

# Scripture Standard

**Volume 82-3**  
**September 2015**

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**Pleading for a total return to New Testament principles.**

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**CORRECTION and apology**  
**Volume 92-1 was dated 2014. It should be 2015.**

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## **THE BEAUTY OF BAPTISM**

**Page 8**

In volume 80-1 March 2013 there was an article by Fred Miller about Felix Ysagun Manalo. He was once a member of a church of Christ and later joined the fore-runners of the "Jehovah's Witnesses." who taught that Jesus would come in 1914. That year Manalo declared himself to be "the last messenger of God" and founded a sect and called it "Iglesia ni Cristo" (Filipino for "Church of Christ"). It grew very quickly and has spread to many countries around the world. Its organisation is heirarchical and Felix's grandson, Eduardo, is the executive minister. There are several groups in the UK. Two years ago one started in Trafford. Most of its members seem to be Filipinos.

Currently the media reports that the organisation is experiencing serious internal disruptions. These could cause many of their members to become disillusioned and lose what faith in God they have. They deny the deity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. This raises the question: When they immerse folk in water, is it into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, seeing the three have one name? (Matthew 28:19. Exodus 3:14,15)

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## **HISTORY OF THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD** **Page 13**

Brother Graeme Morrison and sister Rose M. Payne have done trojan work in preserving past copies of the Scripture Standard magazine. Graeme in collecting, scanning and uploading them, and Sister Rose in cataloguing each issues and the articles in them. This makes available to us valuable Scripture articles of brethren since its inception.

They are temporarily in Graeme's drop box. Please e-mail him for details on how to access them.

[graemorr@hotmail.com](mailto:graemorr@hotmail.com)

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# **The Wayward Son**

**Luke 15:11-24**

Foo, Yong Wee

Pasir Panjang, Singapore

The parable of the prodigal son is a moving story that tells of God's love for us and his willingness to forgive us no matter what we have done. There are three main characters in this parable. The father and his two sons. The story begins with the younger son who said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' What an audacious remark! It was clear that the son was not putting in a request. Rather, he was telling his father what to do - hand over the portion of the estate that belongs to him, period. That was really an astonishing statement in an ancient Jewish society that highly revered parents. The Jews were taught to honour parents in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:12). What the son did was tantamount to wishing the father dead so he could have his estate right away. In fact, in most cultures, that is out-right rebellious and disrespectful. Despite the insulting demand, amazingly the father granted it.

Within a short time, the son liquidated the estate, got the cash and took off. Strangely, notice how quickly the deals were struck. Normally asset liquidation takes time - more like in the phase of days, weeks or even months. Besides the usual paperwork, there are viewings, price negotiation, valuation and process for the legal transfer of property ownership and etc. You just can't cash out in a short time. Of course, unless the son had already plotted all these in advance. Why? So that he could waste no time in getting out of his father's land and ventured into a faraway country. Also his plan in that distant land? To indulge in all kinds of wild, riotous and sinful living using what he took from his father. Even with tons of cash to burn, all the squandering and hard partying soon left the son with an empty pocket. By then, a famine had swept over the land and the son found himself in dire straits with no

resources to weather the hard time. Broke and hungry, his lofty state slowly reduced to a state of despair. To survive the famine, the son subjected himself to a pagan so he could look for a job. By taking up local citizenship, it meant that the son had renounced the citizenship of his birthplace to be identified with the people in the strange land. The Jews see themselves as the physical and spiritual descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob/Israel (John 8:39). They are proud of their nationality and have a strong sense of identity as a people. To end up in this state was a humiliation.

If you think that the story is sad, it gets even sadder from that point. While the son managed to get a job from a local farmer, he was given the task of feeding pigs. The job of feeding the pigs was the most demeaning at that time. You see, to the Jews, pigs are unclean animals (Leviticus 11:7). The very thought of coming in close proximity with the animal is abhorrent. Trying to eke out an existence, the young man took up the job to herd swine. In the process, even as the swine had food, the son had none. No one gave him anything to eat. He was so hungry that he wished he could be filled with the very food that the pigs were fed. How could he have sunk so low? How could he have messed up so badly? He was left shattered and spent. At the lowest point of his life, the son finally came to his senses.

The thought of his father came to his mind. He remembered how generous his father was. The father had many hired men and he took good care of all their welfare. In those times, the standing of hired men in the society was even lower than that of the slaves! A slave lived under the roof of his master. Food, clothing and shelter were provided for by the master. On the other hand, a hired man had no guarantee of his daily meal as he was a daily wage worker. If he had no job, he had no food. What a hired man would do every day was that he would wait by a busy market place for a hirer to come by to give him daily

jobs. If a hirer showed up and offered him daily job, he would earn his daily wage. Even if he was hired, a hired man cannot negotiate his wage. It was up to the hirer to decide the wage (Matthew 20:10). So in essence, the hired men were really at the mercy of their hirer. But the son's father was a good and generous man. His father treated his hired men kindly and gave them more than what they deserved. Surely even one of his father's hired men would be in a far better state than him.

Starved, desolated and despaired, the son decided to turn and go back to his father. He wanted to tell his father that he had sinned and that he was sorry for what he had said and done. So ashamed was he that he felt no longer worthy to be his father's son anymore. Instead, he wished that his father would make him one of his hired men, so he could work for him and pay back all that he owed. But while he was still a long way from home, the father spotted him. Clearly, the father had been waiting for the son's return. Even after so long, the father was still looking out for his son. Filled with compassion, the father ran towards his son. In that culture, Middle Eastern man never ran, especially a noble elderly man. But not only did the father run, he would also have to hold up his tunic so he would not fall. That meant that his legs would be exposed which was so humiliating, in the first century, for a man to bare his legs.

What the father did was completely shocking and out of culture! At that point of the parable I could picture the Pharisees' jaws dropped, eyes popped and hearts skipped a beat. They would have expected the father to teach the son a lesson! Justice and retribution must be handed down! The son should be punished for all that he had done – disrespecting the father, dwelling in sin, being disloyal to his own nationality, defiling himself among the unclean animals. A son with such defiance and disobedience in an Eastern or Middle Eastern culture would be met with equitable punishment. The father had every right to refuse to see the son upon his return. Even

to disown him! During my upbringing years, I've known of a boy in my neighbourhood who had been disowned by his father for bringing extreme shame to the family. It was very sad. But if the father did those things, the community would have all understood that. They would have said, "That's just, that's fair and that's right. The son deserved it because of what he had done to his father." The son would then be shamed, humiliated and scorned. What the wayward son did was very severe. In an honour and shame culture, it was very important to protect the honour of the father.

But ignoring the stare and discounting how the villagers might have thought of him, the father raced as fast as he could to meet his son. I thought he wanted to reach his son before the villagers to shield him from the hurled abuse and insults. Because of the joy of seeing his son, the father endured all possible forms of insult, mockery and shame and embraced his son and plunged him in kisses all over despite his filthy and soiled state. What an incredible scene! What a loving father! Overwhelmed, by his father's response, the son voiced his well-rehearsed confession that he had prepared along the journey home, "I have sinned and against heaven and against you and am no longer worthy to be your son..." Before he could finish it with "make me your hired servant," the father cut him short. He covered his son with his best robes, placed his signet ring on his figure and sandals on his feet. The father wanted to say, you don't earn you're way back, I brought you back! You are my son! All his filth was covered by the father's noble robe. His sins were forgiven. Sandals represented sonship. Slaves went around without sandals. His sonship was restored. The signet ring represents authority. By putting the ring on his finger, any document signed and endorsed by the son's ring carried his father's full authority! His family status was reinstated!

Oh what joy and what a time for celebration! This was depicted

by a feast of fattened calf. This was not your usual meal as meat was eaten only at an important festival of celebration. The fattened calf was really a double joy – he that was dead was alive again, he that was lost was found. Son, welcome back to the family!

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## **JUDAS ISCARIOT**

Jonathan Ashurst, Byron GA

### **INTRODUCTION**

As an apostle, Judas Iscariot witnessed Jesus' ministry, including Jesus' baptism by John (Acts 1:21-22). Unlike the other apostles, Judas Iscariot turned away from following Christ. In spite of all the mighty works he witnessed, Judas would eventually betray his rabbi to the religious leaders and end his own life in suicide. What led Judas to such treachery?

### **DISAMBIGUATION**

Before examining his life, it may be helpful to distinguish him from the other men in the New Testament named Judas. Jesus had a half-brother named Judas (Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3) who was also called Jude (Jude 1:1). There was another apostle named Judas (Luke 6:16, Acts 1:13, John 14:22), who was also known as Thaddaeus (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18). Other men named Judas are mentioned as well (Acts 5:37, Acts 9:11, Acts 15:22-35). However, the man who betrayed Jesus was known as Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon (John 6:71).

### **EXAMINATION**

Unlike some of the lesser known apostles, Judas Iscariot is mentioned many times in the gospel accounts. He is listed with the twelve apostles (Matthew 10:4, Mark 3:19, Luke 6:16) as the one who ended up betraying Jesus. Several times, Jesus predicted the coming betrayal (Matthew 17:22-23, 20:17-20, 26:1-2. John 6:70-71, 17:12).

Judas allowed greed for money to consume him. Though he was entrusted with carrying the moneybag for the apostles (John 13:29), he would sometimes steal from it for himself (John 12:6). When Judas criticized Mary for pouring expensive ointment on Jesus' feet, Jesus corrected Judas (John 12:1-8). Soon after, Judas secretly agreed to betray Jesus to the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-16, 27:3-19. Mark 14:10-11. Luke 22:3-6. Zechariah 11:12).

On the evening when Jesus ate the Passover with the twelve, he washed their feet and then told them that one of them would be his betrayer. The disciples were shocked and saddened. When they wanted to know who it would be, Jesus answered that it would be the one who dipped his hand with him in the dish. Jesus pronounced woe on the traitor, saying "It would have been better for that man if he had never been born." When Judas asked "Is it I?" then Jesus told him that it was. After Judas ate the sop, Satan entered into him and Judas left to carry out the betrayal ( Matthew 26:20-25, Mark 14:17-21, Luke 22:21-23, John 13:1-5,10-11,18-30, 1.Corinthians 11:23 ).

The religious leaders had wanted to arrest Jesus in private, so that there would not be a riot (Matthew 26:3-5, Luke 22:1-2). Judas Iscariot knew the place that Jesus liked to go to pray, and led the temple guards there. He signalled to them which one was Jesus by pretending to greet Jesus as a friend. Jesus knew the entire time what was happening, and he allowed himself to be arrested. (Matthew 26:45-50, Mark 14:41-46, Luke 22:47-48, John 18:1-9)

The next morning, Judas heard that Jesus had been condemned to death. This news caused Judas to feel remorse, but he still did not repent.\* He acknowledged his wrong, but he would not turn back to God. Instead, he angrily threw down the silver in the temple, went to a field outside Jerusalem, and hanged himself. (Matthew 27:3-5) The priests

decided to use the money to purchase the field in which Judas had killed himself. Matthew notes that these events fulfilled prophecy (Matthew 27:6-10).

## **CONCLUSION**

After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, Peter reminded the other apostles that Judas' betrayal had been predicted by the prophets. In addition, Peter noted that Judas' replacement had also been prophesied. Matthias became the man who replaced Judas Iscariot as an apostle (Acts 1:15-26).

In spite of all he witnessed, Judas Iscariot turned away from Christ. Let us instead recommit ourselves to the Lord, so that we can be like the faithful apostles who stayed true to Christ to the end.

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\*EDITOR: The Greek in Matthew 27:3 is μεταμεληθεις = regretting [it].

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## **The Amazing Beauty of Bible Baptism**

Allan Ashurst - Stretford

### **JEWISH BAPTISM.**

As it was practised in the first century.



**Sightseers viewing the foundations of first century private houses, outside Jerusalem's temple compound.**

[Photographs printed with the permission of Fred Miller, [www.moellerhaus.com](http://www.moellerhaus.com)]



## **Hewn into the bedrock of each house is a baptistry.**

A guide explained how, when devout Jews arrived home, they would totally immerse in water, themselves and anything purchased for purification. That would even include immersing bed-mats.\* Someone remarked that baptism was immersion, to which another onlooker responded that they don't practise immersion for baptism. However the word "baptism" is from a Greek word meaning immersion.

## **Did John the Baptist Simply Adopt Baptism from Jewish culture?**

Jewish baptism was immersion in water. But there the similarity ends:

- 1 Jewish baptism in water was a ritual to remove physical contamination, contracted by contact with things outside their home. But neither John nor Jesus' followers baptised people in water to remove physical dirt,<sup>2</sup> They baptised for "the forgiveness of sins."<sup>13</sup>

\*[Mark 7:4. "bed-mats" or "?tables"?. Greek κλινη cp. with Mark 9:2-7 & Luke 5:18-25.]

- 2 Jews immersed themselves. But, those who believed John the Baptist and after Jesus' resurrection, those who believed in Him did not immerse themselves. They submitted to being immersed.

## **So what is so wonderfully distinctive about Bible baptism?**

### **THE AMAZING BEAUTY OF SCRIPTURAL BAPTISM.**

#### **1) John's Baptism**

In those days, Jews flocked to hear that great prophet, John the Baptist. Many were eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and set up His Kingdom. John was telling them His arrival was imminent, so they must repent and be baptised in water.<sup>1</sup>

Many obeyed John, acknowledging their sins and deciding to amend their lifestyle. However, unlike Jewish baptism, they did not immerse themselves; they submitted to John to be

immersed. Also, it was not for physical purification but for their sins to be forgiven.<sup>2</sup>

John went where there was “much water” in order to immerse people, because baptism requires “much water”. It says that he baptised at “Aenon near Salim because there was much water there.”<sup>3</sup>

Even though Jesus was sinless, baptism was so important to Him that He persuaded John to baptise Him, saying they should do everything that is right. So Jesus allowed John to immerse Him in water.<sup>4</sup>

As John raised Him out of the water, the Holy Spirit alighted like a dove on Jesus and a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved son...”<sup>5</sup> This convinced John that Jesus was the Messiah. Then John declared Jesus to be “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”<sup>6</sup>

Jesus also persuaded people to repent because the Kingdom of God was imminent and they were also immersed.<sup>7</sup> They were baptised in anticipation of Jesus becoming king. His kingdom would be an eternal spiritual kingdom, not an earthly kingdom.<sup>8</sup>

Consider with awe, how in those days, numerous Jews repenting and submitting to being immersed in water, for their sins to be forgiven, in preparation for the imminent establishment of the Messiah's kingdom.

## **2) Baptism in Jesus' Name**

As we know, Jesus was eventually executed, but three days later he rose out of the grave, endowed with all authority in heaven and on earth, as King of kings.<sup>9</sup> So John's baptism was no longer valid because Jesus was enthroned as king over His kingdom. From that time baptism has to be in Jesus' name, that is, with his authority.<sup>10</sup>

For the next few weeks He taught His apostles (i.e. envoys)

more about His kingdom. and told them to “go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” Then He returned to heaven. But before leaving them, He commissioned them to “go into all the world and preach the good news to all the creation.” So this is for everybody in the world. To us this means that those who believe and submit to being immersed \*into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, will be saved. Sadly those who disbelieve will be condemned.<sup>11</sup>

\* **[NOTE:** “into (Greek εἰς) the name.” The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have one name. This means that repentant, baptised believers are brought into such a close relationship with the Almighty, that they are “called the children of God.” How amazing this is!]<sup>12</sup>

Soon after, Peter took the first opportunity to declare to Jews assembled in the temple courtyard that Jesus whom they had crucified was risen and is at God’s right hand. Many were smitten to the heart and wanted to know what they should do. Peter told those convicted believers that they should repent and be baptised for their sins to be forgiven and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. He said that this promise was made to everybody who hears the call of the Gospel message. Even Gentile believers were baptised,<sup>13</sup> first - Cornelius and his neighbours,<sup>14</sup> later - the Philippian jailer.<sup>15</sup> Jew or Gentile, all nations - there was and is no difference.<sup>16</sup>

The Lord Jesus added to His church those who believed, repented and were baptised.<sup>17</sup> Thus began His kingdom on earth<sup>18</sup> and His church was established. From then on, numerous people throughout the world have repented of their sins, been baptised in water and been raised to live new lives, devoted to Jesus. They meet together in groups and strive to base their faith and practice on New Testament principles.

Why did they attach so much importance to the immersion in water of repentant believers? Even the apostle Paul was baptised to wash away his sins “calling on the name of the Lord.”<sup>19</sup> Peter says it is because baptism is a good conscience's appeal to God.<sup>2</sup> Moreover Paul wrote to the Roman church that baptism is the point at which we become dead to sin being buried with Christ and risen with him to live a new life.<sup>20</sup>

### **Valid Baptism**

Baptism in water displays the beauty of the Gospel: that the Lord Jesus died for us, was buried, then rose triumphant from the dead, giving us the assurance of eternal life.

Other “baptisms” do not do that.

Now consider the wondrous beauty of baptism in water, when a repentant believer, confessing their faith in Jesus before witnesses, is burying their old lifestyle, receiving forgiveness of sins, being buried with Jesus and rising with Him, to begin a new life with Him.<sup>11,20</sup>

Immersion in water displays, as no alternative ritual does, the death and burial of the old life and the birth into a new life of a repentant believer, as well as the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It is being buried and raised with him.<sup>21</sup>

### **Maybe you are asking,**

**“What is to stop me from being baptised?”**

I suggest you read in the Bible from Acts 8:26-39, about an Ethiopian who asked the same question. Then read the passage he was reading, in Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12, about what would happen to Jesus, written some 700 years before He was born.

### **The significance or validity of baptism does not depend on:**

- The standing of the one who does the baptism.  
(Though it is wise that it is done by capable baptised believer.)

- Where it is done, whether in a place of worship or elsewhere.  
(As long as it is done decently and in an orderly manner.)
- It being dedicated water.  
(Though it should be enough water to be immersed in.)
- A special formula of words being used.  
(Though it is wise that the witnesses understand what is being done.)

**What makes your baptism valid and significant:**

- That you repent of your sins, deciding to strive not to sin again.
- That you believe with all your heart that the Jesus who died for you is the Christ the Son of the living God.  
This should be confessed before witnesses.
- That you are lowered under the water and raised from the water.

## **A History of the Scripture Standard**

Sister Rose M. Payne

Some interesting facts came to light while helping to make up an index for previous volumes of the magazine.

Publication of the Scripture Standard began in 1935 with protests against liberal trends which eventually led many members into the denominations, and also warnings about the likelihood of another war. It also dealt with the current evils of the cinema, dance halls, alcohol, tobacco and gambling.

During the thirty years from 1935 to 1965 (the section of the index dealt with by the writer) there were approximately 1347 baptisms reported. Always there

were more women baptised than men, and they made up 62% of the total. However, among the 787 death notices, the sexes were very nearly equal. This falling away probably occurred because many of these ladies married non-members and found themselves living where there was no church meeting.

Many young people had been baptised straight from the Sunday schools. Most churches had well organised schools on Sunday afternoons and even non-members from the neighbourhood would be happy to send their children, partly because Sundays were very quiet days, with all shops shut and often no transport.

Gospel missions were usually supported by neighbouring congregations, with refreshments being provided for the visitors. Probably this custom began in order to keep people away from establishments where alcohol was served. These events often took place on the anniversary of the opening of the building.

The Second World War made surprisingly little difference, as far as was recorded in the magazine. There is the odd mention of evacuees in Sunday school, times of services being altered because of black-out, rations saved up to provide tea for visitors, and fewer pages in the magazine because of paper shortages. No mention was made in print when one church lost its building, and at least one London congregation ceased meeting because all the members were dispersed, but thankfully most churches came through safely.

The few full-time evangelists were very active during the years 1945 to 1960, when there was real fear of a nuclear war, and numbers of baptisms were rising. Readers were a fairly tight knit fraternity and the magazine carried most of their news items as well as

correspondence, questions and Bible studies. This began to change with the advent of more visiting preachers from overseas often accompanied by groups of workers who set up new congregations, and who may never have heard of the Scripture Standard.

Magazine articles continued to be of a high quality, contributed by a group of writers who were mainly self-taught, and had often acquired some knowledge of Greek in their spare time. There were often very thorough debates about doubtful interpretations of scripture. An immense amount of work was involved in producing monthly numbers, especially as type had originally to be set up from handwritten papers. Altogether there is a mine of information here for the Bible student.

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## **NEWS AND INFORMATION**

### **OBITUARY**

#### **Alex Strachen, Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland.**

Brother Alex Strachen passed away on the 8th. July 2015.

Alex kept the faith right to the end.

Though we feel deep sorrow  
we rejoice that he went to be with the Lord.

To God be the glory.

The funeral was held on the 14th. of July, his brother Jack spoke in the church's building to a full assembly and was assisted by Adam Ball junior at the crematorium.

Please keep his wife Moyra, his sister Betty and all his family  
in your prayers.

Richard Gilmour

I am the resurrection, and the life: he who believes  
in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live. John 11:25.

## NOTICES

**STRETFORD, Manchester.**

**Saturday Gospel Meetings. 2015**

**7.00 pm** The Green Hut

538 Kings Road, M32 8JT

Pilomon Raja

**September 19th.**

**October 17th.**

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**Map:**

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**November 14th.**

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