

YOUNG



Volume 8 Number 2

PRECIOUS SEED

Edited by
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How do I prepare for the Lord's Supper?

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It is sometimes said, 'the way we spend our Saturday evening will affect the way we honour the Lord the following day'. Perhaps we might further add, the way we spend our **week** will affect the way we honour the Lord on a Sunday morning. It is of vital importance that when we attend the Lord's Supper we do so with our hearts fully prepared to worship Him, hearts which have been preparing throughout the week. Without this we risk 'not discerning (or "distinguishing") the Lord's body', a serious matter indeed. This subject is taught in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verse 28 and will be discussed later.

Before we consider how we might best prepare for the Lord's Supper, we should remind ourselves what the purpose of the gathering is. Believers gather to remember Him, 1 Cor. 11. 24-25, and proclaim His death for us until we meet Him in the air, 1 Cor. 11. 26. This meeting is called the **Lord's Supper**, 1 Cor. 11. 20, as it draws attention to the authority of the One whom we come to worship and remember; it is **His** supper. It is also called the **Breaking of Bread**, Acts 2. 42; 20. 7, which describes the simplicity of what we do. We *break the bread* (a symbol of His body given for us), we *drink the cup* (a symbol of His blood shed for us) and we do so *together* (a symbol of the fellowship we share with Him and each other). In the Gospels you have its **institution**, Matt. 26. 26-30; Mark 14. 22-26; Luke 22. 19-20, in Acts its **practice**, Acts 2. 42; 20. 7, and, in the Epistles, its **doctrine**, 1 Cor. 10. 16-17; 11. 23-34.

Why then is this gathering so important? *Firstly*, to remember Him in this way is an act of **obedience**; He has asked us to do this, Luke 22. 19. *Secondly*, the book of Acts indicates that this gathering had real **prominence** in believers' lives and it should be no different for us. For example, it was the first thing the believers did every week, Acts 20. 7, and the apostle Paul even waited seven days in order to attend the Lord's Supper at Troas, Acts 20. 6. *Finally*, the Lord's Supper is a meeting of **reverence** or worship and provides an opportunity and a responsibility (cf. Heb. 13. 15) to offer our appreciation of Him. If we have nothing

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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*, Pitcot Farm, Pitcot Lane, Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Radstock BA3 4SX, UK, and is also available separately from the main magazine.
MAY 2011

HOW DO I? helpful biblical guidance for believers

to offer, it suggests we do not have much appreciation of Christ, which will affect our daily Christian living.

Given its importance, there are three ways in which we should prepare for the Lord's Supper. Prepare to be **present**, prepare to **participate** and prepare to **partake** (of the emblems – see later for a definition).

Preparing to be Present

You might consider this a strange statement to make, and, granted, the Lord's Supper is one of the best attended gatherings, nevertheless, prepare to be there! In the early days of the church, believers built their lives around the meetings of the local church, not the meetings around their lives! The 3,000 new converts in Jerusalem 'continued steadfastly' in 'breaking of bread', Acts 2. 42, that is they 'gave constant attention to' or 'attended continually' the Lord's Supper. They were also most particular about studying the word of God, joining with each other in the Lord's work and attending the prayer meeting too! They persisted in all the features of assembly life. It was important to them. What about us?

We should also remember that the supper is His, and He is **Lord**. We are gathering in His name and, as such, we must prepare to attend in a manner which is dignifying and fitting for His presence, Matt. 18. 20. There should be an aspect of reverence about the way we speak and act. What will you wear that is compatible with this? I'm sure you remembered your mobile phone, but what about your Bible? Is the mobile switched off? Would you be thinking in that way if you could physically see His presence? Are we prepared to be present?

Prepare to Participate

We must continually remember that **all** present are expected to participate at the Lord's Supper. Some will take part audibly (brothers), some inaudibly (sisters). Some will pray, others will read the word of God, others will give out a hymn (by the way, it's good to get to know the hymn book!). It is the collective responsibility of the gathered believers to worship and we should therefore **all** be preparing to participate.



There is a beautiful illustration of this in Deuteronomy chapter 26. Here, the Israelites were to offer the first-fruits of their harvest to the Lord, the **best** of which would have been selected at home. It is this that was considered worthy to offer to God. [For further comments on this passage I highly recommend reading David Newell's notes in *Letters to a New Believer*, pp. 76-77]. In the same way, we too should be collecting and selecting the meditations of the Lord Jesus we have enjoyed throughout the week so we can offer our appreciation of Him.

Whatever we do bring it must be Christ centred and Christ glorifying. We are there to remember *Him*. The Lord Jesus said, 'This do in remembrance of me', Luke 22. 19, that is, we should be actively 'calling Him to mind'. Every hymn, every prayer and every reading should be focused on Him. Often, younger believers are worried about whether their meditation fits with the 'theme' of the meeting. Praise God, every Lord's Supper has only one theme, and it is always *Him*. **If it's about Him then it fits!**

So what of Christ can we bring to remembrance? Many times scripture exhorts us to remember and

much of this can be applied to our remembrance of Christ. For example, we can remember His Name, Ps. 20. 7, His works, cf. 1 Chr. 16. 12, His love, S. of S. 1. 4, His sufferings, Lam. 3. 19-20, His resurrection and ascension, cf. 2 Tim. 2. 8 and the words He spoke, Acts 20. 35.

With regard to His name, we could meditate upon the fact that He is called the Alpha and Omega, Rev. 1. 8, the Author of Salvation, Heb. 5. 9, the Almighty, Rev. 1. 8, the Arm of the Lord, Isa. 53. 1, the Angel of the Covenant, Mal. 3. 1, the Ark of the Lord, Josh. 3. 3, the Advocate, 1 John 2. 1, the Anchor of Hope, Heb. 6. 19, the altogether Lovely, S. of S. 5. 16, the Amen, Rev. 3. 14, and the All in All, Col. 3. 11 to name but a few 'A's!

Recently I have been meditating on the Lord Jesus as the Balm of Gilead, Jer. 8. 22. Gilead was a place renowned for its medical care. The Balm of Gilead was something physicians used to cure disease and sooth pain. In Jeremiah chapter 8, verse 22, God laments over the spiritual condition of His people and speaks of the Healing Balm available in Gilead. That balm is Christ! He is the Healing Balm for the brokenhearted and bruised, Luke 4. 18, 8. 43; 10. 34, for the bereaved, Luke 7. 13-15, for the blind, John 9, for all believers, Isa. 53. 5; 1 Pet. 2. 24 and yet there was no healing available for Him at Calvary. By **His stripes we** are healed.

Truly, the Lord Jesus is unsearchable and His riches unlimited, Eph. 3. 8. There is still much we could say of prophecies, predictions, pictures, parables and miracles! Quite clearly, there is no excuse for not being prepared with 'precious ointment' to pour at His feet.

Prepare to Partake (of the emblems)

Finally, and most solemnly, we must all prepare to partake of the emblems at the Lord's Supper. When I use the expression the emblems I am referring to the symbols of the bread and the cup as they are symbolic emblems. 1 Cor. 11. 27-29 states that before we partake of the emblems we must 'examine' ('test' or scrutinize) ourselves. It is an extremely serious matter to merely turn up at the Lord's Supper with un-confessed sin in our lives or disagreements and divisions with other believers damaging our fellowship and unity.



If this is the case then we are taking the emblems 'unworthily' or in the wrong condition. To put it another way, we are treating the emblems and the Person they represent with dishonour and indifference by pretending we are holy in life and in harmony with each other. Such a person would be 'guilty of the body and blood of the Lord' and has not 'discerned' His body.

Praise God, grace is available! Before

we come to the Lord's Supper we are to self-examine our lives, confess any hidden sins to God and put any quarrels with fellow believers right **with a view to partaking**, 'so let him eat'. These things are not an excuse to stay away!

May God continue to encourage and challenge us with regard to how we prepare to remember the Lord Jesus. It is one of the greatest privileges afforded to believers to gather together with Him and consider His glorious Person until He comes, 1 Cor. 11. 26.

One way to study the Bible

By **STEPHEN G. BAKER** Liverpool, England

Bible Software available on an iPhone and on most smart phones

Introduction

In the modern world we always seem to be looking for ways to access information as easily as possible. The mobile phone/'smart' mobile phone has developed in recent years to such an extent that many functions that we would have formerly used on a laptop computer are now accessible through a phone. Many of us have a smart phone on our person or at least within easy reach most of the time. This means that access to a broad spectrum of information is a real benefit. I know that we need to be wise and not become too obsessive with technology, otherwise it can dominate and rule our lives. The reality is however that this is the way things are and we can choose to either ignore it or use it to our advantage. I personally find it immensely useful to have immediate access to information that I otherwise would have to carry in book form or on a 'laptop'.

A word of caution

We must be careful to allocate time for Bible study so that we can sit in quietness and hear the voice of God as we read His word. Easy access to information will allow me to have the facts about the word of God instantly available, i.e., what a word means, where it is first found, where it occurs and what others say about it. It will however never replace the periods of meditation and fellowship with God that is so essential to hear His voice through His word.

In the rest of this article I want to outline the Bible

programs (or 'applications') that I use on my iPhone and the benefit that they are to me. There are no doubt many other applications available both on iPhone and other 'smart' phones.

Strong's Concordance for the iPhone

This is a very handy resource. I use it to look at the meanings of words (definitions with reference numbers), where they occur (locations) and to chart the use of the same word in the original language against the different translations into English. This application is based on the Authorised King James Version and *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* which was first published in 1890.



Logos Bible Software

If you use this software on your desktop or laptop it will cost you in excess of £300 for the very basic package. To get the same software on your iPhone is free. The resource package will not be anything like the one that is available by paying the fee but you still get an incredible amount of information for free. Once you have downloaded the application you open it up and select books that want to look at from the online library. A number of books can be permanently downloaded onto your phone and the rest can be accessed as you need to. I tend to use this application mainly to access books that I do not have in my library or that would like to look at when away from home but do not want to carry with me. It is worth browsing the library to see what is available.

KJV Bible Audiobook

When I first got my phone I spent quite a bit of time looking for recordings of scripture to listen when on a journey. This was a laborious task until I discovered this application. KJV Bible Audiobook gives you the whole Bible in audio and visual. You can listen to it being read through earphones and you can read it at the same time, if you so desire. The application can be used to make notes, to follow a daily reading plan and to access other resources that can be quite helpful. This is a great way to have the word of God 'ringing in your ears' and to feed on your daily bread, Matt. 6. 11.

Holy Bible – Your Version

Much as I do not really like the name 'Your Version' this is a good application. It has a vast range of versions of scripture, but bear in mind that not all versions of scripture have the same degree of accuracy. Wisdom is required when looking at translations and a knowledge of which translations are the most accurate is required. This application has not only proved useful when looking at the meaning of a verse but I have used it from time to time as a tool for evangelism. For instance, as well as English translations there are translations into Arabic, Bulgarian, Czechoslovakian and many other languages. In total there are forty-five translations into twenty-one languages. What has that to do with evangelism I hear you ask? Well I have been known to look up John 3. 16 in English and then show it to someone in their own language.

With this application you can also look at what other people have said about a particular passage and while this can be helpful it is often of limited benefit. It has an excellent range of reading plans which does help if you need the discipline of reading a certain number of passages a day. Finally



one annoying feature of the application is that every time it is updated any of the translations that you have downloaded have to be downloaded again. Painful though it is I am willing to live with this for the other benefits.

Olive Tree Bible Software

This must be among my favourite applications (as well as the Strong's Application). Why? – it has vast resources most of which are free! The range of translations includes the older and established ones which are so trusted (Darby, Young's, Rotherham's and RV). There is an immense catalogue of books for you to look at; some can be read for no cost and others you pay for. The 'store' is well organised as it

is divided into self-explanatory categories and you have the added benefit of old and new writings. Not everyone (including me) likes to read books on a phone but it's all there if you want it.

PocketSword – Crosswire Bible Society

This application provides access to the *Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary*, *Darby's Translation Notes*, *Robertson's Word Pictures* to name a few. You can access a 1525/1530 William Tyndale Bible, if you like old English as well as many other translations. Generally, I find it useful for the resources mentioned above. It is good to dip into from time to time.

Conclusion

In closing I often remind myself that however I choose to study I must make sure that I 'study to shew myself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth'; 2. Tim. 2. 15. It will take hard work, discipline and effort to study the Bible and a lifetime of meditation and living to know our God as He wants us to. May the Lord help you as you also seek to do this.

Building Blocks of the Christian Faith

'Ye must be born again' – THE CONCEPT OF BIBLICAL

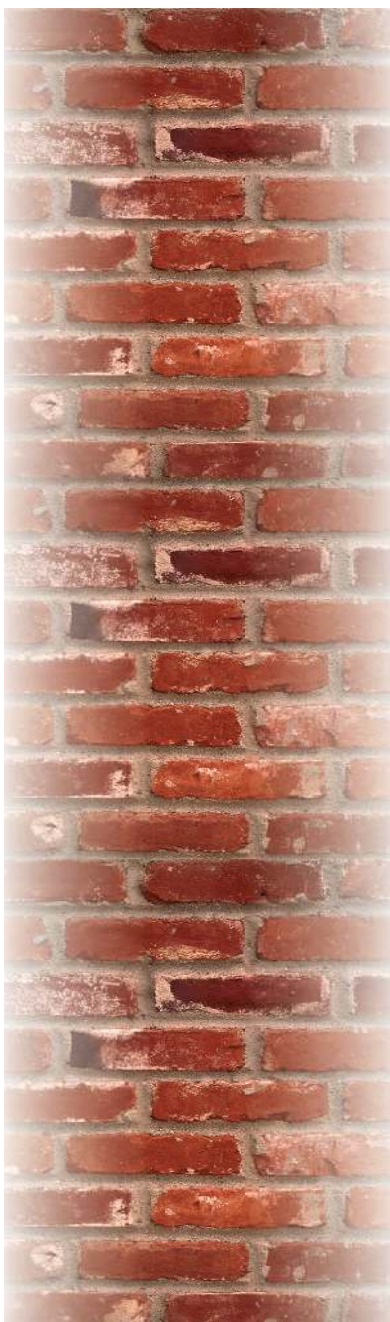
REGENERATION

By **JACK HAY** Comrie, Scotland

Key Bible references – John 3. 1-15; 1 John 2. 29; 3. 9; 4. 7; 5. 4.

The word 'regeneration' is used only twice in the King James Version of the Bible. The first is in Matthew chapter 19 verse 28, where the reference is to the coming earthly kingdom of the Lord Jesus, commonly called 'The Millennium'. During that period of time, massive environmental changes will warrant the description, 'regeneration'.

The second reference is in Titus chapter 3 verse 5, where the phrase 'the washing of regeneration' relates to our experience at conversion, and it is that concept of regeneration that concerns us here. We would more often refer to it as 'the new birth', or 'being born again'. In the media and among the general public, there is much uninformed comment about the new birth. Most people speak of 'born again Christians' as if the folks referred to are part of a fanatical fringe sect that originated in America, and, in many minds, being born again is equated with the excesses of some Charismatic groups. There are few who understand that the Lord Jesus taught that this experience is a universal necessity, and the fundamental requirement for admission to God's kingdom,



for, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God', John 3. 3.

The Need for the New Birth

We did not need to be born again because of anything we had ever done but simply because of what we were as fallen creatures descended from Adam. (*Forgiveness* was necessary for our wicked deeds).

Everyone in the world is descended from Adam through Seth, and when Adam fathered Seth he 'begat (him) in his own likeness, after his image', Gen. 5. 3. By that time Adam was a fallen, sinful man, and he was now transmitting the crippling legacy of a sinful nature to the next generation, and from that generation right on down to us.

The term 'sinful nature' is not a biblical expression, but it seems to adequately explain the meaning of what the Bible calls 'the flesh'. When speaking of the need for the new birth, the Lord Jesus said, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh', John 3. 6. Natural birth brings into the world people who are dominated by the sinful nature, and there is no hope of improvement for that sinful nature. 'The mind of the flesh is

enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can it be*, Rom. 8. 7 RV. The flesh is so rebellious that even God made no attempt to make it any better. What He does is this: when someone believes on His Son, He imparts to them what the Bible calls, 'the divine nature', 2 Pet. 1. 4. This new birth gives us the capacity to quit the former sinful lifestyle, and produce something in our lives for God.

As noted already, another reason as to why the new birth is essential is that without it there is no access to the kingdom of God, John 3. 3, 5.

The Source of the New Birth

God is said to be the instigator of the new birth: hence, the phrase, 'born of God', e.g., 1 John 4. 9. John speaks of the children of God as being 'born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God*', John 1. 13. From the individual's side, 'receiving Christ', that is, 'believing on His name', is the factor that brings about the divine activity of regeneration, v. 12. New birth is 'not of blood', that is, it is not a genetic trait that runs in the blood. It is certainly not effected by the sinful nature for it is 'not of the will of the flesh'. It is not 'of the will of man', in that no one else could ever achieve it for us; it is a divine activity.

The person of the Godhead who is particularly involved in this activity is the Holy Spirit, and so the Lord Jesus used the phrase, 'born of the Spirit', John 3. 6. (It is an incidental evidence of the deity of the Holy Spirit that on occasions new birth is described as being 'born of God', and at other times, 'born of the Spirit'; the Holy Spirit is equated with God). In John chapter 3 verse 5, water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. A legitimate translation of the verse is, 'born of water, even the Spirit'. The use of water as a symbol indicates the cleansing effect of the new birth. In changing the symbol to the wind in verse 8, the Lord was indicating the sovereignty of the Spirit's activity.



The cleansing effect of the new birth was again stressed by Paul when he spoke about 'the washing of regeneration', Titus 3. 5. It is illustrated in an Old Testament passage with which Nicodemus was familiar, a passage where water and the Spirit are brought together. 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean . . . A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you . . . And I will put my spirit within you', Ezek. 36. 25-27.

The instrument that God uses to bring about the new birth is His word. When the gospel is received and believed, the miracle of regeneration takes place. 'Of his own will begat he us *with the word of truth*', Jas. 1. 18. 'Being born again . . . *by the word of God*', 1 Pet. 1. 23. The word of God generates faith in human hearts, for 'faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God', Rom. 10. 17. No wonder Paul impressed Timothy with something that we all need to heed, 'preach the word', 2 Tim. 4. 2. For an effective, lasting work of God, there is no substitute for the preaching of His word.

Descriptions of the New Birth

The term 'born again', John 3. 3, 7, is literally

'**born from above**'. The word is used later in the chapter; 'He that cometh *from above*', v. 31. 'Born from above' is a term that indicates that the transaction has no relationship with this world or the process of generation connected with human life; it is sourced in heaven.

The description '**born again**' is used twice by Peter in 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 3 and 23. This phrase demonstrates that the experience is new and revolutionary. 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new', 2 Cor. 5. 17. The new birth changes a person's life. If there is no change then there is doubt about the reality of the profession.

References have already been made to two further descriptions of regeneration, '**born of God**' and

'born of the Spirit'. The first is an indication that the experience places us in God's family. The other reminds us that the Spirit who regenerated us, and came to reside within us at that moment, is the same Holy Spirit who empowers us for Christian living and Christian service, Rom. 8. 4; 1 Cor. 2. 4.

Evidences of the New Birth

It has already been stated that the experience of the new birth is life changing. What kind of changes can be expected? What would be the evidences that someone's claim to be born again is valid? In his epistle, John explains the characteristics of those who have been 'born of God'. Essentially, they will take character from their Father, and exhibit the moral features of the family of God.

The first quality of those who have been born again is righteousness. 'If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him', 1 John 2. 29. Habitually, doing righteousness is not a feature of mankind in general, for, 'There is none righteous, no, not one', Rom. 3. 10. Doing righteousness means honesty and integrity. It means that in money matters everything is ethical and above board. It means that the biblical standard of morality is the norm. 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness', Matt. 5. 6. Are you doing righteousness?

Another evidence of the new birth is freedom from sin's habits, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin', 1 John 3. A surface reading may leave the impression that born-again people are perfect and never, ever commit sin. That would fly in the face of teaching elsewhere in John's epistle. While he wrote his letter to discourage sin among God's people, he did anticipate that there could be occasions when believers would fail, 'if any man sin ...'; 2. 1. The tense in that phrase indicates isolated

acts of sin in contrast to the tense of chapter 3 verse 9 where the thought is that of constant, regular, habitual sinning. John is saying that a person who is born again will not go on sinning in that persistent way. Peter was able to detect that Simon the sorcerer was not genuine because he was still in 'the bond of iniquity'; that is, he was still enslaved to sin, Acts 8. 23. People who have been truly born again have liberty from the habits of sin; they do not routinely 'commit sin' in their lives. Are you free, or are you still shackled by sin?

Another feature of people in the family of God is that they love their Father and each other. 'Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God',

1 John 4. 7. In the context of John's epistle, love is not just an emotion, but something intensely practical. 'My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth', 3. 18. In other words, those who have been born again will have a genuine care for the other members of their spiritual family.



A final evidence of a true experience of regeneration is the capacity to overcome the world. By the world, John means the world system that is orchestrated by the devil and is opposed to God. It involves philosophies, traditions, mind-sets, fashions, religions, and anything else that is contrary to a holy God. The world pressurizes believers to conform to its standards, and embrace its way of life, but, 'whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world', 5. 4. People with a genuine faith will be overcomers, for those who have been born again maintain a firm belief in the Lord Jesus, v. 1, and that faith is a shield against the subtle influence of the world.

Let us all assess our lives, and ask if the evidences of the new birth are there. If not, 'Ye *must* be born again'.