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Young PRECIOUS SEED

New Editor

I have the pleasure of taking over as Editor of *Young Precious Seed* (YPS) from Ian Rees. Ian introduced YPS to the main magazine; this has been a useful addition which has been the vehicle through which many topical and doctrinal issues have been addressed. While looking through four or five years of issues of YPS I began to wonder what topics had not been covered and how I would develop things.

Some of the sections that have been in YPS have run their course and will not be revisited. I have no doubt that some of the issues that have been written about in the past will be covered again at some stage but hopefully in a way that will be relevant to where we are now. I have especially enjoyed the articles which came under the heading of 'The Moral Maze' – these have addressed tough issues (abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, etc.) and honestly faced up to the dilemmas of the

modern world and explained what the scriptures have to say. Other interesting contributions have been items such as 'Fools in Fellowship' where in a very pointed way some of the shortcomings in the attitudes of believers have been faced head on and spiritual behaviour that is pleasing to the Lord explained. These and many other articles are well worth a re-read. If you do not have the past issues the best way to access them is through our website (by the way we hope this is soon to have a revamp, watch this space) www.youngpreciousseed.org.

So, what will we be looking at going forward? Some new sections will be introduced and some old ones revisited from time to time. Each issue will vary

to keep things interesting. If you have a view about what you would like to see in the magazine please e-mail me at stephen.baker1@virgin.net or text me on 07747 101352.



YOUNG PRECIOUS SEED

is a supplement of *Precious Seed International* 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. YPS is published by *Precious Seed International*, P.O. Box 573, Fareham, UK, PO14 9FB, and is also available separately from the magazine.

Walk with me through the British Museum

Why bother?

In the things of God believing is seeing. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen', Heb. 11. 1. It is only by faith that we can hold unshakably to the truth of creation and the very existence of a creator God, solitary in dignity, Heb. 11. 3. The same principle applies to every detail of the biblical record of history. Higher critics tirelessly attempt to discredit the Holy Bible, refusing to bow to its unique authority as an infallible record of God's dealings with humanity. Only by faith can we accept that in the Bible is a flawless, albeit divinely selective, recording of human history.

Having said this, our faith can be encouraged by visible, independent secular verifications of Bible stories. If you don't have the time, or the money, to visit the Holy Land, and if you are interested in seeing multiple historical artefacts that substantiate Bible accounts of history, I would recommend visiting the British Museum, London. It is accessible – only about 20 minutes walk from St. Pancras Station – and it is free, although you are invited at strategic points throughout the

Museum to donate generously. However, be prepared; it is big



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

and there are thousands of exhibits. To get the most out of your visit, stay focused. Peter Masters (a prominent evangelical) has written a helpful tour guide for the British Museum.¹ If you keep up a good pace you can complete the tour in about two hours. To whet your appetite read on; as I give an account of my discoveries.

Lets walk while we talk!

Head to **Room 6**. Here is the Stela of Shalmaneser III (Fig. 1) who ruled Assyria from 859-824 BC. It is a large stone monument describing six of Shalmaneser's military campaigns. Text is embedded into a picture of the king raising one hand to four symbols of deities, his other hand grasping a sword. This text mentions by name Benhadad, king of Syria, 1 Kgs. 20. 1, and Ahab, king of Israel, 1 Kgs. 20. 2. In 745 BC, an Assyrian general called Tiglath-pileser III laid claim to the throne of Assyria. Tiglath-pileser III invaded Israel. Here in Room 6, just left of the Stela of Shalmaneser III is a relief from the palace at Nimrud that visibly portrays the capture of Astartu in Galilee (Fig. 2).

Although the Bible does not mention Astartu, per se, it does mention Galilee, among other sections of Israel, being carried captive during this military campaign, 2 Kgs. 15. 29. This picture shows Tiglath-pileser III

standing in his chariot with two servants holding a parasol. Turn behind you, still in **Room 6**, and you will see the Black Obelisk (Fig. 3) which takes us back to the time of Shalmanesar III. It names and pictures Jehu, the son of Nimshi, 2 Kgs. 9. 20, bowing down before the Assyrian monarch. Walking towards the seven-metre-tall replica gates of Balawat (a second palace built by Shalmanesar III) you will see a pair of human-headed winged lions which once guarded the throne room of Ashurnasirpal II who preceded Shalmanesar III.

Turn right at these massive gates into **Room 7**. Walk to the end of this long room and just on the right as you enter **Room 8** there is a portrait of Tiglath-pileser III (Fig. 4). He is wearing an earring and a bracelet resembling a modern wrist watch. Go into **Room 23**. Turn immediately right into **Room 22**. Here is a base of a column taken from the temple of the Ephesian goddess Diana, Acts 19. Return to **Room 23**. Go straight through it into **Room 10**. This room presents amazing proofs of Bible history. Just to the left is a large inscribed stone discovered in Nineveh. It seems to have been burnt, perhaps evidence of the fires that consumed the Assyrian capital as predicted by the prophet Nahum, Nahum 3. 13, 15. This stone text records Hezekiah being shut up in Jerusalem 'like a caged bird' and his paying tribute to

Sennacherib king of Assyria, 2 Kgs. 18. 13-16. Hezekiah offered this tribute while Sennacherib besieged Lachish, another Judean city. The Lachish room, just past the human-headed bulls, is an exciting verification of Bible history. Many of the images highlight the cruelty of the Assyrians. Soldiers carry heads that are piled up. There is a child captive; another captive appears hand-cuffed. One picture at the end of the room shows Sennacherib, his face now defaced, sitting on a throne as captives from Lachish cower before him (Fig. 5).

We get an insight into the weapons the Assyrians used to besiege cities. Bows, arrows, shields, spears, ladders and siege engines pushed up artificial ramps are all seen. God promised Hezekiah that these devices would not be brought to bear on Jerusalem, Isa. 37. 33. In this room is a small prism a few inches tall which also reports that Hezekiah was shut up.

Go back to **Room 8** and turn left into the long **Room 9**. Two-thirds along this room on the right is a picture of a ship of Tarshish (Fig. 6). We have some idea of the materials used to construct these ships and the kind of crews that manned them from Ezekiel's prophecy, Ezek. 27. 5-9, 25. Turn right at the end, walk round the corner to the left, ascend the stairs and go into **Room 59** and onwards



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

into **Room 57**. On the left are five small stone letters that look like the breakfast cereal 'Shredded Wheat'. These letters were written by officials and 'kinglets' of Canaanite cities threatened by a nomadic people they referred to as the 'Apiru'. It is impossible to say for certain if this is a reference to the Israelite invasion of Canaan under Joshua; however, it gives an insight into the thoughts of the people the children of Israel were soon to overcome. Just next to them are some tiny carved ivory fragments that were discovered in Ahab's royal palace in Samaria. We do not know for sure if they belonged to Ahab, but, according to the Bible, Ahab built what is termed an ivory house, 1 Kgs. 22. 39. Just next to this are tiny stone fragments referred to as the *Lachish letters*.

These date back to the time of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Judah. Walk to **Room 56** where there are many artefacts unearthed at Ur of the Chaldees, from where Abram originated, Gen. 11. 31. In **Room 55** the *Taylor Prism* – named after Colonel Taylor who discovered it in 1830 – is another Assyrian recording of the tribute Hezekiah paid to Sennacherib (Fig. 7). Just along on the left- hand side in **Room 55** is a brick stamped with the name of Nebuchadnezzar. Just next to this is the tiny clay *Nabonidus Cylinder* and *Nabonidus Chronicle*. Secular historians and higher critics have constantly cast doubt on the book of Daniel. Up until

the mid 1800s they poured scorn on the mention of Belshazzar being the last Babylonian king, Dan. 5. 1. It was always contended that Nabonidus was the last king to reign over the Babylonian empire. That was until these two artifacts were discovered. The cylinder speaks of Belsarusur, the first-born son of Nabonidus; the chronicle mentions that Nabonidus was at Tema for a substantial part of his reign. This explains why Belshazzar offered Daniel only third place in the kingdom, Dan. 5. 7. The chronicle records Babylon's fall, Dan. 5. 30, 31.

Walk forward to **Room 53**, turn right into **Room 52** and you will see a beautiful full-sized picture of an archer, set on a blue tile background (Fig. 8); this was discovered in the palace at Susa (viz. 'Shushan the palace', Neh. 1. 1; Esther 1. 2; Dan. 8. 2). Just a little further along in **Room 52** is *Cyrus Cylinder*, which records Cyrus' policy of returning vanquished peoples to their homeland, allowing them to rebuild their sacred sanctuaries. This man permitted Judah to return from exile and rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, Ezra 1. 1-4. In this same room is a seal of Darius the Great who repeated the



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

decree to rebuild the Jerusalem temple, Ezra 6. 8. There is also a silver bowl, the size of a fruit bowl, which mentions Darius the Great and his son Xerxes (called Ahaseurus in the Bible) who married Esther, Esther 1. 1.

Turn back into **Room 53**, cross over into **Room 65**, turn left and go through the rooms into **Room 61**. For the ladies, here is a small ornately crafted Egyptian jewelry box. Turn left and out of **Room 61**, cross the landing into the Greek and Roman galleries and keep walking through till you get to **Room 70**. Here are sculptured heads of Caesar Augustus, who commanded the census just before the Lord's birth, Luke 2. 1, Tiberius Caesar, who, Pilate fearing to offend, delivered Christ over to the will of the Jews, John 19. 12, and Titus who in 70 AD led the brutal attack on Jerusalem that totally destroyed the temple, as predicted by the Lord Jesus, Matt. 24. 2. Walk through **Room 69**, turn left into **Room 68**. This will be of interest to many: the money room. Just before you leave this room on the left there are Roman denarii bearing the image of Tiberius Caesar (Figs. 9 and 10). This sort of coin was used by the Lord Jesus when answering the Jews' difficult question about tribute money, Matt. 22. 19-21. Two other Roman coins on display here commemorated the 70 AD victory over Jerusalem. This ends our tour.

Closing time

I hope that you have enjoyed our speedy tour through the British Museum. If you get time to make a visit it might be useful to remember to take this paper with you. As we said in our opening comments, these visual supporting evidences cannot prove to an unbeliever that the Bible is true, but we trust they may increase the appreciation of believers about the utter reliability of Holy Scripture.

Image reference numbers

Figure 1 – *Stela of Shalmanesar III*
(AN00150815_003)

Figure 2 – An Assyrian relief portraying the capture of Astartu in Galilee (AN0032472_005)

Figure 3 – the *Black Obelisk* (AN00072218_003)

Figure 4 – Portrait of Tiglath-pileser III
(AN00613518_003)

Figure 5 – Lachish captives cover before Sennacherib
(AN00609004_001)

Figure 6 – A Tarshish ship (AN0032471_005)

Figure 7 – The *Taylor Prism* (AN00032573_005)

Figure 8 – Full-sized archer (AN00020605_001)

Figures 9 and 10 – Roman denarii, bearing the image of Tiberius Caesar (AN00031208_005 AND AN0031209_005)

1 Peter Masters. *Heritage of Evidence in the British Museum* (London: The Wakeman Trust, 2004)



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

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How I study my Bible

By Jack Hay, Comrie, Scotland

INTRODUCTION. Many works of literature are the product of human brilliance, but the Bible is the inspired word of God, 2 Tim. 3. 16. Every Christian should be disciplined to read it regularly and systematically for it is our source of guidance and growth, Ps. 119. 105; 1 Pet. 2. 2. Regular reading will give a working knowledge of scripture, but it is important also to study regularly and to dig deeper by spending time studying 'the word'.

While this article is biographical it is presented with the hope that an older man's experience of Bible study may provide points of guidance that you can adapt to suit your own style of study. Perhaps you can find something worth imitating as you commit yourself to learning the truth of God.

MY TEENAGE YEARS. One lesson I learned very early on was that if I was going to study the scriptures I would have to make time for it for there were so many rivals for my time. Secular studies make a claim for a major slice of your time whether you are academically inclined or apprenticed to a trade. As you are young and energetic, sport will often also make a bid for your time. In recent years technology has added to the list of potential time wasters with the availability of the Internet and the proliferation of social networking sites. For us all, apportioning time to God's service should be a top priority, but there is a potential danger in being busy. We can be so occupied for Christ that we can neglect to be occupied with Him, Luke 10. 38-42. We must make time for Bible study!

A major lesson that I had to learn at that stage was that getting to know God through Bible study involved solitude. Moses, Elijah, John Baptist and Paul all experienced spiritual education in isolation with God. I am not suggesting that you take a year out for concentrated Bible study! What I am saying is that at times you will have to be alone with Him, away from the crowd. On occasions, this may mean foregoing the companionship of friends even when they have exciting plans for the day! Sadly, some of these friends will not understand.

An unexpected lesson that I had to learn was the need for perseverance. Preachers had left the impression that every moment that they spent with the Bible was sheer ecstasy. For me that was not true to life and anyone who gives themselves to the study of scripture discovers that it is hard work. To be able to 'rightly (divide) the word of truth' you have to 'study', that is give diligence, 2 Tim. 2. 15. Secular studies require strenuous mental activity: so too does Bible study, 2 Tim. 2. 7. The Lord will not 'give

thee understanding' if you do not 'consider' what you are reading. Nuggets of truth have to be found, Ps. 119. 162, so be like the Bereans who 'searched the scriptures daily', Acts 17. 11. There is great joy derived from it, but when discouragement sets in, persevere.

TAKING ADVICE. In my early years, there were men who gave me advice regarding the study of the scriptures. Obviously, counsel was given by preachers as they explained the great need to familiarize oneself with the book of God, but I was indebted to one man who at a personal level imparted valuable information about how best to go about studying the word of God. I refer to the late Mr. George Waugh. He had a heavy schedule with business and preaching, but despite that, for a period he devoted one night per week to gather with a few young men in the town of Prestwick with the aim of giving us guidance as to how to study. Subsequent suggestions in this article are methods that he recommended during that period. Perhaps there is a case for gifted teachers giving guidance to the younger people regarding how best to go about the earnest study of divine truth.

PRACTICAL TOOLS. When I was young I was told that an armchair does not lend itself to diligent study! In days before every young person had their own desk and chair, a table had to do the job. Elisha had a table, a stool, and a candlestick, 2 Kgs. 4. 10. It may seem an obvious remark, but pen and paper were other necessities. I could never rely on memory, and neither can you. I recall a believer telling me that for fourteen years he had read his Bible without recording his meditations. He regretted that he had no permanent record of all that he had gleaned over the years. Another lesson that I learned was that notes on scraps of paper were inadequate. It is far better to use a pad or notebook, for the scraps can easily be lost. I was born too early to benefit from the computer age, but you might find it easier to record your findings electronically. Make sure you have backup! But Bible study predates the computer age, and to a great extent pen and paper are still essential.

Some friends of mine are very meticulous in the records that they keep, maintaining a file for every book of the Bible. Whenever valuable thoughts come to them either in their personal reading or at meetings, these are documented and filed in the appropriate place. I mention this for the benefit of those who would have the patience to follow their example.

STARTING OFF. When commencing to study a book, I found it helpful to read it through, and re-read it perhaps

more than once. In the reading, recurring themes may be observed, or recurring words; these should be noted. The translation that I use is the Authorised Version, the King James Version, but I do compare it with other versions, in particular the Revised Version and J. N. DARBY's New Translation. For me, using an Interlinear Bible facilitates comparison with the Revised Version. Some find its style a little complicated, but a lifetime's usage means that I am very comfortable with it. There are occasions when a modern translation can help to explain an archaic phrase in the KJV, but some question the accuracy of some of these translations.

Speaking of Bibles, another that is of great help is what we commonly call the NEWBERRY Bible. Incorporated in it is a system of signs, which among other things indicate the tenses of the verbs. Those of us with no knowledge of Hebrew or Greek are greatly helped in understanding the sense of a verse by being shown the exact tense of the verbs employed in it.

KEEPING NOTES. As already suggested, a pad or notebook is essential and I use margined paper. The page is headed with the name of the book and the chapter number. The verse number is placed in the margin with relevant jottings against it. For example, the precise meaning of words could be of interest and worth noting; also, the usage of the word in other passages and its translation in these passages. (There is a danger in being so obsessed by each word that we miss the general teaching of the passage; you don't see the wood for the trees!). However, it must be remembered that every word is inspired, 'words . . . which the Holy Ghost teacheth' 1 Cor. 2. 13.

A concordance is an essential aid to understanding words. It helps to locate verses whose whereabouts have slipped your mind, but it will also give the expanded meaning of any Bible word. The concordance that I use is STRONG's, and for years it has incorporated a numerical link with other helpful word-study books. By that I mean that if the number 5547 is the number allocated to a word in STRONG's, that number is used in WIGRAM's or THAYER's etc. In more recent years computer based helps such as the Online Bible have utilized this same numerical system. I mentioned earlier that it is worth noting how words are translated in different passages and WIGRAM's concordance is useful for that, but again, the Online Bible makes such a search very easy.

Another word-study book that was invaluable to me was W. E. VINE's Expository Dictionary of New Testament

Words. From these various sources, the details of words are recorded.

Another thing I would note is an illustration of the truth conveyed in the verse. I ask myself, 'Is there an Old Testament story that illustrates this, or would the Gospels or the Acts supply a suitable example of what is being taught'? Secular illustrations can be helpful, but there is no substitute for something that is drawn from scripture itself. Of course, constant reading of the historical books of the Bible is necessary to maintain this habit.

I would also note the whereabouts of what may be described as parallel passages, and a Bible with good marginal references is of great assistance in this respect.

SECTION HEADINGS. Having selected a book for study, I would normally make some attempt to divide each chapter into sections with a suitable caption for each. Some friends are experts at making all their headings start with the same letter of the alphabet. Early on I found that I was spending unwarranted time on that without success, so it was abandoned! In dividing the passages, two things must be kept in mind. First, chapter divisions are very helpful but man-made, and sometimes the teaching at the end of a chapter spills over into the next; watch out for that. Second, divisions that we create are never watertight, although helpful in enabling us to remember the main theme of a section.

COMMENTARIES. This is a term that we use for books written by Bible teachers to help us understand the scriptures. Commentators are not inspired! Sometimes you discover that they have difficulty in understanding the parts that puzzle you! As a young believer, I found that simple easy-to-understand books were of help to me. When some of my peers were reading what I thought were complicated volumes, I was contenting myself with H. A. IRONSIDE or W. E. VINE. I have no qualms about recommending simpler commentaries to young people, books by authors such as WILLIAM MACDONALD or WARREN WIERSBE although this is not an endorsement of everything they write.

TO CONCLUDE. In a few words then, that is how I study my Bible. Your experience may be somewhat different, but whatever the method, keep on at the studying. Avoid making it an academic exercise, but rather a search for truth that can be put into effect in your life. Ezra 'prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it', Ezra 7. 10.

'He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose'. While these words sound like they may have flowed from the quill of the apostle Paul himself, they were in fact penned by a 22-year-old Jim Elliot while still a college student in the USA in 1949!

In early 2008 I read *The Shadow of the Almighty*, a collection of Jim Elliot's personal letters and journal excerpts, and came to realize that these were not just the empty words of a philosopher or dreamer, but were actually the reality whereby this young man lived every day of his short life until it was eventually taken from him at the age of just 28 years by the Auca Indians he was endeavouring to reach with the gospel.

From an early age Jim Elliot had a single-minded desire to serve God, and to reach out to the lost with the gospel. Everything else in his life was governed by this desire and it particularly challenged my heart to read the inner thoughts of a man with exceptionally high standards of Christian living. Elliot had a strong interest in pioneering gospel work in foreign lands; and his heart appears to have been fixed on South America for a number of years before he eventually felt the call of the Lord to serve in Ecuador. This was a man who was prepared to give everything, including ultimately his life, in order that he might reach some of the most unlikely people in the world with the transforming power of the gospel. Reading of such all-consuming determination and passion called me to question my own zeal for the gospel and inspired me to give myself more wholeheartedly to reaching those all around me with the good news of salvation.

Jim Elliot was a man who truly 'counted all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord', Phil. 3. 8. His attitude towards many of the things of life which we may describe as perfectly legitimate

was that they were nothing more than distractions from his life's ambition of serving, pleasing and knowing his God. His attitudes towards education, sport, entertainment, women and money, along with his views on prayer, Bible study, the local assembly, gospel outreach and supporting foreign missions seemed radical, revolutionary and awe-inspiring, yet the reality is that they were none of those things. They were merely the views and attitudes of a devoted Christian living above the average watered-down standard of Christianity which was common-place both then and now.

The lessons and challenges which came to me daily as I read of such a Christ-like young man are too numerous to list here. To read of such a life without being moved, challenged and inspired would be impossible. Jim Elliot was one who lived for Christ, and one who ultimately died for Christ. What are you and I prepared to give for Christ, and for the sake of the gospel?

While we may never be called to die for Christ, like Jim Elliot, each one of us is called to live for Him, and the distinction between the two is perhaps not as clear cut as we may think. For to live for Christ is to die for Christ! We must 'die daily' as the apostle Paul put it, 1 Cor. 15. 31! Die to sin, die to self, and die to the world, in order that we might live unto Christ and be used by Him to effectively reach precious lost souls!

How much our dark and lost world needs a new generation of 'Jim Elliots' today, those who are prepared to give their lives wholeheartedly for the furtherance of the gospel! May you and I be part of this new generation!

FURTHER READING:

- *The Shadow of the Almighty*, Elisabeth Elliot.
- Phil. 3. 8.
- 1 Cor. 15. 31.

