



YOUNG  
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# YPS

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## YPS

**(Young Precious Seed)** is a supplement of *Precious Seed* designed for those young in faith. Its purpose is to restate timeless truths from the word of God for a new generation of Christians and to kindle a biblical approach to current issues in the world in which we live.

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## Assembly Principles and Practice

### (1) Baptism

Considering this subject I want us to explore a number of simple questions and see what answers we can find in the Bible.

It is important that we can answer all these questions from the scriptures and be clear in our own minds why these things are the practice of New Testament assemblies.

### What is baptism?

It would be helpful to cover the technical bits first for we need to understand exactly what the word baptism means. The word baptism originates from the Greek words *baptisma* (the noun) and *baptizo* (the verb). These words were not translated but transliterated into the English. If you look back to the Greek, the word was used in two main ways. It was used in the process of dyeing garments and it was used in the process of drawing liquids from one vessel to another. To dye a garment completely that garment has to be submerged in the dye so that the colour is the same throughout. To draw water out of a large vessel into a cup for drinking, the cup has to be submerged in the liquid before being drawn out.

The Christian method of baptism is to submerge a person in water, the person going under the water before emerging out of the water. This means that the person is dipped completely under the water before being raised out of it and out of the baptistry as a whole.

This is confirmed to us by Romans chapter 6: 'we are buried with him by baptism into death', v. 4. To bury a body means to submerge it under the earth completely. This is a point we shall return to when we consider the question: How should we be baptized?

In reading Romans chapter 6 it is important to notice Paul's choice of words:

- 'like as Christ', v. 4;



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- 'in the likeness of his death', v. 5;
- 'in the likeness of his resurrection', v. 5.

This suggests that Paul is drawing a picture. He is drawing a parallel between the concept of death, burial, and resurrection and the New Testament practice of baptism. The language of the early verses confirm this, 'baptised into his death', v. 3; 'buried with him by baptism', v. 4.

It is important that we appreciate and understand the meaning of this picture. Paul says that in our baptism we were:

- 'baptized into his death', v. 3. In our baptism we died with Christ. The life that we once lived before we were saved has ended. That life was characterized by sin but the pleasing of self is now at an end. Our old life and our old man should both be dead. Literally, our baptism was the funeral service for our old life.
- 'buried with him', v. 4. To signify the reality of the death of our old life we have buried it. As we went under the water in baptism our old manner of life was buried. All that character-

ized that life remains under the water. It is buried and, as such, should remain out of sight forever.

- 'so that we should walk in newness of life', v. 4. As we came out of the water we came out in newness of life. Our new, spiritual man has emerged from the baptistry. We are, or should be, a new person.
- we identified ourselves with Christ – 'baptized into his death', v. 3; 'buried with him', v.

4; 'in the likeness of his resurrection', v. 5. It is said of some that ask for baptism in Albania that they bring a tank of water to the gate of your home. The person is baptized in front of their neighbours and friends as a genuine witness and clear identification with Christ.

This is the real challenge to our hearts. We may have been baptized recently or many years ago but are we living in the good of what that baptism meant? Are we walking in newness of life? Are we really a different person and increasingly so?

What is this new person like? We can see the negatives and the positives:

- 'the body of sin might be destroyed', v. 6. That old life has been rendered powerless. We are 'dead indeed unto sin', v. 11.
- 'we should not serve sin', v. 6. This means that we are no longer slaves to sin. We are no longer controlled by sin, sin being our master and we being its willing slave. We may fail but that is not the manner or principle of our life.
- we are 'freed from sin', v. 7. The penalty that we should have borne because of sin has been removed. We are justified, made righteous and fit for the presence of God. Sin no longer has any legal rights over us.
- 'we shall . . . live with him', v. 8. Whilst we may think this refers solely to a future in heaven and glory, it also means that we live in the enjoyment of His fellowship now and that we should live a life that is consistent with the presence of the Lord.
- we are 'alive unto God', v. 11. In this verse 'to reckon' means to consider or count ourselves as alive unto God. This is not a mental exercise but one that affects our lives. Paul



**Baptism should give testimony to the change that has taken place within. It is the outward testimony to the inward change and that is why it is so important that our baptism shows that our lives are changed**

bids us maintain our God-consciousness and God-centred lives.

This is a transformation and one that is not short-term but long-term. As our salvation is an event that changes our lives forever, it is also a change that cannot be reversed. Baptism should give testimony to the change that has taken place within. It is the outward testimony to the inward change and that is why it is so important that our baptism shows that our lives are changed.

## Why should we be baptized?

As the Lord is about to depart from the earth and return to the glory He bids His disciples to 'teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you', Matt. 28. 19-20. Baptism is:

- a command of the Lord. The King, departing this scene for the glory, gives command to His servants. It is not an option but a command to be obeyed. If we are not yet baptized, the command of the Lord is to us. Obey His command and submit to the testimony of the waters of baptism.
- part of the doctrine that the Lord bid His disciples to teach. Clearly, as it is linked with, so it is part of, the 'all things' that the disciples were to teach new converts to 'observe'. We see throughout the Acts of the Apostles that this teaching was not only communicated to new converts but was also part of the practice of the early church. It applied to Jew and Gentile for, as Peter said in the case of Cornelius, 'Can any forbid water, that these should not be baptized', Acts 10. 47.

- 'the answer of a good conscience toward God', 1 Peter 3. 21. That is, a good conscience, created by our salvation, would want to follow the Lord in the waters of baptism. The scripture never envisages a believer that is not baptized, except, perhaps, those that are close to death when they are saved.

## Who should be baptized?

If we read Acts chapter 2 from verses 37-42, we see that baptism is for:

- those that are saved – 'they that gladly received his word were baptized', v. 41. This reception of Peter's preaching was demonstrated by faith in Christ. They witnessed to that faith in Christ by being baptized.

It is important to notice too that they had been taught the need for baptism. 'Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you"', v. 38. Peter didn't mention it to believers but to those who were not saved but anxious enquirers after the truth.

In Acts chapter 10 verses 44-48, we have a further example. There we can see that baptism is:

- for Jew and Gentile – 'he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord', Acts 10. 48.

Peter did not distinguish between Jews and Gentiles. Cornelius was saved and Peter encouraged him to be baptized. There are no national or cultural differences. All believers should be baptized.

In Acts chapter 16 verses 30-34, the account of the conversion of the

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Philippian jailor shows us that baptism is:

- for young and old alike – ‘and was baptized, he and all his, straightway’, v. 33.

It is remarkable to see the Spirit of God at work in Philippi. This passage shows us that: the gospel was preached to all that were in the house – ‘they spake ... to all that were in his house’, v. 32; they were all believers – ‘believing in God with all his house’, v. 34; they were all baptized as believers – ‘baptized, he and all his’, v. 33.

Finally, in Acts chapter 19 verses 1-5 we see that baptism is:

- for those who may have experienced other forms of baptism – ‘they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus’, Acts 19. 5.

It is important to appreciate the formula. Baptism is an act of witness and an act of will of a believer in Christ. The use of what appears to be a different form of words, ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus’, v. 5, was to distinguish the baptism from the baptism of John not to suggest a different form of words from that commanded by the Lord in Matthew chapter 28.

### How should they be baptized?

We said, as we started our study of this subject, that baptism was by immersion. That is the principle of scripture. That principle is based upon the meaning of the word baptism and it is based upon the truth that baptism indicates, the

death, burial, and resurrection of the believer as identified with Christ.

But our method of baptism is not based only upon a principle. It is clearly based upon the practice of the early believers as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. If we read of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch we will notice that ‘they went down both *into* the water’, Acts 8. 38. It was in that water that Philip baptized the eunuch. We are then told ‘when they were come up *out of* the water’, v. 39.

It may be that you have seen pictures that purport to show this scene and they have Philip and the eunuch standing in the water whilst Philip pours water over the eunuch’s head. Such portrayals might be called examples of artistic licence. We believe that the scripture would clearly teach baptism by immersion.

Considering our questions again:

#### What is baptism?

It is identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

#### Why should we be baptized?

Because the Lord commanded that we should.

#### Who should be baptized?

Believers in the Lord only

#### How should they be baptized?

They should be baptised by immersion in water.



**It is important to appreciate the formula. Baptism is an act of witness and an act of will of a believer in Christ.**

# THE LORD'S PRAYER (3)

## God's concerns: concern for His glory

That the first three petitions of this prayer have in mind God's concerns teaches us that the things of God should always have priority with us, even in our own prayers. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God' is the principle which our Lord gives us – and then 'all these things will be added unto you'. So the pattern of prayer given here reminds us that, when we pray using our own words, as we should, we should still pray for God's work and His interests, before our own. 'Give us this day our daily bread' should come after 'Thy kingdom come'. Concern for God's glory, first and foremost, is more important than concern for our own needs; the furtherance of His name, His kingdom and His will should be of greatest importance.

## 'Hallowed be thy name'

'What's in a name?' Everything, for as far as God is concerned, His name reflects what He is, as well as what He is called. Knowing someone by name, in Hebrew culture as well as in some cultures today, is to show an acquaintance with someone, to have a hold over them, or authority with them. When God told Moses to return to Egypt and tell His people he had come from God, Moses replied, 'When I come unto the children of Israel and shall say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they shall say to me, What is His name, what shall I say to them?' Exod. 3. 13. In other words, If I don't know Your name, how can I claim to come from You or to represent You. So God gave Moses a name by which He would be called. God's name is very important to Him. To 'hallow' something means to set it apart, to make, or to acknowledge, it to be holy. We can either hallow, or

profane, God's name by the way in which we use it or bear it.

## Using His name

'Holy and reverend is his name', writes the Psalmist in Psalm 111 verse 9. So 'thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain', was one of God's commandments to His people, Exod. 20. 7. This means that all, whether Jew or non-Jew, should treat the name of God, as well as His person, with respect. We should only ever take the name of God upon our lips with reverence and with godly fear. Any misuse of God's name is equivalent to profaning His name, Lev. 19. 12. We are to 'exalt his name together', Ps. 34. 3, and to 'give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name', Ps. 96.8. When people use the name of God as a swear-word, or as an expletive, they misuse it and God will not hold them guiltless for this. It is sad to hear professing Christians becoming so much like unbelievers that they, too, use God's name without reverence.

## Bearing His name

But we can also hallow God's name by the way in which we bear it, not just the way in which we speak it. We bear God's name when we both *claim His authority* and *claim His identity*. In Old Testament times, God insisted that when a prophet claimed His authority for what the prophet said (when he claimed to speak in the name of the Lord) the people were to watch and wait to see what happened. If events transpired as the prophet had said, the people were to respect that prophet as one who evidently knew the mind of God, and therefore rightly claimed to speak in His name and with His authority. 'When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, [however] if the

### Invocation

*Calling upon God by name*

### God's concerns

*Expressing concern for God's glory*

### Man's concerns

*Expressing dependence upon God's grace*

### Conclusion

*Declaring God's authority*

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## THE LORD'S PRAYER (3)

thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet has spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him'. Deut. 18. 20. In fact, that prophet was to die, for 'speaking lies in the name of the Lord,' Zech. 13. 3. Now, though we do not have prophets in this sense in the church today, we need to be very careful when we say to other people, 'The Lord told me to say this, to do this, or to tell you this', for when we say that we are trying to claim greater authority than when we merely say, 'I think this'. If God genuinely did reveal that to us, that is one thing; if we merely wish to reinforce the importance of what we say or think, however, that is another thing altogether. Any one of us who claims to speak in God's name should be careful that we are not misusing His name. It is as much possible to speak lies in the name of the Lord today, as ever it was.

We also bear God's name when we *claim His identity*. The name 'Christians' was first given to disciples of the Lord Jesus at Antioch, Acts 11. 26. The word identified people as 'Christ's ones'. Bearing His name, they became His

representatives. We do not hallow His name if, when we bear His identity, we live lives that reflect badly on Him. So, 'let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity', is the instruction of 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 19. It is a dreadful thing when 'the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles' through His people, Rom. 2. 24. Instead, we should pray 'that the name of

our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified' in us, 2 Thess. 1. 12.

### 'Thy kingdom come'

#### God's kingship or God's kingdom?

A difference has been drawn between God's *kingship* and God's *kingdom*. God's *kingship* is His sovereign rule in His world. 'The Lord most high is terrible; He is a great king over all the earth.. .. God is the King of all the earth', Ps. 47. 2, 7. 'The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will, and sets up over it the basest of men', Dan. 4. 17. The New Testament even goes so far as to say that our Lord 'is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords', 1 Tim. 6. 15. God's kingship is something that is true throughout all history and across all dispensations. God's *kingdom*, on the other hand, is God's spiritual rule in the hearts of His own. Thus it is spiritual new birth that enables someone both to see and to enter the kingdom of God, John 3. 3,5, and without it nobody can.

When we are saved, or born again, God delivers us from the power of darkness, and moves us out of the sphere of Satan's control and 'into the kingdom of his dear Son', Col. 1. 13. It is this spiritual kingdom to which the Lord Jesus refers when He says, 'My kingdom is not of this world', John 18. 36, and in this spiritual sense, the Lord Jesus could say 'the kingdom of God is within (in the midst of) you', Luke 17. 21. (The kingdom of heaven is something different, as seen in the parables of Matthew 13). The kingdom of God has, therefore, a present spiritual aspect, but it also has a future aspect. When eventually the Lord Jesus returns to this earth in power and



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glory, bringing His saints with Him, as opposed to coming for them, He will usher in a period when He will rule on this earth. Then, 'the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them', Isa. 11. 6. It is this earthly rule of Christ that is referred to when God says 'the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be', Gen. 49. 10. It is into this kingdom that the sheep will be welcomed with the words, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world', Matt. 25. 34. God's kingdom, or rather Christ's kingdom, in its future aspect will come when both His kingship and His kingdom come together in that millennial day.

## **'Thy will be done'**

### **God's sovereign will**

God's will can be seen in a variety of ways. His *sovereign will* is seen when He does as He pleases in this world. 'He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay His hand or say to Him, What doest thou?', Dan. 4. 35. It is, for instance, God's sovereign will that His Son will one day reign and rule. So, despite what the nations of men plan to do, 'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision... Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion', Ps. 2. 4 & 6. God is the one who declares 'the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure', Isa. 46. 10. God's sovereign will consists of His prescriptive will (what must take place) and His

permissive will (what He allows to take place).

### **God's secret will**

There are many aspects of this sovereign will of God that we cannot understand because they are not revealed to us. These things belong to the *secret will* of God. 'The secret things belong unto the Lord our God', Deut. 29. 29. He knows what He is doing, and why, but He does not always choose to reveal this to us. It is not up to us to speculate why God does, or allows to be done, what transpires in this world. His secret will is His alone.

### **God's revealed will**

Yet we do also have the *revealed will* of God. 'The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law', Deut. 29. 29. The important thing for us is not to try to pry into God's secret will, or to try to alter His sovereign will. Instead, we are to *desire* to know the revealed will of God, Psa. 86. 11, to *discern* it, Eph. 5. 17, and then to *do* it. 'Teach me to do Thy will, for thou art my God', Psa. 143. 10. We are to do the will of the Lord 'from the heart', Eph. 6. 6. Our prayer should be, as our Lord's was, 'Not my will but thine be done', Luke 22. 42. So many people waste their time speculating about the secret will of God, instead of knowing and doing His revealed will. Here, amongst many instructions which show us God's will for mankind, are two fundamental things: 'God commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent', Acts 17. 30; 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love

# Ancient Wisdom for a Modern World

Wise words from the New Testament



## Whoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also, Matt. 5.39

BY IAN REES

mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God', Mic. 6. 8. How can we pray, Thy will be done, if we do not even begin to obey it in its very first steps?

### Conclusion

So the teaching of this prayer applies to us in this way, that when we use His name we must do so with reverence; when we bear His name, either claiming His authority in what we say or claiming His identity in who we are, we do so in such a way as to recommend the gospel and Christ to others; when we think of His kingdom we ask God to further His work in establishing both His spiritual rule, and His eventual earthly rule, in the hearts of men and in the kingdoms of this world; and when we think of His will, we remind ourselves that the revealed will of the Lord is something that we have to desire, discern and do ourselves. There is no point in praying 'hallowed be thy name' if we proceed to profane His name by our words and our works; we cannot pray for the furtherance of His kingdom if we are not in it and it is not in us; and it is great hypocrisy to pray that others will do the will of God if we ourselves refuse to do so. Concern for God's glory should have priority in my prayers, and, more importantly, priority in my life.

Perhaps you, like many others, have little time for the Lord Jesus. Some deny He is the Son of God, saying He was deluded in many of His claims, especially when He said, 'I am the way... no man cometh to the Father but by me', John 14. 6. Yet, even some dyed-in-the-wool atheists or agnostics are prepared to admire the ethos of the Sermon on the Mount and what they see as Jesus' teaching about living in society, about being selfless, sincere, patient, even being a pacifist. From this record of teaching in the Sermon come such popular expressions as being 'the salt of the earth', 'going the second mile', 'keeping on the straight and narrow'.

The expression 'turning the other cheek' comes from another one of the Lord's sayings. It involves more than a mere refusal to retaliate, however: it implies a willingness to endure wrong, to bear an insult, for principle's sake. The *lex talionis* of the Old Testament law ('an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth') allowed redress at law if it was claimed. But our Lord here teaches that retaliation and redress are to be rejected by His followers. Instead, when insulted we are to be prepared to be insulted again; when hit by another, we should be willing to be hit again. Why? Perhaps it is because by willing submission and generosity of spirit we may win over our adversary.

It is one thing to approve the principle, but quite another to put it into practice, and it is here that our Lord sets the example, never instructing others to do what He Himself was not prepared to do. When men beat, mocked and crucified Him He refused to retaliate. 'When he was reviled, [he] reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously', 1 Pet. 2. 23; He was brought 'as a lamb to the slaughter', Isa. 53. 7; He could say, 'I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting', Isa. 50. 6. And why did He do so? His love for sinful men and women, and His love for the Father, made Him suffer willingly, 'the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God', 1 Pet. 3. 18. The spiritual dimension of His sufferings on the cross as He faced the judgement of God in the place of sinners, was unique, and cannot be shared by any other. God then 'made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him', 2 Cor. 5. 21. Yet, His physical sufferings were part and parcel of the cruel process of crucifixion and the mockery He endured in addition was a result of His rejection by men. Peter reminds us that 'Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps', 1 Pet. 2. 22. Are you unjustly condemned and abused? Turn the other cheek, and commit your cause to Him who judges righteously. Here is the supreme example of patient suffering seen in One who is the Saviour of all who trust in Him.