcome it“ (John 1:4,5).  
“...delivering you (Saul, later Paul) from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send you. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in Me“ (Acts 26: 17,18). “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light“ (1 Peter 2: 9). “This then is the message which I have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all “ (1 John 1: 5). “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine on it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof“ (Revelation 21: 23).

Christians walk in light (1 John 1:7). But we have to be careful here. Light can represent a lot of things: knowledge (darkness represents ignorance); moral purity (darkness represents impurity); prosperity (darkness represents adversity); happiness (darkness represents despair). Some commentators are of the view that the light of which John speaks is love. A careful study of his first epistle reveals that to walk in light is to walk in love. For example, “He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now“ (1 John 2: 9). We recall the words of Jesus: “You have heard that it has been said, You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them who curse you, do good to them who hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven...” (Matthew 5: 43-45a).

## ETERNAL DARKNESS IN HELL

I once went down a pit in Ayrshire. Brother Willie Black, who was showing me around, put off all the lights at one point. I have never experienced darkness like it. I waved my hand in front of my face, but could see nothing. It was truly quite frightening. I was so glad to have the lights put back on.

We read: “And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth“ (Matthew 8: 11, 12). “Outer darkness“ means eternal separation from God. No darkness compares with this. Hell is horrific. There is not a chink of light there. It has to be avoided at all costs. It cost Jesus His life to save us from this fearful and dreadful state.

#### FINAL THOUGHT

There is an important passage with which to conclude. Paul wrote: “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light“ (2 Corinthians 11: 13,14, N.I.V.). Dear reader, let us never be unaware of Satan’s schemes.

(2 Corinthians 2:11).

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## **MEETING WITH THE BRETHREN**

Ian Grant. Eastwood

In the Lord’s church we are familiar with the fact that while the word church has come to mean the building in much of the religious world, in scripture it refers to the people and not to where they meet. Although we may be in the minority over this we are guided by scripture and not by what other people believe. However, in the religious world meeting together for worship is not generally seen as all that important, and some brethren seem to have the same view; they appear not to have grasped the importance scripture places upon meeting together with the saints.

That the word church means ‘assembly’ (1 Cor. 14:19) points to the importance of Christians assembling, even though the term is used in scripture to refer to the people of God, whether assembled or not (1 Cor. 1:2). A quick perusal of the New Testament reveals a striking number of passages referring to

Christians meeting together for a number of purposes including the meeting for the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42-46, 14:27; 1 Cor. 11:33-34, 14:23-26).

While faith is an individual thing, it has a community expression that involves meeting with other Christians. It should be noted that meeting with 'believers' is not the same as meeting with brethren.

God is to be glorified in all that we do (1 Cor. 10:31); he is to be glorified in the church (Eph. 3:21). Of course, this is not limited to when the church meets but clearly it will include assembling for the Lord's Supper. God is glorified simply by the existence of the church, but also as his people praise him. It is all too easy to approach worship with our focus on things other than the glory of God. It takes effort and practice to achieve worship that is in truth and also in spirit. Every missed assembly with the saints is a missed opportunity to learn and to practice how to glorify God.

Teaching was a prominent feature in the meetings of the first century church. Writing to the church in Corinth Paul said that edification (building up the brethren) was to be the aim of everything done in worship (1 Cor. 14:26). Reading through this chapter one can see that edification requires instruction. There is instruction in the singing where we are to teach one another (Col. 3:16). Also, one of the benefits of meeting with other believers is that of hearing the word preached. We can all benefit even from the poorest of lessons, if we will but make the effort; teaching is a two way street where the listener has an essential part to play in the process. At the very least we can all be blessed by the reading of the scriptures (1 Tim. 4:13-15).

Meeting with other Christians provides accountability. It is an opportunity for Christians to talk to one another about their lives and their struggles, and to receive and give encouragement (1 Thess. 5:14). A close friend and mature Christian can be a real blessing in holding us accountable as we strive to implement

change in our lives. At the end of the day, we all need help to become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:3). This is not something that we take to like a duck to water; it is a challenge that requires hard work, perseverance and encouragement.

Maintaining a relationship with fellow Christians by meeting with them every first day of the week (and more often when there is the opportunity) is an essential part of the Christian's life.

Worship is not an option if time allows or if there is no other more attractive alternative; it is required of Christians (John 4:23-24; Heb. 10:19-25) and for good reasons.

When we fail to meet on each Lord's Day we deprive ourselves of the opportunity to praise God and to be edified, and also to help and encourage other fellow Christians who need our assistance. When the church was first established, meeting with the brethren featured strongly in the lives of those early Christians. May it also be a feature of our lives today.

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## **BOOK REVIEW**

Allan Ashurst

### **UNWRAPPING THE PHARAOHS**

**BIBLICAL & EGYPTION TIMELINE**

John Ashton & David Down

In this book we learn about enormous discrepancies between Biblical, ancient Greek, Assyrian and Hittite time-lines and the traditional Egyptian time-line of up to six hundred years in places. This is due to failure to recognise that sometimes there were several Pharaohs ruling at the same time. When the traditional time-line is reduced to take this into account, it amazingly harmonises with Biblical events. Here are some examples:

#### **ABRAHAM VISITS EGYPT**

Josephus tells us that Abraham taught the Egyptians the science of Astronomy and Mathematics. This would

account for the similarity of early stepped pyramids to those in Mesopotamian and the amazing accuracy of the layout of the Khufu's (Cheop's) true pyramid. It is exactly square in plan and the corners point directly north, south, east and west. The revised time-line places the building of this pyramid in the 19c. B.C.

## **JOSEPH IN EGYPT**

According to his statues, Pharaoh Sesostris I (revised time 1673 BC) was an agreeable looking person. During the 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty the canal from the Nile to the Faiyyum Oasis was constructed, a man named Mentuhotep was made the duplicate ('alter ego') of the king (cp. Genesis 41:43) and a provincial governor stored food to prepare for famine. This was the time when Joseph was put in charge of the storage of crops. This canal is still called Joseph's canal and supports a population of 2,000,000 people.

## **SEMITIC SLAVES IN EGYPT**

Sesostris III (1572 BC) statues depict him as a very disagreeable person. He had the reputation of being a tyrant. During his reign there were numerous Asiatic (Semitic) slaves. It was the time when a Pharaoh arose who 'knew not Joseph.'

## **MOSES**

Sesostris III was succeeded by Amenemhet III (1531 BC). During his reign pyramids were built with sun-dried mud bricks mixed with straw. He had two daughters but no sons. Evidently his infertile daughter, princess Sobekneferu, went to the river to worship the fertility god, Hapy, where she found and adopted Moses and it was her father who had instructed all males to be killed at birth.

## **THE EXODUS**

Excavations at Kahun reveal that during the reign of Neferhotep I (1572 BC) numerous Semitic slaves suddenly deserted their homes and shops 'en masse,' abandoning tools and other possessions. This was the time of the Exodus. Wooden boxes containing baby skeletons were uncovered under house floors. Probably babies snatched from their parents and killed during the reign of Amenemhet III.

Neferhotep's mummy has never been found. He and his army were no doubt at the bottom of the Red sea. This could account for why the Hyksos were able to swarm in and take control of Egypt with little resistance.

### **MONOTHEISM (Belief in one god)**

Sceptics claim that the Jews learned monotheism from Pharaoh Akhenaten. If there was any copying of ideas the revised dates show that it would have to have been the other way round. Abraham went to Egypt in 1921 BC, which was more than over 1,000 years before Akhenaten became Pharaoh (824 BC). In fact it is even 5 centuries before the traditional date for when he succeeded to the throne (1353BC).

So if the time-line is corrected there is absolutely no conflict with Scripture. Many other important facts are revealed in this well written and suitably illustrated book.

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## NEWS and INFORMATION

### SPECIAL CHURCH MEETINGS

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Speakers to be announced

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