

Scripture Standard

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Ian S. Davidson

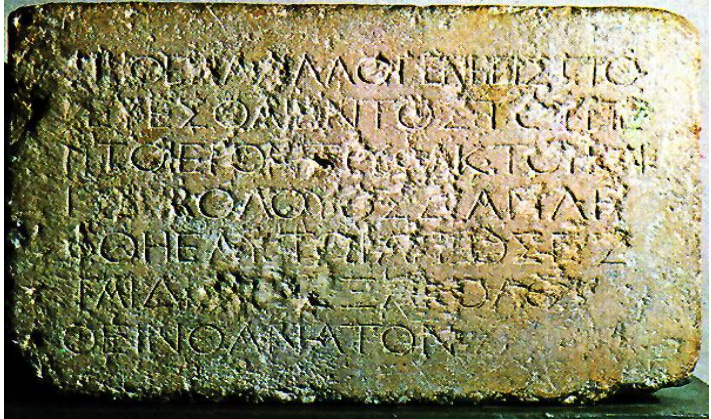
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"Whoever is caught will have himself to blame that his death ensues."

A STONE FROM THE TEMPLE WALL

WALLS

Ian Davidson, Motherwell

I have always been fascinated by the Antonine Wall built by the Romans in 142 A.D. This turf wall extends about 37 miles across central Scotland between the Clyde river and the Firth of Forth. It was named after the emperor Antoninus Pius (ruled 138-161), who ordered its construction. The Antonine Wall is not as famous as the stone-built Hadrian's Wall in the north of England, but it is still Scotland's chief Roman monument. A couple of years ago a friend and I set out to explore the traces of this great edifice from east to west. I loved every minute of the enterprise. Various books were read, museums visited, experts consulted and maps scrutinised before we set out.

I especially admire the work of Lawrence Keppie in this field and his cataloguing and translating of the Roman distance slabs excavated at various sites. Here is an example of his work. The slab reads:

IMP CAESARI/T AELIO HADRI/ANO ANTONINO/AUG PIO P
P/VEXILLATIO/LEG XX VAL VIC F/PER MIL P III.

This may be expanded to: imperatori Caesari/Tito Aelio Hadri/ano Antonino/Augusto Pio patri patriae/vexillatio/legionis XX Valeriae Victris fecit/per milia passuum III.

The translation is: *'For the Emperor Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius, Father of his Country, a detachment of the Twentieth Valerian and Victorious Legion completed (the Wall) over a distance of 3000 paces.'* This slab is now in the Hunterian museum, Glasgow University.

Why was this famous wall built in the first place? Keppie writes: *"The Antonine Wall belongs to a period of Roman history when visible barriers were being erected on several frontiers, sometimes over very long distances, to demarcate what was legally Roman from what lay beyond. In the view of some scholars these frontier works served principally as customs barriers to control but not prevent access; but the present writer views them as defensive works designed to prevent intrusion."*

The Romans never did conquer the whole of Scotland, which to them was known as Caledonia. The Highlands were too great a barrier. The fierce opposition of the local tribes played a huge part too. Incidentally, the wall was systematically evacuated by 196. Hadrian's Wall was eventually evacuated after 383.

ANOTHER WALL

Walls are barriers. We read about one in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians:

"But now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who has made both [Jew and Gentile] one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; to make in Himself of two one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you who were afar off [Gentiles] and to them who were nigh [Jews]" (Ephesians 2: 13-17).

F.F. Bruce has written: *"It has frequently been suggested that Paul had a literal wall in mind as a tangible symbol of the division between Jews and Gentiles – the wall in the temple area at Jerusalem which separated the court of the Gentiles from the inner courts (into which only Jewish worshippers might enter) and to which notices were affixed in Greek and Latin warning Gentiles to keep out on pain of death."*

I am certain Paul also had in mind the wall in most of the hearts of Jews and Gentiles in his day. How they hated each other! For example, the Jews regarded the Gentiles simply as fuel for the fires of hell. I understand that back then it was not even lawful for a Jew to help a Gentile woman in childbirth. William Barclay has written: *"If a Jew married a Gentile, the funeral of that Jew was carried out."*

Such contact with a Gentile was the equivalent of death: even to go into a Gentile house rendered a Jew unclean". Tragically, similar divisions exist in the world even today. But Jesus came to end such animosity, hatred and division. He came in love and His love is for all - Jew and Gentile. Before Jesus came the barriers were up. After Jesus came the barriers were down.

JESUS – WALL-BREAKER

To save the world, Jesus shed His life blood. He gave His life not for the few, but for all. I am glad He did because, if He had come only to save His own people, then, as a Gentile, I could not be writing this article today. I would still be lost in my sins. Paul said: "*He is our peace...*" So we see that true peace is not a pact, but a person. To accept Jesus is to accept peace. To be in Him is to dwell in peace. W. Carl Ketcherside has written: "*Notice the Jews and Gentiles did not become one on their own. They were made one. Their unity was the work of God and not merely their own contrivance or arrangement. Between them was enmity so great and powerful that it was like a dividing wall. On either side existed hostile parties, hating and being hated. And Jesus did not try to get them to make up, or to confer with a view to setting their differences. He arranged no delegate conference to iron out the problem. Instead, He simply died for all of them...And when the wall was removed, broken down by death and washed away by blood, there they were sitting together, their hatred gone and their ire dissolved.*" Once the Jews were walled in and the Gentiles were walled out. Now they can all be together in Christ. Praise the Lord!

A New Creation

J. Lee Roberts, Lubbock, Texas.

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

THE NEW BIRTH is the beginning of a process of spiritual growth in which we seek to weed out of our minds and hearts any worldly influences that would separate us from the Lord. Our aim is to be transformed into His image and take on those godly attributes that equip us to someday live with God forever. We seek to follow Christ's teachings and example - to grow in Christ likeness. 1.Peter 2: 22-23. THIS SPIRITUAL CONVERSION requires a drastic change, from fleshly desires to holy aspirations - from the love of the earthly to a love of godly righteousness - from having this world's mindset to being filled with holy desires - to having the mind of Christ. We must learn to love what God loves and to love as He loves. Our Father desires our sanctification - He has not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness. Colossians 3: 1-10; 1.Thessalonians 4: 3,7.

HIS IS HEART EDUCATION, spiritual circumcision, where we root out of our system all that keeps us separated from a Holy God. Trained in the knowledge of Christ, we can then partake of His divine nature. This is not achieved by human effort but by the Lord's Spirit working in us as we pray and study His will.

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." 2.Corinthians 3:18.
Read also Colossians 2: 8-19.

"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." Romans 6: 3-6.

"Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2.Peter 1:2-8

***If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has passed away. Behold: the new has come.
2.Corinthians 5: 17***

Simon The Zealot

Jonathan Ashurst, Byron, GA

"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." (Romans 10:2)

Did you know that one of Jesus' apostles may have been a former terrorist? Simon the Zealot, also called Simon the Canaanite or Simon Zelotes, is listed four times in the New Testament, along with the other apostles. (Matthew 10:4; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). Before he came to Jesus, Simon was zealous to rid his homeland of the Romans. But Jesus' message changed his life forever.

It seems that Simon had been a member of the Zealots, a group that sought to free Judea from Roman occupation. Here is some information about the Zealots:

"The Zealots were a Jewish patriotic party. Their object was to resist Roman aggression. According to Josephus (BJ, IV, iii, 9; v. 1; VII, viii, 1), they resorted to violence and assassination in their hatred of the Romans, their fanatical violence eventually provoking the Roman war (A.D. 66-70)."

[*From Riches to Poverty to Glory*, H.B. Frank, 1985, pp.97-98]

John MacArthur notes, "The Zealots were hoping for a Messiah who would lead them in overthrowing the Romans and restore the kingdom to Israel..." [*Twelve Ordinary Men*, 2002, p. 175]

What a surprise it must have been to Simon when he heard Jesus' teachings, such as recorded in these verses:

Matthew chapter five:

"9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God...."

"39 ...resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. ..."

"41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain...."

"43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. ..."

"48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Christ's way was very different from the methods of the zealots. However, something about Jesus' character, teachings, and works must have convicted Simon that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

Paul, another of the apostles, was also a very zealous man. In his letter to church in Rome, Paul stated:

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." (Romans 10:1-2)

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus prophesied to his apostles that persecution would come, sometimes from religious people:

"2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. 3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me." (John 16:2-3)

As he followed Jesus, Simon learned what truly pleases God. He transferred his zeal from a physical kingdom to the spiritual kingdom of God. As MacArthur says, *"Simon ...embraced Christ as his Lord. The fiery enthusiasm he once had for Israel was now expressed in his devotion to Christ." (Twelve Ordinary Men, p.177)*

In today's world, there are many people who are zealous for God, but misguided in their understanding of God's character. Some resort to violence because they hold the mistaken belief that God has called them to it. As followers of Jesus, we need to show such people the truth and the love of Christ. Then they will be able to find joy and to do what is truly pleasing to God, as Simon the Zealot did.

The Tongue: Small but Dangerous

V. Sujatha, Stretford

Are we careful with what we say? Have you hurt anyone by your words and felt sorry for it? Does that sorry mean anything once the wrong words have been said? The tongue is a small part of our body but when not used correctly, it leads to destruction. Being so small, it does great mischief, still we are not able to control it.

The Bible describes the tongue as a fire, which defileth the whole body, no man can tame it, full of deadly poison (James 3:5-8). We often use it for gossiping, lying, cursing and speaking evil, which is wrong in God's sight (1.Timothy 5:13; Ephesians 4:25; James 3:10; James 4:11). Before gossiping, ask yourself is it necessary? Is it okay to speak ill of somebody? Will it do any good to others? If not, then it is not required. Words once spoken cannot be taken back.

Utilize your speech to give glory to your God. Make godly use of your tongue. Pray with your lips, give thanks to his name (Hebrews 13:15). "*With the mouth confession is made unto salvation*" (Romans 10:9, 10). Have faith in Christ and speak (1.Corinthians 4:13). Speak good things (Matthew 12:34). Give reason for the hope (1.Peter 3:15). "*Let your speech always be with grace*" (Colossians 4:6). Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:11). Preach the gospel to every tongue (Revelation 14:6).

Your tongue can bring someone close to God, and it is your tongue that can do ungodly things. "*With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men... Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so*" (James 3:9, 10). Remember when you are in Christ, it is no longer you, who live but Christ lives in you (Galatians 2:20). So be careful when you speak, for in your speech also you represent Christ.

A 17th Century church of Christ building in the UK

This article refers to congregations which pre-date those in America. It is taken from an extemporaneous speech made at the request and in the presence of visiting American brethren (Carley and Lisa Conner, Elmo Connor and Harry Cobb) by our esteemed British brother in Christ, Albert E. Winstanley. This speech was

made April 6, 1997 from the pulpit of the meetinghouse at Tottlebank, in the Northwest of England. But this printed copy can in no way allow you to enjoy Brother Winstanley's tones and inflections. The seating arrangement in this well preserved building, like many in those earlier days, is with separated stalls usually occupied by families. Outside in the cemetery are many grave sites dating from the 1700's, including the unmarked grave of brother Gabriel Camelford, who is mentioned in Brother Winstanley's address. - Harry Cobb, Wedowee, Alabama

"Sometimes members of churches of Christ who have particular interest in what's called the Restoration Movement, assume that churches of Christ in modern times came into being through the activities of Alexander and Thomas Campbell, Barton W. Stone, and other great servants of the Lord of yesteryear. In fact, many churches of Christ came into existence because of the activities of good and great men long before the time of Campbell and Stone.

We are today in the meetinghouse of the church in Tottlebank, some seven or eight miles outside the town of Ulverston. And the first church of Christ that we know about in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, was started here in the year 1669. The story of its beginning is fascinating, indeed.

This was the time when Charles II was King of England. Before, if you remember from your history lessons, there was Charles I who was beheaded because of the Puritans under the governments of Oliver Cromwell. Well, this is the story that concerns Tottlebank. During the time of Cromwell this period was called the Commonwealth, and the Puritan Party was very much in the ascendancy. And many parsons or preachers in the Church of England

were Puritan preachers. They were remarkable people. They really believed that this book was the word of God in the full sense. They preached and proclaimed and taught many of the principles that we as members of churches of Christ hold dear today. However, when Charles II ascended the throne after the end of Cromwell's Commonwealth, laws were brought in insisting on more strict adherence to the doctrines of the Church of England which had been very much influenced by the Catholic Church. And there was an oath of allegiance required of every Church of England parson in any Church of England in any part of the country. The oath of allegiance, a declaration of allegiance, was a solemn vow in the presence of God that the preacher concerned believed without question everything taught by the Church of England doctrine, and that he would preach, maintain, and uphold that. Now many of these Puritan parsons couldn't in good conscience do that, because they were simply preaching and teaching what they understood the word of God to teach. They were true to the Bible – Bible believing and Bible teaching men. About three hundred of these Puritan parsons refused to make this declaration, so they lost their livings. That meant no house to live in, no support, no recognition in the community, and they became outcasts. One of those men was a man called Gabriel Camelford. This particular preacher in this area became an itinerant preacher. He travelled all over the area preaching the gospel as we preach it today. When people came to believe the message, he assured himself that they repented of their sins, and on their confession of faith he baptised them into Christ. He preached all over this area called the Furness District and gathered quite a group of people around him who said they were

Christians only, and as a community they were simply the church of Christ. With regard to their standard of faith, they said that their standard of faith and teaching were simply the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament. They would not accept any denominational standard of faith, creed, or confession of faith or any denominational name. They were simply and solely Christians, they said, believing and teaching what the New Testament maintained.

One Lord's Day in 1669, Gabriel Camelford gathered his brothers and sisters around him and they met here in Tottlebank and they declared in a statement of faith, that they were the church of Christ believing simply in New Testament teaching and seeking to be Christians as they were in New Testament times. That was the first church of Christ in England, as I said earlier, long before the time of the Campbells, or Barton W. Stone, or those grand men of that particular era.

From that church in Tottlebank, six other congregations came into existence in this district called the Furness District of England. And one of those, the church in Kirkby, was started directly from this congregation. The other five were started subsequent to the Kirkby congregation. It was told me, indeed I read it in one history of the movement, that a number of families from Kirkby, in Furness, which must be perhaps eight miles away from here, used to walk to worship from Kirkby to Tottlebank those eight miles and back again every Sunday morning. And then would you believe it, they came back in the evening for evening service and did the trip again, a round trip. So, if you multiply eight by four, you may say the families walked thirty-two miles to

worship God on the Lord's day from Kirkby to Tottlebank. Well, according to Mary Cox, who is relating what her father told her, some of the people who did that, after a while began to ask themselves, "Why should we walk eight miles there and eight miles back when there is a group of us anyway living in Kirkby? We might as well have a church of our own." And according to Mary Cox's father, one of the old brothers as they walked along said, "Look, we've been listening today to yon (two words unclear) yon beardless youth telling us what the word of God teaches, why don't we stay at home and teach one another in Kirkby?" And they did that and started the church in Kirkby. From the church in Kirkby, then, came the church in Ulverston, the church in Askam, the church in Dalton, the church in Barrow, and the church in Urswick – five more congregations. So, the church started in 1669 was responsible for six more congregations coming into being in this area. The history of the churches of Christ is much earlier than the Campbell-Stone Movement. And believe me, if it be true, and true it be, that the same seed planted in the right soil and given the proper conditions will always bring forth the same results. Then, the seed of the word of God, planted in an honest and good heart will always bring forth simply and solely a Christian – nothing more, nothing less. Nothing more or less is necessary – the Lord wants His people to be simply Christians. And you may be sure, if you could look into the whole of history since New Testament times that in many, many places there have been those who have believed the word of God, who have repented of their sins, who have given their life to the Lord Jesus Christ in the obedience of baptism into death, rising to newness of life, and have been simply and solely Christians. When a number have

gathered together they have been simply a church or congregation of Christ. And I am persuaded that that has been true since Pentecost and it will continue to be true until the Lord Jesus Christ comes again. And you know as well as I, when He comes again He will come for His church, His people, because He is the head of the church and He is the Saviour of the body, that is the church. Praise be to God for the grace that made us members of the body, the church, the family, the kingdom, the flock for which our Lord Jesus Christ died. He purchased His church with His own life blood. Thanks be to God!"

Albert E. Winstanley
Ulverston, England



OBITUARY

It is with sadness that the church in Tranent reports the death of our sister Maisie Smith, on seventh of December 2011 at the age of 85.

Sister Maisie was baptised in October 1959. Maisie has been a faithful member from that time. She attended most of the church's services even through her recent illness and old age.

The church will miss her presence but rejoice that she has gone to be with her Lord. Brother John Kneller conducted the service in the church and at the graveside.

John Colgan

NEWS and INFORMATION

EASTWOOD, Nottinghamshire.

Seymour Road, NG9 7EB

Saturdays

6.00 pm Refreshments

7.00 pm Message

February 11 Trevor Ralph

Allan Ashurst

May 12

August 11

November 10

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E-mail: ctkwood@hotmail.com

STRETFORD, MANCHESTER.

Saturday Gospel Meetings

7.00 pm The Green Hut

538 Kings Road, M32 8JT

March 17 Pilomon Raja

September 15

October 20

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Map:

www.eusebos.eu/d4web4s/longford.htm

QUESTION BOX NOTICE

Brother Frank Worgan is

happy to receive Bible

questions requiring urgent

answers by telephone, letter

or e-mail.

Questions warranting a larger

audience might be printed in

the Scripture Standard. But the

questioner's name will not be

disclosed.

THE SCRIPTURE STANDARD

The Editor

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