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Editor's Introduction

Hi, thanks for reading YPS. We hope that you will find this issue very helpful. We are just starting off a couple of new series of articles, which we hope you will find very interesting and informative. One of the writers cannot be identified due to the country where he works being very antagonistic towards the gospel. You will see his initials 'TM' and his location as SE Asia. Please excuse this; if you want more details please contact me directly. This brother has a series for us on how we got our Bible, which will start in the next issue. His article in this issue is part of a series called 'Chapter & Verse' where we will address some key verses that are essential if we are to be well-informed Christians.

I hope that as you read all of the articles that we produce that you have a Bible by your side to check and verify if what we write matches what the scriptures teach. It is essential that you do this. We are called to 'rightly divide the word of truth', 2 Tim. 2. 15, and you are called to 'receive the word with all readiness of mind' and search the scriptures daily, whether these things are so, Acts 17. 11.

Have a good read; I trust that we are helping you in some way in your growth and development as a believer.

Stephen Baker

PART 1:

The Holy Spirit

BY MALCOLM BEATTIE BELFAST

The person and work of the Holy Spirit

This is the first of four short studies about the Holy Spirit. We will first look at who He is.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is a divine person and a member of what the Bible calls the Godhead, Col. 2. 9. The Godhead is made up of the Father, the Son,



Volume 14
Number 2

MAY
2017

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*, 34 Metcalfe Avenue, Killamarsh, Sheffield, S21 1HW, UK, and is available separately from the main magazine.

and the Holy Spirit. Although the word 'trinity' is not found in the Bible, it helps us remember that there are three persons in the Godhead, for example, in Matthew chapter 28 verse 19.

The Holy Spirit is God. He is eternal and equal with the Father and the Son. The message of the Bible is about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit working in harmony to complete a great plan. They are going to populate heaven with saved sinners and bring them into the wonder of worship, fellowship, and service for God, forever. The Holy Spirit's part in this work is different from that of the Father and the Son, but it is just as important.

The Holy Spirit and the word of God

The Holy Spirit appears in all parts of the Bible. He has different names. He is called 'the Spirit of God', Gen. 1. 2, the 'Spirit of the Lord', Judg. 13. 25 and the 'holy spirit', Ps. 51. 11. In John chapter 15 verse 26 He is the both the 'Comforter' and the 'Spirit of truth'. In the original Greek of the New Testament the word for 'ghost' and 'spirit' is the same. There is no obvious reason to the modern mind why the King James Version of the Bible refers to Him both as the 'Holy Ghost' and the 'Spirit'. In modern translations 'Spirit' is consistently used, but in Jacobean times the word 'ghost' referred to living people whilst the word 'spirit' often referred to phantoms or apparitions.

Throughout the Bible we hear God speaking to people. In the New Testament we hear many things said by Jesus Christ, the Son. Rarely, if ever, do we hear the Holy Spirit speak to people directly. But He is not silent. In fact the whole Bible comes from Him! It was the Holy Spirit who guided the men who wrote

the Bible. We are told that 'holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost', 2 Pet. 1. 21. In fact, all of the Bible came that way – 'all scripture is given by inspiration of God', 2 Tim. 3. 16.

The Holy Spirit and the world

The Lord Jesus told the disciples about the 'Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me', John 15. 26. He also explained that 'when he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment', 16. 8. The word 'reprove' means to prove, show, or convince.

The Holy Spirit speaks in different ways, including through preaching, or by a gospel tract, or by us talking about the Saviour. He uses these things to convince people about God, to show them that they are sinners who will be judged, and to show what the Son of God did for sinners in His death at Calvary. When people hear these truths, some believe and are saved. Sadly, others reject the message, and many just put off making a decision, Acts 17. 32-34.

The Holy Spirit will continue to work in the world in this way until the Lord Jesus returns for the church, 2 Thess. 2. 7 (see Editor's note).

The Holy Spirit and worship

The Holy Spirit is truly God, but we are never instructed to pray to Him or worship Him. Also, we are never instructed to pray for Him to come upon us, not least because He has already come to dwell within us! But we are expected to obey Him, as we hear His voice within us and through the Bible. In fact, He will help us to pray and to worship God. By always following His guidance, we will be able to live in a way that pleases God.

Next time we will look at His association with the Son of God.

Editor's note:

Please note that there are other views on this point. Not everyone sees this reference to the restraining power as meaning the Holy Spirit – even Vine had problems with this interpretation, and argued that there is no support for this view in other parts of the New Testament. He lists additionally four other views, and comes to the conclusion that all can be little more than speculative!



When Soldiers Pray

BY **ANDREW ROBERTSON** CHATHAM, ONTARIO, CANADA

'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints', Eph. 6. 18 NKJV.

Paul has made it clear that Satan and his great army of evil forces have declared war on every Christian, in every generation, in every part of the world. So he tells us to 'stand therefore', v. 14, against the evil enemy. He also tells us how to stand – equipped with the armour of God. But if Paul stops his instructions here, we would get the wrong idea – that we are standing alone in the fight. If we leave now, we may mistakenly think that we are self-sufficient – after all, we have all the battle equipment we need. But don't walk away yet, because Paul is just about to make one final point.

From our study, we already know that Paul was using the picture of a Roman soldier as his example for Christian warfare. His readers would understand exactly what he was referring to with all of this 'armour' talk. But there's one more thing that they would have known that we need to remember: Roman soldiers, with all their equipment, were still vulnerable on their own. But if they carried out their orders in connection with their fellow-soldiers, they were almost unstoppable. Roman warfare was not built on the glory of individual warriors, but on soldiers who did the job they were given for the good of the entire company.

This is the final point in our study – we do not fight in this battle on our own, but we must stand our ground connected to God and our fellow-soldiers. We stand together as a unit. We stand in dependence on the Lord's strength, v. 10. And prayer is what connects us with headquarters. Through prayer, we stand dependent on the Lord to strengthen and direct us. Through prayer, we are also intensely aware of our fellow-soldiers in the trenches. In verse 18, Paul tells us that the soldier's prayer will be constant, urgent, and watchful of others.

Paul's first instruction in this verse is to be 'praying always', or, more literally, 'praying at all times' ESV. Some Christians think that prayer is something we do in the morning and at night. We have our prayer list and those we pray for. We may add to the list or subtract from it, but, in prayer, we dial up, we make our requests, and we sign off again. But when a Christian realizes they are a soldier in wartime, and that the enemy is always just around the corner, they don't dial up, and they don't sign off – they are always online with God! From morning to night, whether their eyes are open or closed, whether at the office or at home, whether alone or with others, they are always in contact with Headquarters. They don't hear a prayer request and wait until later to pray for it – they pray in the moment because they are connected in the moment. This is a battle, and the enemy is ready to strike when we least expect it, vv. 11-13. We cannot



afford to be signing off or waiting until 'prayer time' to pray. So Paul commands Christian soldiers in wartime to 'pray at all times', v. 18.

Secondly, Paul commands us to pray 'with all prayer and supplication', v. 18. These two terms are like twins, and they are often used together in the New Testament, Phil. 4. 6; 1 Tim. 2. 1; 5. 5; Heb. 5. 7. The terms are not that different in meaning, but when used together they communicate urgency about prayer. Paul has set up a picture of soldiers standing their ground as the arrows are flying at them. How would you pray in the trenches on the front lines with mortar shells landing all around you? To paraphrase, Paul seems to be saying, 'in whatever way necessary – just pray!' We have a perfect example of this type of prayer when our Lord was in Gethsemane anticipating the weight of our sin and the coming judgement for it. Luke tells us that 'being in agony, he prayed more earnestly', Luke 22. 44. The enemy was near, and He was under attack. He wasn't concerned with the form and style of His prayer. He was praying out of deep agony on the

front lines of battle, Heb. 5. 7. When we realize that we face an enemy too big for us, we will pray with desperate urgency as we stand our ground.

Finally, we pray constantly and urgently for those standing in harm's way with us. Paul tells us that we are to be watchful in prayer; continually lifting our brothers and sisters who are with us in the fight. We do not fight alone. We are part of a vast army of ordinary people, who, by God's grace, have been rescued from the enemy to stand together in the line of fire. We are fellow-soldiers, and, in wartime, we must be looking out for the welfare of each other in prayer.

We must remember that this is wartime and we are on the front lines of battle. We must remember that we are not self-sufficient. But we also need to constantly experience the closeness of Christ in prayer. We are not fighting alone, but we are part of an army of 'saints' with one common cause: the glory of God. So, while putting on all the pieces of armour – keep praying! Pray constantly, urgently, and 'for all the saints'.



Nevertheless at thy word

BY **TIM COLTMAN** BURTON ON TRENT

Luke 5. 1-11

Have we ever been asked to do something again, that we have only just completed?

In this scenario the Lord had just taught the multitude from the boat and then He turns and asks Simon to launch out into the deep, let down the nets, for a draught of fish. Simon answered and said, 'We have toiled all night and have taken nothing'. He had just spent the night fishing, and had achieved nothing, yet the Lord asked him to do it again! Simon didn't argue with the Lord. As an experienced fisherman, Simon could well have questioned the Lord: after all, the Lord was a carpenter and he a fisherman. They had already toiled all night, and surely the opportunity to catch fish had passed, but he made no objections.

We might well be going through experiences that we are finding difficult and challenging.

We have toiled all night, as it were, and yet the Lord asks us again, to cast the nets. Perhaps we feel like asking why? or what's the point?

I want us to notice the words Simon uses as he answers the Lord – '**Nevertheless at thy word!**'

Whatever we think of what He is asking us to do, no matter how small or large the task, we should simply bow in obedience and say, 'Nevertheless at thy word'. If the instruction had been given by anyone else, it wouldn't have carried the same weight, but it was the word of the Lord.

In verse 5 we are reminded that they had toiled all

night. The thought of toiling here is to be wearisome, tired, or exhausted, but notice what happens when they are obedient, and take Him at His word.

They were blessed beyond measure; they landed a great multitude of fish, and their net broke, v. 6. The Lord supplied more than they could imagine, and provided far beyond their expectations, which reminds me of the words of Paul, 'Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen', Eph. 3. 20.

We are living in such a materialistic world. There are many today who haven't half of what we have as far as this world's goods are concerned, but they have a real desire and thirst for the word of God. Some people have to travel for hours to hear the word of God taught, yet sometimes we make feeble excuses why we can't go a short distance to the meeting.

Have we lost the thrill and zeal for our Saviour and His word?

In the abundance of fish, we see the blessing and the great provision that Christ made. There is the danger that we think that we are in control of our current circumstances, and unless we work all of those hours and strive to get to the top, then we won't have enough to pay the bills. We lose sight of the fact that He is in control, and all that we have is from Him, and not because of our own efforts. He is able to meet our need. The words of Philippians chapter 4 verse 19 spring to mind, 'But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus'.

Let us give the Lord, His word and the assembly their rightful place.

When Simon Peter saw the amount of fish, and the nets breaking, and the ships starting to sink, we see his response. He fell down before the Lord in amazement and in worship.

Simon Peter realized that what had taken place could only be as a result of the Lord's power.

As we consider our Saviour, and the many blessings that we have been brought into as believers, and the blessings that are ours on a daily basis, it should cause us to bow before Him in amazement, and with thankful hearts in worship.

When they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him, v. 11

In our final verse we read of Peter, who turned from what he knew best, and what he did best, and wholly followed the Lord. He followed the Lord when he had more in his possession than he had possibly had before, and he left it all. What a cost, to leave all that he had to follow the greatest of masters!

Surely this is a challenge to each one of us today! What are we prepared to leave or give up so that we might follow Him, and give the best of our time to Him? The ultimate price has been paid for us. He is the rich One, who, for us, became poor – 'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich', 2 Cor. 8. 9.

He is the all-sufficient and faithful One who understands our needs, if only we will wholly rely upon Him. In our service for Him, may we respond with the words of Simon . . .

'Nevertheless at thy word'.



ADVENTURES IN ACTS:

Acts 23-25 - Paul the Prisoner

BY JEREMY SINGER BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND

In the life of a believer, *waiting* time is never *wasted* time. God's plans include all our pauses. Paul's detention seemed to curtail his service for the Lord; instead, it was part of God's scheme for him. Similarly, Joseph recognized that his imprisonment belonged to a divine plan, 'God meant it for good', Gen. 50. 20 NKJV.

Paul was detained at Jerusalem for less than two weeks, Acts 24. 11, but subsequently had to stay at Caesarea for more than two years, v. 27. Like the Lord Jesus, Paul was subjected to a series of trials when he was falsely accused by the Jewish religious rulers. However, the Lord's trials were concentrated in one dark night at Jerusalem, whereas Paul's trials stretched over many years and various cities, finally ending up at Rome, 23. 11.

How did Paul spend his time while in prison? The apostle was usually so active, with expansive plans for pioneering the gospel in fresh locations, 'not where Christ was already named', Rom. 15. 20 RV. In this article, we identify three activities that occupied 'Paul the prisoner', Acts 23. 18.

Evangelism

Immediately after Paul's conversion, God stated that he would 'bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings', 9. 15. The apostle did not have many opportunities to witness to rulers on his missionary journeys. Rather than Paul going to rulers, they eventually came to him requesting to hear his message. Three important political figures – Felix, Drusilla, and Festus – listened to

Paul's teaching, either in formal court session or personal conversation. Later, Agrippa and Bernice – celebrity royals of the day – also came to hear Paul's testimony. According to historians, these individuals had lurid lifestyles and wicked reputations. Paul preached to them, demonstrating that God 'will have all men to be saved', 1 Tim. 2. 4. The gospel does not change despite the audience; 'righteousness and judgement' are clearly emphasized, Acts 24. 25. We must reiterate these themes today, even if there is a perception that such raw evangelical truths are unpalatable to modern society.

Paul neatly turned the tables around. The accused has become the leading witness, testifying to the grace of God. The judge, whether Felix or Festus, has become the accused – under divine judgement. We can't be sure what happened to these men – but the message they heard from Paul would have left them in no doubt about the claims of the gospel. This sets an ideal precedent for preachers today.

Encouragement

Paul's sufferings must have heartened his fellow Jewish believers. Many of them, unknown and unnamed, had 'suffered like things of [their] own countrymen', 1 Thess. 2. 14. When these anonymous sufferers heard that the apostle was going through difficulties, they would have been encouraged to persevere. Paul faced unjust trials, assassination threats and long periods of imprisonment. Along with other Jewish believers, he would have said, 'The Lord

is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me', Heb. 13. 6.

We also find in our passage some intriguing hints about Paul's family members. There are few details, but we learn that the apostle's nephew was in touch with him, Acts 23. 16, which might suggest that Paul had reached out to his relatives during his protracted stay in Judaea. Often, family members are the hardest to win for the Lord. Samuel found this with his sons, 1 Sam. 8. 3. Even the Lord Jesus' brothers did not believe on Him until after the resurrection, John 7. 5, 1 Cor. 15. 7. Here is an encouragement for us to contact out-of-touch family members and witness to them. God 'sets the lonely in families', Ps. 68. 6 NIV. He does this with a view to salvation – for instance, think of Lydia's household or the jailor's family in Philippi.

Education

In Paul's situations of distress and difficulty, God often spoke to him at night, e.g. Acts 16. 9; 18. 9. At Jerusalem, the Lord assured Paul that he was in the right place, and was fulfilling his commission as a witness, 23. 11. This gracious reassurance from the Lord must have emboldened Paul to appeal to Caesar, 25. 10. When we have important life decisions to make, it is always good to hear the Lord's affirmation, 'This is the way, walk ye in it', Isa. 30. 21.

The quiet times of reflection during his imprisonment would have allowed Paul to meditate on the scriptures. 'Books' and 'parchments', 2 Tim. 4. 13, were his constant companions. 'O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day' would be his attitude, Ps. 119. 97. Periods of enforced rest can be transformed into great times of in-depth scripture study. The natural outcome of such activity is increased urgency in gospel testimony – as we will discover next time, when we examine Paul's address to Agrippa.



THE ACTS OF GOD

SOVEREIGNTY

Jesus

CHRURC

Lydia, Jew, Elders, Christ, Suffering, Antioch, Temple, Prophecy, Faith, Servant, Jerusalem, Joy, Pain, Regeneration, Antioch, Worship, Bold, Colossae, Barnabas, James, Christian, Athens, Paul, Timothy, Preaching, Peter, Miracles, CHURC

ROSS, Gospel, Lydia, Jew, Elders, Christ, Suffering, Antioch, Temple, Prophecy, Faith, Servant, Jerusalem, Joy, Pain, Regeneration, Antioch, Worship, Bold, Colossae, Barnabas, James, Christian, Athens, Paul, Timothy, Preaching, Peter, Miracles, CHURC

Chapter & Verse



BY TM SE ASIA

1. HEAD, HEART, HANDS, Neh. 8. 8

This is the first of a number of articles in a series called 'Chapter & Verse'.

It is essential that we read and study God's word for ourselves. Knowing the chapter and verse to support what we believe is vital for every believer. This will bring great blessing. By God's grace, I have benefited from the teaching of many godly Christians over many years. It is my desire to share what I have learned with you. We hope these notes will help you in your Christian walk.

Ezra's reading of the scriptures had a profound effect on his hearers. Note three ways in which the word benefited them:

Head

'So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading', Neh. 8. 8 NKJV.

God wants us to understand His word. The Bible was written in the everyday language of ordinary people, in Hebrew and Greek, and most of the translations we have in our language are faithful representations of the original. More than half of both Old and New Testaments contain narrative accounts of historical events. These true stories are easy to understand. The Old Testament also contains poetry and prophecy, which require a little more study but are not beyond the grasp of the average reader. The New Testament also contains doctrine, and with careful study, and a good foundation in the historical portions of scripture, most Bible doctrine is readily understandable. There are a few passages which are more difficult, but the most important doctrines are explained clearly.

We should use our heads to understand. We do not need esoteric knowledge or a theology degree. We need to read and to think, but ultimately we need wisdom from above, through the work of the Holy Spirit, to understand the text of scripture.

Heart

'And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they

understood the words that were declared to them', Neh. 8. 12 NKJV.

The people's first response when they heard the word of God was to worship, 8. 6. When that word brought conviction of sin, they were overwhelmed with sorrow and wept, v. 9. Finally, when they understood that God had accepted them, their mourning became a celebration, v. 12.

God's word should touch our hearts. At different times it may elicit sincere worship, tears of repentance or the joy of salvation. If we never feel anything when we read the scriptures, it could indicate a spiritual coldness in our lives.

Notice that the people rejoiced when they understood the scriptures. Emotionalism without understanding suggests spiritual immaturity; such feelings soon pass. But emotion resulting from understanding God's word is pleasing to the Lord.

Hands

'And they found written . . . that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month. Then the people went out and brought [branches] . . . and made themselves booths', Neh. 8. 14, 16 NKJV.

God's word must get into our heads, but it must not stay in our heads. It should touch our hearts, but not merely so that we can have warm, fuzzy feelings. To be rounded students of the word, we need to put what we learn into practice. On hearing the Law, the people understood that they should be celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles. As soon as they realized this they went out and used their hands to build shelters so that they could worship as God commanded.

We must understand first, and then do. Doing without understanding can result in doing the wrong thing. For example, we need to understand why we don't celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles today. But understanding without doing leads to a dry intellectualism and spiritual hypocrisy. When we read, but don't do, we only deceive ourselves, Jas. 1. 22.