

Editor's Introduction

Hi again; thanks for reading YPS. You will note that we have revamped the style of the insert; hopefully, you will like it. One of the joys of compiling and editing a magazine is that you get the opportunity to read lots of articles. If you enjoy books and articles, then this is a real treat, especially when you maybe struggle to find time to read as much as you would like. Please take the opportunity to read the articles in both YPS and the main magazine. If you struggle for time, try reading the magazine as part of your daily devotional schedule. I have found that the best way to do this is through the Precious Seed App Reading Plan. You will read the whole magazine in one month if you do this. It's worth giving it a try. Let me know how you get on.

One of the series we are currently running, every second issue, is about Career Choices. To-date we have had an introduction and an article on a career in accountancy. There are more to come, once I receive and edit them. This series got me thinking about my own career before serving the Lord as I presently do. I can't say that I was driven towards a particular career. I probably left school far too early and then after looking at many options joined a bank. As a result, I studied the hard way – night school and day release – until my Chartered Bankers' exams, when I was given block release. Yet, in all of this God was working out His plans. I ended up working in various parts of the United Kingdom, and I can see, looking back, that the Lord used the bank and its needs to further His plans for me and His work.

Whatever career choices you make, please ensure that you bring God into the equation. Our desire should be, 'If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that', Jas. 4. 15. His plans are the most important ones, but we need to make good choices and then rest with confidence in our God who 'works all things according to the counsel of His will', Eph. 1. 11 NKJV.

Stephen Baker



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STEPHEN BAKER

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YOUNG PRECIOUS SEED is a supplement of *Precious Seed*, designed for those young in faith. Its purpose is to restate timeless truths from the word of God for a new generation of Christians and to kindle a biblical approach to current issues in the world in which we live. YPS is published by *Precious Seed*, 34 Metcalfe Avenue, Killamarsh, Sheffield, S21 1HW, UK, and is available separately from the main magazine.

The Dispensation of the Fullness of the Times

BY TM SE ASIA



3. INNOCENCE AND CONSCIENCE 'Who told you that you were naked?'

Gen. 3. 11 NKJV.

Throughout history God has given mankind various responsibilities, so that man might know what God requires of him, but time after time man has failed in his stewardship. But God will have a man to be a faithful steward of the earth, and of the heavens too. One day, when human beings have proved altogether untrustworthy, and the present heavens and earth have been destroyed, Jesus Christ will take His place as Head over the new creation, with the whole universe subject to Him.

In the following studies, we will examine in detail each of the administrative systems under which man has been tested. We will see what God required of man at each stage, and how man consistently failed the tests.

Man's first test was in Eden. God gave Adam three simple commands, three 'house rules' which Adam must follow in order to be a faithful steward. First, Adam was to be fruitful and multiply. Second, he should care for the garden. Third, he must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Aside from these instructions, Adam and Eve had no knowledge of right and wrong. They were innocent regarding good and evil. This is why Bible teachers sometimes describe this administration as **'the dispensation of innocence'**.

But although Adam and Eve did not have the knowledge of good and evil within themselves, if they wanted to know if something was right or wrong, there was a simple way of finding out. In the evening, God would come down to walk in the garden. Adam and Eve only need wait for Him and they could ask about anything they wanted to know. In this way, they would be dependent on God. God wanted them to have a knowledge of good and evil so that they could learn what was pleasing to Him. But He wanted them to acquire this knowledge through dependence on Him.

But there was a possible shortcut – the tree of knowledge. Adam and Eve realized that if they ate

from the tree, they would have all the knowledge God had on this subject instantly. They would not need to ask God about anything. They could be independent.

The requirements God had given to Adam as manager were clear and simple. But within a very short space of time, Adam failed in his stewardship.

There was nothing wrong with the system. What God had required of Adam was not unreasonable, nor was it especially difficult. Adam did not possess a sinful nature to lead him astray. Nevertheless, Adam desired independence from God. He did not want to serve under the terms his Master had laid out.

So, God judged Adam for his sin. But He is gracious. Although His chief steward had failed, God did not abandon His plan to set a man in charge of a united heavens and earth. Since man had chosen to have the knowledge of good and evil within himself, God would test man against that knowledge. When Adam and Eve sinned, their consciences were awakened. Immediately, they realized they were naked, and they understood that nakedness was wrong, so they covered themselves. For the rest of their lives, God never gave them a single commandment, but they had their consciences to discern right from wrong.

The same was true for their descendants. There was no written or spoken commandment against murder, yet Cain knew it was wrong – why else would he have denied killing his brother?

Down through the generations, although people had the knowledge of God's righteous requirements written on their hearts, Rom. 2. 15, they persistently chose evil over good. By the time of the Flood, almost everyone was living in open rebellion against the Creator. Adam had failed under the dispensation of innocence; now, mankind had failed under **'the dispensation of conscience'**.

There was nothing wrong with the system. It was possible to follow one's conscience and live righteously, as Abel, Enoch, and Noah proved. But most people didn't want to do that. Like Adam, they chose their own way. Judgement was inevitable.

To be continued . . .

Fruit of the Spirit – Joy

BY ROBERT THOMPSON, KINROSS, SCOTLAND



Joy

Joy is the second attribute described as being part of the fruit of the Spirit. Joy is synonymous with happiness, gladness and delight. Secular thinking promotes the concept that joy comes as a result of pursuing things that produce an inner feeling of happiness. However, the Christian should be careful to ensure that this attitude does not encourage engagement in sinful activity which can be associated with happiness, at least temporarily. Selfishly chasing after pleasure is not the way to experience real joy.

Proverbs chapter 21 verse 15 states that joy occurs when the believer acts in a just or righteous manner. This is what is in mind in Galatians chapter 5 verse 22; joy is the cheerful, glad and hopeful outlook of an individual who has complete faith in God and seeks to live life as directed by the word of God through the Holy Spirit. Joy in the Holy Spirit is an essential mark of the kingdom of God, Rom. 14. 17. It should be seen in us, given that we are the recipients of God's favour, and we have the certain hope that our salvation will be completed, and we shall share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Despite the fact that we have not seen our Lord, we love Him and patiently wait for His return, believing in Him, this belief itself being associated with joy that is 'unspeakable', 1 Pet. 1. 8. This should be a permanent feature in the lives of God's people. It is Christ Himself who supplies the believer with His joy, John 15. 11, and His prayer in the Upper Room prior to His arrest in Gethsemane was that His disciples should experience the fullness of joy in their lives, 17. 13.

Reasons to rejoice

Christians have plenty of things to be glad about. We are the objects of divine protection, Ps. 5. 11, which should fill us with great comfort and reassurance. There is joy associated with salvation, which David considers in Psalm 21 verse 1, 'The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!' The Lord Jesus directed the attention of the disciples after a day in the

service of God to the fact that they should rejoice in the sovereign predestination and election of God for them as individuals, rather than the miraculous power they had through Him, Luke 10. 20. It is widely known that the scripture teaches of there being joy in heaven when a sinner repents, 15. 7, but it should also be the case that Christians are glad when they hear news of people trusting in the Lord Jesus, Acts 15. 3. The circumstances of life have an impact on our mood, and therefore we are frequently not as happy as we would wish. Nevertheless, Paul instructs us, 'Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice', Phil. 4. 4. The Lord is the source of joy; our joy in Him should be constant and increasing, as we have fellowship with God throughout the course of our lives.

Joy in suffering

One of the great paradoxes of the scriptures is the recurrent teaching that suffering is associated with joy.¹ It is not the case that joy results from pain in some perverse manner, but rather that in persecution the Christian is conformed to Christ, who is our Head, and draws us nearer to Him. Suffering is used by God in the training of His children to develop our character and increase our faith. CHARLES SPURGEON said, 'Those who dive in the sea of affliction bring up rare pearls.'² Believers rejoice through tribulations since they cause us to focus our minds on Christ and not the distractions of this world. We subdue our own wills to God's as His purpose is worked out, and as we anticipate more of our hope of glory in Christ Jesus. When we consider the sufferings of Christ, we learn that it was for joy that He went to Calvary, 'Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross', Heb. 12. 2.

Let us be characterized by joy through the activity of the Spirit of God within us, in spite of the frequent trials and difficulties which are ours to face.

¹ Matt. 5. 11, 12; Acts 5. 41; Col. 1. 24; 1 Pet. 4. 13.

² C. H. SPURGEON, *The Complete Works of Charles Spurgeon*, Volume 78, Delmarva Publications, 2015, pg. 92.

Paul's I am Series

BY ANDREW DUTTON, NORWICH, ENGLAND



'I am crucified with Christ', Gal. 2. 20

Many Christians love to quote Galatians chapter 2 verse 20, particularly the part that speaks of the 'Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me'. What an encouraging, yet amazing little phrase; to think of the love and sacrificial giving of the Lord Jesus for Paul! Today, however, like countless other believers since this letter to the Galatian Christians was written, we are thankful that we can identify with Paul and claim this love and sacrificial, substitutionary giving for ourselves.

Perhaps the first part of the verse, where Paul states, 'I am crucified with Christ', is not quoted as often. It is this vital personal truth that we shall consider. In order to get the full weight of the statement, let us first consider the background to Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Galatians – Paul's reason for writing

In Galatia, the gospel was under attack. 'Another gospel', 1. 16, was being proclaimed, which added the works of the law to faith in Christ as a requirement for salvation. In his response to this attack, Paul covers the following in chapter 2:

- *Disagreement at Antioch, vv. 11-14 – Peter, though previously happy to have fellowship with Gentile believers, withdrew himself, 'fearing them which were of the circumcision'. Peter was allowing himself and other believers to be influenced by the works of the law. Paul publicly tackled Peter, and condemned those that 'walked not uprightly . . . to the truth of the gospel'.*
- *Justification by faith, vv. 15, 16 – Because of the disagreement, Paul teaches what it means to be justified by faith. To be justified is to be 'declared righteous' by God; all guilt removed, and this because of God's grace. Those that*

are justified have 'believed in Jesus Christ'; justification is through 'faith in Jesus Christ'. It is all because of Jesus Christ. No one could ever be justified through keeping the works of the law.

- *The name of Christ defended, v. 17 – Paul emphasizes his teaching by showing that adding the demands of the law is an attack on the gospel and an insult to the person of Christ.*

Paul's conclusion is, 'I . . . am dead to the law, that I might live unto God', v. 19. Paul had died to the law, because the Lord Jesus had taken the punishment of the law. Therefore, the law could have no claim over Paul; he had no responsibility to keep it, because he was living a new life free from it.

'I am crucified with Christ' – the meaning for Paul

Paul reaches the climax of his teaching: 'I am crucified with Christ', v. 20.

To be crucified was the outcome of judgement; it was a punishment that resulted in death. When the Lord Jesus was crucified, He was under the judgement of God for human sin. He died for sins, bearing our punishment for the broken law of God. The old Paul, or Saul as he was, who tried to live so carefully by the law, Phil. 3. 5, 6, yet sinned terribly, Acts 7. 58, was associated with Christ in His death.

Paul was saying, 'When Christ died, I died'.

'I am crucified with Christ' – the meaning for me

Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can join with Paul and state with certainty, 'I am crucified with Christ', v. 20. Though still alive as a person, I am not the old me; 'Yet not I', Paul says, 'but Christ liveth in me'. Life is no longer about me, my desires, my ambition, my will, but about Christ. He is Lord and

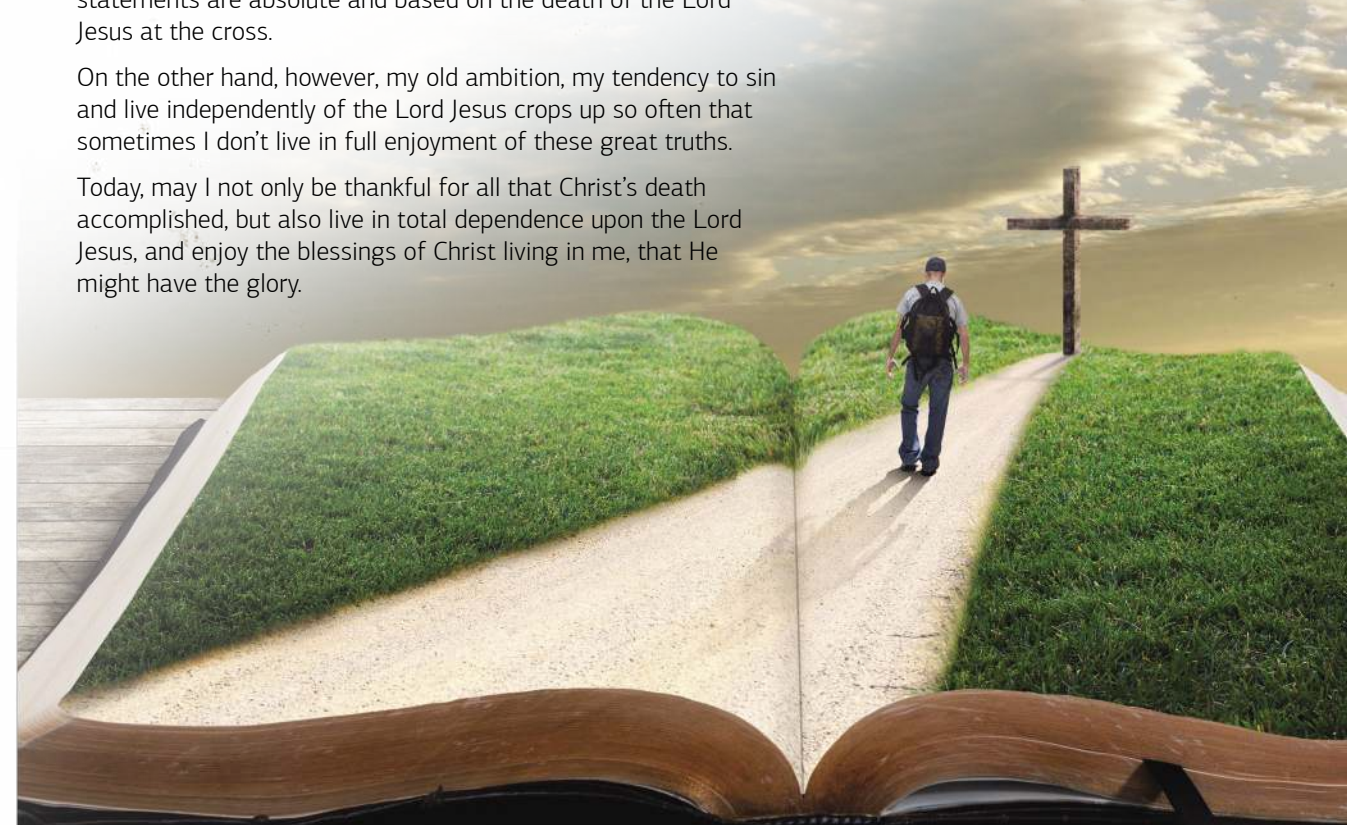
ought to have full control. Through obedience, my life should bring glory to Him.

Paul recognizes though that 'in the flesh', the earthly body full of weakness, power is required to enjoy the full potential of Christ living within. The Son of God is the source of this power, through faith, every day. Living a life to please God is not achieved by striving to keep the law, but by living in dependence upon Christ, the Son of God.

There is a great challenge about Paul's teaching. On the one hand, 'I am crucified with Christ'; I have died with Christ and the law has no jurisdiction over me. The old 'me' no longer exists and I now live a new life with Christ in me. My old will has gone and the Lord Jesus has full control of my life. These statements are absolute and based on the death of the Lord Jesus at the cross.

On the other hand, however, my old ambition, my tendency to sin and live independently of the Lord Jesus crops up so often that sometimes I don't live in full enjoyment of these great truths.

Today, may I not only be thankful for all that Christ's death accomplished, but also live in total dependence upon the Lord Jesus, and enjoy the blessings of Christ living in me, that He might have the glory.



Who's Who of Bible Priests – Introduction

BY JEREMY SINGER, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND

Scanning along my bookshelves, I noticed several interesting A-Z reference catalogues for various Bible concepts. For instance, John Heading's *Directory of New Testament Churches*¹ lists every local assembly mentioned in the New Testament, from Achaia to Troas. Other reference works cover *The Kings of Judah and Israel*² (from Abijah to Zimri) and *The Titles of Christ* (from Alpha to Well-beloved).³

'What about biblical priests?' I wondered. 'Is there an encyclopaedia of priests available?' I searched high and low but found no such book – either in my collection or on Amazon. So, I decided to compile my own 'Who's Who of Bible Priests', from Aaron to Zadok.

What is a priest?

In terms of Bible occupations, being a priest is a highly significant role. Priests appear throughout the Bible record; from Genesis to Revelation, the word occurs over eight hundred times. Along with prophets and kings, priests formed an integral part of the fabric of Israelite society.

Priests were **called**, Heb. 5. 4, **cleansed**, Lev. 8. 6, **clothed**, Exod. 28. 1-43, and **consecrated**, Lev. 8. 12, for service to God. They worked with and among 'holy things,' 1 Chr. 23. 13; 1 Cor. 9. 13. They carried out God's instructions on behalf of His people, Heb. 7. 27. Additionally, priests had a pastoral responsibility, in caring for fellow Israelites, 5. 2. A variety of other duties included teaching, 2 Chr. 15. 3, medical diagnosis, Lev. 13. 3, and building surveys, 14. 44. A priest clearly needed to be an all-rounder.

Priesthood was a distinct role in the Old Testament.

Only certain people were able to serve as priests. In the earliest part of the Bible, there were patriarchal priests like Noah and Job. One man in the family served as a priest. Among the children of Israel, there were national priests descended from Aaron. One family in the nation served as priests. Finally, there was a unique king-priest, called Melchizedek, Gen. 14. 18. He was one man in the world who served as a priest in his distinctive order, Ps. 110. 4.

Why study priests?

In the New Testament, all believers are priests, Rev. 1. 6; 1 Pet. 2. 5. Although this was God's original intention for Israel, Exod. 19. 6, their sinfulness prevented such an all-inclusive priesthood. However, in the church, God's purpose will not be frustrated. We are all priests – young and old, brothers and sisters, Jews and Gentiles – without reference to gift, experience or education.

As holy priests we worship, 1 Pet. 2. 5, giving to God what His glory demands. As royal priests we witness, v. 9, giving to men what God's grace provides. During the Reformation Martin Luther rediscovered this truth that all believers are priests. He said, 'This word priest should become as common as the word Christian, because all Christians are priests'.⁴

For this reason, it will be important to consider the priests of Jehovah in the Old Testament to learn practical truths about our priestly service for the Lord today. Some priests were godly men, others less so. Nevertheless, all their experiences are recorded 'for our learning', Rom. 15. 4.

Further, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is a priest, Heb. 5. 5, 6. This is the key truth underpinning the

Epistle to the Hebrews. Christ's priestly work is far superior to that of Aaron or Melchizedek, the two most influential priests in the Old Testament. The Lord Jesus serves in the heavenly sanctuary, 8. 2, and His work has eternal value, 10. 12.

The Hebrew Christians were completely familiar with Jewish ritual. All the priestly metaphors and allusions were apparent to them. For us to have a genuine, deep appreciation of the priesthood of Christ, His person and work, we need to study Old Testament priests.

So, our A-Z of Priests starts here. Aaron is first up, in the next issue.

¹ JOHN HEADING, *Directory of New Testament Churches*, Precious Seed Publications, 1990.

² CHRISTOPHER KNAPP, *The Kings of Judah and Israel*, Loizeaux Brothers, 1983 (reprint of 1908 edition).

³ JAMES LARGE, *Titles and Symbols of Christ*, AMG Publishers, 1994 (reprint of 1888).

⁴ MARTIN LUTHER, *The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude Preached and Explained*, 1859. Available online at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/29678>



Our Food

BY D. SPENCER, LEEDS, ENGLAND

Human bodies need food. Without it, we can only survive for limited periods. Similarly, our souls and spirits need to be fed from the word of God; without it they will wither, and we will not prosper and grow as believers. We have rich assurance that once saved, we cannot be lost, John 10. 28, but food for the soul and spirit is vital if we are to prosper in the Lord's service, 21. 15-17.

In Genesis chapter 2 verse 16, we read, 'And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat'. There was, of course, one exception. What a generous provision was made for man in his original state, prior to his fall! In the place where there was no sin, no decay, no disease, and no pain or discomfort, he had top-quality fruit from which he could choose. His food was to come from the trees so, for his food, he had to look up. When we feed our souls, where do we look? We look into the word of God, which is like looking upwards, Ps. 121. 1, 2. When the Lord gave thanks for food, He lifted His eyes to heaven to thank His Father for the provision, Luke 9. 16. If we are to feed our souls, we need to feed on the word of God, which means we look upwards to the Lord.

However, when sin entered into the world and God confronted Adam and Eve, their food was to change. Although meat was not given to man until after the flood of Noah's day, his diet had to change. In Genesis chapter 3 verses 18 and 19, we read that God commanded, 'Thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return'. Instead of looking upwards for his provision, man in his sin, was to look downwards for his food. Instead of looking upwards for fruit, he was to look downwards to the herbs, including wheat, barley and oats, all of which were below eye level for an adult. Morally and spiritually, man has done this ever since and we still see the effects of this today.

Where are we looking to feed our souls? Are we looking up spiritually, and feeding on the word of God, or looking downwards at the things of the world to satisfy us? May the Lord keep us looking upwards until, as THOMAS KELLY described it, 'the hour of our receiving promised joys in heaven'.¹

¹ THOMAS KELLY, Hymn – *Praise the Saviour, ye who know Him*, 1806.

