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Young PRECIOUS SEED

Tips for Testimony

by **DAVID HUGHES** a Liverpool student

Perhaps 'tips' is the wrong word for this title since I don't really consider myself to be in any position to be giving tips on witness at university. But as someone who is currently at university maybe it's helpful to share with you some things I've learned about being a witness for the Saviour there.

Firstly, one of the great things about going to university was the amount of time I had on my hands. With the exception of possibly medical-based courses, most students have a lot of time out of lectures, particularly in the first two years. Obviously, I realized that I needed to work hard at my studies, because that is honouring to the Lord, but I was still faced with a lot more free time than I had expected. In fact, as I am now considering job applications and all that 'working life' involves I've started to realize that I will perhaps never again (at least until I'm retired!) have as much time when I'm not required to be anywhere. My advice to you is if you are at university to use the time you have for the Lord and for these years spend as much time as you possibly can supporting work for Him. For example think about how you could spend your summer holidays in service for the Lord!

There are several ways we can serve the Lord, let me suggest a few

I had the opportunity to be involved in running open-air meetings with a few people from the local assemblies, both on the University campus and in the city centre. I have also been involved with the Christian Union (CU) at the University. I understand Christian Unions vary in different locations but nonetheless I am at 'uni' to be a witness to my student friends and this seemed to be a good opening. There were however aspects of CU that I discovered that I was not overly comfortable with and each believer would need to make their own judgement on how involved they become, Having said that many opportunities to speak to people about the Lord arose as a result of sharing in these activities.

Probably the best opportunity I had to be a witness was among the fellow students on my course. If you share halls/flats with people then this will be another sphere where you can be a 'light in the darkness'. Everyone is in the same boat when they arrive at 'uni', knowing very few people. What an opportunity we have to show the love of God by just being a good friend!

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YOUNG PRECIOUS SEED

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Building Blocks for the Christian Faith

'Christ for me' – He took my place!

If I were asked to choose some favourite words from scripture, I'm fairly sure that I'd have placed near the top of the list this statement by the apostle Paul, 'the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me', Gal. 2. 20. Paul marvelled at the love that the Lord Jesus had for him. Notice how personal this statement is, 'Who loved me' and the proof of that love 'and gave himself for me'.

The act of substitution and the concept of a substitute are fairly common to our English language. The meanings, though, are quite varied, including: 'replacing something with something else,; 'to use or serve in place of another'; as well as the association of the words within sport. The difficulty with this topic is that the actual word substitution is not found in scripture. However the lovely truth about the Lord Jesus 'giving himself' on the cross applies to each believer personally and it seems that over the years believers have adopted the word 'substitute' to define this great doctrine.

Aspects of the broad meaning of the English word 'substitute', with the truth concerning the Lord Jesus and the believer. This could dilute our appreciation of the greatness of what Christ did for the believer. To illustrate let's look at how the term substitute is used in sport. To substitute one player for another simply describes providing a replacement of equal value. But as a believer in the Lord Jesus, simply viewing the Lord Jesus as our 'replacement' severely limits the greatness of what was done at Calvary as the Lord Jesus does not substitute us as our equal but as the only one who could remove the legal claims of God against us and ensure that

As such, it is possible to confuse



Definition of Topic SUBSTITUTION		
Greek word	<i>anti</i>	<i>huper</i>
English translation	'for'	Mainly, 'for'
Meaning	Instead of, because of, for, in the room of.	Over, for the sake of, instead, regarding, superior to, more than, over, on the part of, for the sake of, toward.
Notes	This word seems to be very restrictive in meaning to being directly 'instead of.'	This word seems to be wider than 'anti'. It includes the idea of being 'instead of' but goes further to include 'toward' and 'above' This shows both what the Lord Jesus has done for believers personally and also the scope of the death of the Lord Jesus for salvation in a wider sense
References in relation to the death of the Lord Jesus	Matthew 20. 28. Mark 10. 45.	Suggested personal context – applying to believers
		Suggested wider context – potentially covering all
		John 10. 11, 15. Romans 5. 8 . Romans 8. 32. 1 Corinthians 11. 24. 1 Corinthians 15. 3. 2 Corinthians 5. 21. Galatians 1. 4. Galatians 2. 20. Galatians 3. 13 Ephesians 5. 2. Ephesians 5. 25. 1 Thessalonians 5. 10. Titus 2. 14. 1 Peter 2. 21. 1 John 3. 16.
		John 6. 51. Romans 5. 6. 2 Corinthians 5. 14, 15. 1 Timothy 2. 6. Hebrews 2. 9. Hebrews 10. 12.

our standing before God is acceptable.

To appreciate this wonderful doctrine in more detail we need to look at a number of words found in scripture. E-sword is a great tool for this as it includes the smaller words, which are not covered in Strong's Concordance. A short list of words is given in the table.

The two Greek words *anti* and *hyper* teach us about substitution. Both of these words are usually translated with the same English word, 'for'. A study of the alternative meanings of this little word 'for' in scriptures in relation to the death of the Lord Jesus (e.g. 'His life "for". . .') starts to reveal a great balance and scope of doctrine. We see both of these words used in 1. Timothy chapter 2 verse 6, 'who gave Himself a ransom for all'. In this verse the word 'ransom' means to pay the price of redemption but also has a link to the word 'anti,' indicating that when a soul is saved the price was paid in their stead. But the little expression 'for all' is also in the verse showing us that the redemption was paid to potentially save all. This shows something of the scope of this ransom.

To apply this point practically, when we speak about the gospel to those who are not saved, we need to be clear and tell them of the wonder of what the Lord Jesus has done in order that they could be saved. It was done for them; they are in reach of it and through faith can claim it. What a wonderful gospel message we have. It is available and relevant to all! Yet we must be careful not

to make the application of the truth to individuals who are lost. They need to believe in order that they can say 'for me'!

So then, having examined the background to this great doctrine now let's consider some of the scriptures already listed!

1. Mark 10. 45, the Son of Man came 'to give his life a ransom for many'

This verse concludes the Lord's response to the disciples' argument about which of them should be the greatest. The Lord simply outlines what He, the Son of Man, came to do. In this verse the word used for 'for' is 'anti', meaning 'in the stead of.' The wonder of this is that the Lord Jesus, through giving His life in the stead of me, paid the ransom.

In this verse the word 'ransom' includes the idea of loosening and breaking up linked to the paying of a redemption price. This 'many' includes every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ; the giving of His life has paid my personal redemption price and loosed me, broken me away from the slavery of sin.

2. 2 Corinthians 5. 21, 'he was made sin for us'

The sin offering of Leviticus chapter 4 provides a helpful illustration. The person who had sinned would bring a bullock that didn't have any blemish to the door of the tabernacle, v. 4. The person offering would lay their hand on the animal's head and kill it 'before the Lord'. By laying his hand on the head of the bullock, the person who had sinned was identifying with the

death of the animal. The animal died *instead of* the individual. Forgiveness was then assured, v. 20.

In the very same way 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 21 applies directly to believers in the Lord Jesus. Just as the person in Leviticus chapter 4 identified with the sin offering, the believer in the Lord Jesus has identified with the Lord Jesus in His death on the cross. This is necessary for salvation.

The verse shows something of the great depth of the Lord's suffering. In all His glory and perfection He was treated as sin ('made sin') deserved to be treated. This was for us; for me! The result for the New Testament believer is better than the temporary forgiveness obtained by the sinner in Leviticus chapter 4. We are 'made the righteousness of God in him.' In identifying with His death, our sin was dealt with by Him and we are made righteous and cleared of guilt before God. What a burden has been removed, yet what suffering He endured.

3. Galatians. 2. 20, 'himself for me'

Well back to the great, yet personal statement of Paul with which we started. The joy of this doctrine is that I can join with Paul and take, own and live this statement for myself, as an every single believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Himself for me', how deep, how profound is this simple statement! May we choose each day to live in the light of it and feel its full effect on our devotion and service!

Checking out the Old Testament from the archaeological evidence

This question has been asked many times over the years and will no doubt continue to be asked until the Lord Jesus returns. For some, the answer is simple – of course it can: it is the word of God. For others, the issue is not so straightforward. The accuracy of the Bible is constantly under attack, especially in the media. Such attacks can be deeply unsettling for believers if we do not have the wherewithal to combat them or else a faith that will hold unshakably to the accuracy of scripture despite apparent evidence to the contrary. Not only is the Bible itself under attack, but we, as Christians, are described as 'brainwashed' or 'blinkered' for believing it. What do we reply? What answers do we have? How can we help those who are wavering? The purpose of this article is to provide some suggestions that we trust will be of help.

Over the centuries, all sorts of things have been called into question about the historical accuracy of the Bible. The existence of Hezekiah's tunnel, for example, was doubted, until its discovery in 1838.¹ Not only was the tunnel itself discovered but there was an inscription on the wall inside that gave details of its construction and which enabled archaeologists to date the tunnel securely to Hezekiah's time. Indeed, over the past two hundred years there has

been an explosion of information relating to places (and people) mentioned in the Bible arising from extensive archaeological excavations at various sites in the land of Israel and elsewhere. Not only does this mean that we are able to get a flavour of what life was like in Bible times but kings and other characters, particularly from the period of the divided kingdom, have stepped out from the pages of scripture firmly onto the pages of history. Sceptics who questioned whether they ever existed have been forced to change their tune. The growth of the internet, too, has meant that a lot of this information has become much more accessible to the general public. It should be said that we will never be able to recover a complete picture of the past: for example, some sites are still inhabited, especially Jerusalem, which means that it is only possible to dig in certain areas. In other cases, later occupation or natural processes have erased what was there before. The result is a jigsaw with many of the pieces missing. However, the picture that emerges both complements and confirms the Biblical record. In a later article we will look at textual evidence and its implications. For now we will concentrate on bricks and mortar, so to speak.

Two periods of biblical history that have been the focus of particular scepticism are the periods of the united monarchy under David and Solomon and the conquest of Canaan under Joshua. For many years it has been claimed that David and Solomon are fictional characters who never really existed and that there was no conquest, no fall of Jericho, and so on. Such claims, if left unchallenged, are unnerving at the least and we do well to question the basis of them. In essence, the first is based on a lack of information, that is, 'we haven't found it yet, so it isn't there, therefore the Bible must be wrong'. The second, as we will see, is based on a misreading and misapplication of what



has already been discovered, leading to the wrong conclusions.

However, even if it is true that we do not have the seal of either David or Solomon or a contemporary inscription detailing their exploits² there is still evidence, already discovered and still emerging, that supports the biblical account. For example, in 1 Kings chapter 9 verse 15 it says that Solomon built 'the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer'. We have already noted the difficulties associated with excavations in Jerusalem itself. However, there are no such difficulties in the other three places mentioned, and, at all three, similar, massive six-chambered gate structures have been found, which can be dated to the correct time period.

1 Kings also speaks of chariots and horsemen that Solomon amassed and placed in various cities throughout his kingdom, 1 Kgs. 10. 26. One prime location for this would be Megiddo and, once again, this is borne out by the discovery of stables there, which have been dated to Solomon's time.³

Despite the difficulties associated with



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digging in Jerusalem, even here there are relevant points of interest. The so-called 'stepped stone structure', uncovered on the eastern side of the City of David, is probably the 'millo' mentioned at various points, 2 Sam. 6. 9; 1 Kgs. 9. 24; 2 Chr. 32. 5, constructed to support the public buildings on top of the hill. Indeed, it is on top of the hill that we have perhaps the most exciting find of recent years, and it is also a classic example of what is possible if we are prepared to take the Bible at face value. In February 2005 an Israeli archaeologist, Dr Eilat Mazar went in search of the palace of King David in Jerusalem, using 2 Samuel chapter 5 as her guide. In verse 17 it states that when the Philistines came against David he 'went down to the hold'. 'The hold' is the original Jebusite citadel otherwise known as 'Zion', or the 'city of David', vv. 7, 9. When Hiram of Tyre sent workmen to build David a palace they would have built it outside the cramped confines of the old fortress as part of a new expansion. When danger threatened, however, he would have moved into the fortress for safety. The phrase 'went down' suggests that the new site was higher up the hill. Based on these deductions she started digging and found a substantial monumental building, the walls of which were up to seven metres thick in places. Is it David's palace? Probably, but we don't know for sure yet. It certainly looks to be about the right age but, as usual, it is the subject of intense debate and controversy. Mazar has been severely criticized for her faith in the

biblical text, but once again the accuracy of scripture even down to the tiniest details can be seen. One further point of interest about this building is that from it was recovered the bulla (seal) of a man called Jehucal, son of Shelemiah, son of Shevi. This man is mentioned twice in Jeremiah, 37. 3; 38. 1, and was apparently one of the men responsible for putting Jeremiah in the dungeon.

Nowhere is the accuracy of scripture more beautifully seen than at Jericho. This site reinforces biblical rather than secular chronology and incidental details from excavations here tie in precisely with the account in the book of Joshua. Let us turn first of all to the Bible to establish a time frame for our investigation and to see exactly what we should expect to find.

In 1 Kings chapter 6 verse 1 it is recorded that Solomon began to build the temple in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had left Egypt, in the fourth year of his reign. This means, then, that the fall of Jericho took place 440 years before Solomon, thus roughly about 1450 BC. Those who deny that there is any evidence for the conquest of Jericho by Joshua usually date it much later, during the time that Jericho was unoccupied. We shall see, however, that there is plenty of evidence for the fall of Jericho at the time that the Bible says. Of the cities in Canaan the account of the spies was that they were 'great and walled up to heaven', Deut. 1. 28. Of Rahab's house it records that her house was 'upon the town wall', Josh. 2. 15, which could otherwise be translated 'in' or 'against' the wall.⁴ What does this mean, exactly? When the children of Israel crossed the Jordan it was 'the time of harvest', Josh. 3. 15. When the Lord is giving instructions to Joshua, He says, 'The wall of the city shall fall down flat (lit. "under it"), and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him' (predicted in Joshua chapter 6 verse 5,



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fulfilled in Joshua chapter 6 verse 20). Finally, the city was 'burnt with fire', Josh. 6. 24. What do we find on the ground?

In the picture we can see an artist's reconstruction of part of the north side of Jericho from around the fifteenth to sixteenth century BC, based on the German excavations of 1906-07. From it we can notice a few things. First, we can see that the city was constructed on a mound and was surrounded by two walls with houses in between and against the outer wall. This explains the location of Rahab's house – it was between the inner and the outer walls, presumably against the outer wall. The city would have been an impressive sight. There was a steep, stone retaining wall at the bottom 4-5m (13-19 feet) high, topped by a mud-brick wall 2m thick and 6-8m (20-26 feet) high. A great earthen embankment led up to the inner mud-brick wall, the crest of which would have been 14m (46 feet) above ground level. For anyone looking on from outside it would indeed have looked like the city was 'walled up to heaven'. It was also

virtually impregnable. The city had a population of around 1200, which would have swollen considerably when the surrounding villages fled there in the face of the impending Israelite invasion.

How were the Israelites to get in? How were they to get past the first wall, let alone make it up the slope to the second? The famous archaeologist, DAME KATHLEEN KENYON, found 'fallen red bricks piling nearly to the top of the revetment [that is, the stone retaining wall]. These probably came from the wall on the summit of the bank [and/or] the brickwork above the revetment'. That is, the walls fell down, filled up the gap and the Israelites were able to climb straight up over the debris and into the city. The impregnable city had, in one moment been laid wide open.

Within the city itself the excavators found jar upon jar of grain, consistent with the account that it was harvest time. The grain would have been laid up for a long siege. It is



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strange, in fact, that there should be any grain there at all – it would have been one of the first things that a conquering army would have looted. Yet, according to scripture, nothing was taken from Jericho except the precious metals, which were placed in the treasury of the Lord's house, Josh. 6. 24. This is not the only noteworthy thing about the grain: it was all charred, consistent with the city having been burned with fire.

In the course of the conquest of Canaan the Israelites captured Hazor and 'burnt it with fire', Josh. 11. 11. Evidence of destruction by fire has been recovered from Hazor from the same time period.

What can we conclude, then, from this study? We have seen, I trust, striking evidence not just for the general historicity of our Bible but its absolute accuracy on points of detail. We will never have concrete archaeological evidence for every event and time period of biblical history – the rising water table in Babylon means that we will never be able to recover the tower of Babel, for example – but for those periods and events for which we do have evidence, when we stick to what it actually says, we find that we can trust the Bible in every detail.

References

- 1 For Bible references to this tunnel see 2 Kgs. 20. 20; 2 Chr. 32. 30.
- 2 For a helpful article and pictures see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hezekiah%27s_Tunnel.
- 3 The 'house of David', referring to David's dynasty is mentioned in an inscription from Tel Dan and is quite possibly contained in the inscription of Mesha, king of Moab. For further information for convenience see the *Wikipedia* articles online on both inscriptions. David is thereby confirmed as an historical figure even without further discoveries. Although not without controversy, some would date them to Ahab's reign. Some would deny that they are stables at all and call them storehouses, but they contain feeding troughs and tethering posts which fit better with stables.
- 4 'built into the city wall' ESV, 'part of the city wall' NIV.

Saints' CVs George Müller By ALAN STAPLEY

I remember many years ago that I was given a book entitled an *Autobiography of George Muller*. At that time I was not interested in reading books. Subsequently the book was put on a shelf and forgotten about as I really never thought I could learn anything from someone who had been born in 1805 and died in 1898. How wrong I was! When looking for another book many years later I came across this autobiography of George Muller. On the front cover was written 'readers will find their faith strengthened, their prayer life enriched and their ministry expanded by the life and example of this man of God'. My attention was drawn immediately to the words 'the life and example of this man of God'. My curiosity was aroused and as I read I discovered how George Muller, the founder of Christian orphan-ages, had come to personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. His conversion radically changed him, and for the rest of his life he demonstrated this by living by faith and serving the Lord to the best of his ability. He decided to depend on God alone for every detail of his life and not to rely on man. This was achieved by prayer and faith. It is one thing to say that we are saved but are we proving every day that we are? Is our faith seen in our actions? George Muller was perhaps someone who wasn't very well known to start with but God had chosen to use him. We might feel at times that we are not well enough known to serve God in a particular



way, but God knows and He has fitted us for the work that He gives us to do.

What was Muller's secret in life? Faith in God and a life of prayer. In 2010 can I ask you, as I ask myself, how is your faith in God? In 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 5-7 Peter gives us a checklist, or progress report, of things that we have to add to our faith – virtue, knowledge, temperance (self control), patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity (love). Peter goes on to say, 'If these things be in you and abound they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ'. While Peter is teaching us about adding to our faith he may also have in mind the words of the Lord Jesus to him in Luke chapter 22, verse 32, 'I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail', NKJV.

How do you find prayer? Do you, like me, find it difficult? In John chapter 17 we have the great example of prayer as the Lord Jesus prays to his Father. John MacArthur says, 'The prayer recorded there is truly the Lord's prayer exhibiting the face to face communion the Son had with the Father'. This prayer reveals some of the precious content of the Son's communion and intercession with the Father. Prayer does work, as George Muller proved in his lifetime. May you and I prove in our day and generation that God hears and answers prayer!

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As you get to know people and develop a group of friends, be aware that they will notice what you do, since you may be the only Christian they know, they will make their opinions about Christ, based on what they see in you. Make sure you know what you think about the key issues of faith, based on the Bible: not just on what you've always done. I have had the opportunity a few times throughout my degree course (and plenty more that I have allowed to pass by) to take my

'uni' friends along with me to different meetings. As a result I had the joy of seeing one or two show a real interest in spiritual matters!

No doubt you will end up serving the Lord in different ways to the ones I discovered. We have all been given varying gifts and talents so it's up to you to find out what you are good at, and what is going on in your area. And if there is nothing going on, start something yourself!