

Editor's Introduction

Thanks for picking up YPS this quarter. This is the second issue with the new design. I hope that you like it. It should be easier on the eye, and let you focus on the various articles.

So, what do we have for you this month? Well, if you are considering a career in engineering then this month's Career Choices will be worth reading. In case you wondered what an engineer does all day, Simon Ambrose lifts the lid and lets you see. He also writes a short section on building projects in the Bible, as well as highlighting the need for a good balance between work time and leisure time. It's a good read.

Jeremy Singer brings us some excellent lessons from the life of Aaron the first Israelite priest. Who better to talk about as we get going with this interesting series on Bible priests?

The series on 'Dispensations' continues with a look at the dispensations of Government and Promise. These are two dispensations with very distinct characteristics. Don't let me rob you of the joy of reading the article which more than adequately explains how God works in these periods of time.

We also have a second article by Tim McMullan. Last time we printed one we said that he came from Ballymena in Northern Ireland. Well, my mistake, I should have known better and spotted it; he actually lives in Ballymoney, though originally from Ballymena. This article explains what the 'Peace of God' is, in contrast to the first article on 'Peace with God'.

The Fruit of the Spirit series continues with an article on the attribute of peace. This is the last article that will concentrate on a single attribute, as we will be dealing with the final six in two batches of three.

So, there is a quite a bit of reading to do, especially if you look up all of the references and note down anything that you think the Lord might be teaching you. That's a good habit to get into. Make it your practice to search the scriptures every day and check that what you hear and read matches up with what is written!

Stephen Baker

Edited by
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



4. GOVERNMENT & PROMISE

'When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel', Deut. 32. 8 NKJV.

God has a plan to place a man in authority over the universe. That man is Jesus Christ. But the plan will not be realized until God has demonstrated that no other man, and no other management system, is sufficient for the task.

After Adam's failure as God's appointed steward and world ruler, each individual was directly accountable to God, and was judged against his own conscience. God Himself took responsibility for dispensing justice and did not involve man in this, Gen. 4. 15. But man did not live according to his conscience and became so wicked that worldwide judgement ensued.

After the Flood, God introduced a new administrative system for mankind. Although people still had consciences to discern right from wrong, God divided them into families which grew into nations. Each nation had a ruler who was to be God's representative to the people, and the people's representative to God.

The power of judgement was delegated to these rulers, 9. 5, 6, a principle which remains operative to this day, Rom. 13. 1-4. Bible teachers sometimes call this administrative system the **'dispensation of government'**. God 'dispenses' His authority to human governments.

We know of only one ruler who served faithfully under this arrangement. Melchizedek was both king of Salem and priest of God Most High, Gen. 14. 18. Most rulers, rather than facilitating true worship instituted idolatry. They disregarded the geographical boundaries God had allocated to them, making war on each other. Instead of judging righteously, they perverted justice for personal gain. One man, Nimrod, even tried to make himself world ruler, 10. 10.

Very quickly, the world was in a mess again, especially in the area of religion. So, God modified the terms under which He would deal with mankind. Although kings retained their political authority, God withdrew their right

to function as priestly intermediaries between Himself and their subjects.

Instead, He chose Abraham to be His sole religious representative on the earth. From that time on, if someone wanted to worship God, they must come through Abraham. We see an example in Genesis chapter 20. When King Abimelech sinned unwittingly, even though he was a God-fearing man, he was only granted forgiveness when Abraham prayed for him. God's relationship with the world was conducted through Abraham, and afterward through Abraham's family.

God made great promises to Abraham, and the stewardship God gave to him is often termed the 'dispensation of promise'. The promises were unconditional. God bound Himself to a covenant with Abraham in Genesis chapter 15, demanding nothing in return. He had reserved Abraham an area of land, Deut. 32. 8, temporarily tenanted by the Canaanites. He promised Abraham many descendants and promised to bless the world through those descendants. In fact, it would be through one particular descendant that God would bring to pass His great plan for the consummation of all things. God had a special friendship with Abraham and enjoyed close personal fellowship with him. This unique relationship was marked by the sign of circumcision.

But with privilege comes responsibility. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his sons must conduct themselves in a way which honoured God in the eyes of the nations. Sometimes they did this, e.g., Gen. 41. 38, but frequently they dishonoured the Lord, e.g., 34. 30. In consequence, they often failed to enjoy the blessings God had lavished on them, ultimately ending up in slavery in Egypt and worshipping Egyptian gods, Ezek. 20. 8. Their spiritual condition was so bad that, initially, they did not even recognize the saviour God raised up for them, Exod. 2. 14.

But despite the failure of the chosen family, God had not forgotten His promises. However, in order for His people to enjoy the blessing, it was necessary for God to introduce an addition to the promises, something which would regulate His relationship with the chosen nation much more strictly. We will consider this extra stewardship which God gave exclusively to Israel in our next study.

Peace of God

TIM MCMULLAN, BALLYMONEY, NORTHERN IRELAND



Last time, we considered the truth that every single person who has put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ has the assurance of peace **with** God, as Romans chapter 5 verse 1 reminds us, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ'.

However, as we look out into a world that seems to be in complete turmoil, it's easy to become full of anxiety, fear and doubt. Through the media, we are constantly bombarded with stories of terrorism, Brexit¹ and the immigration crisis, the crisis in the National Health Service, poverty with the need for food banks ever increasing, global warming, student debt and so on. Then, there are times when we ourselves go through difficulties, times of trial, of temptation, times when we have illness or loss in our families, and it's easy to become despondent or troubled. Isn't it good, then, that at these times we can know 'the **peace of God**, which passeth all understanding' which 'shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus', Phil. 4. 7.

It's a peace that protects us from those doubts and fears, and allows us to have that inner tranquillity in the midst of our troubled circumstances. So, how or where can we lock into this peace? Well, as our verse in Philippians tells us, this is a supernatural peace, a divine peace, whose source is God Himself. Again, the apostle Paul writes in Romans chapter 5 verse 13, 'The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing'. In 2 Thessalonians chapter 3 verse 16, he says, 'Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means'. So, it's not something that's uncertain, or that comes and goes, it's always available. We see that even more strongly in Colossians chapter 3 verse 15, 'And let the peace of God rule in your hearts'. The peace of God is something that should rule and dominate our lives, and yet, so often, this isn't the case. How can we be sure, then, that this peace is our daily experience?

The Bible makes it clear that peace is only going to be the experience of those who are walking uprightly before God. If we are living careless, carnal lives, how can we expect to know the peace of God? The Lord Jesus was speaking about how people lived, their motives, their worries about daily life in Matthew chapter 6, and, in conclusion, He said, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you'. This linking of peace and righteousness

can be seen in the Old Testament too. In Isaiah chapter 32 verse 17, 'the work of righteousness is peace', and in Psalm 55 verse 22, 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved'. So, firstly, it's available to the righteous, but the practical enjoyment of it is conditional upon living righteously.

It's also something that's dependent on an active prayer life. The Philippians passage that we considered earlier makes it clear that the peace of God is something known when we bring everything to God 'by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving'. This crying out to God, laying the problem before Him, with the knowledge that He is the one who is able to do immeasurably beyond all that we ask, and 'who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able', 1 Cor. 10. 13 NKJV, is another condition to having His peace. Peter sums it up like this, 'Casting all your care upon him', 1 Pet. 5. 7.

But we will only be confident to do this if we truly know God. Know about His attributes, His power, His promises and His word. The more we read the word of God, and think about God, the greater He becomes in our minds, and the greater our faith in Him will be. If we know that He is sovereign and loving, with infinite resources, and that He is working the circumstances of our lives for our good, and His glory, then we can rest in confidence and faith, and know His peace. Isaiah chapter 26 verse 3 says, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee'. So, from the knowledge of God flows trust in Him, from which flows perfect peace.

The night before the Lord was crucified, He told the disciples that He was leaving them. They were distressed and discouraged, given that they had been with Him for years. This was the One who had done so many miracles, who had been their teacher and their friend, and He was now going away. His words in John chapter 14 verse 1 were just what they needed to hear, 'Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me', ESV. And then, in verse 27, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid'. His peace is the very peace of God.

¹ Britain's exit from the European Union.

The Young Believer and Career Choices – Engineering

SIMON AMBROSE, PORTAVOGIE, NORTHERN IRELAND

Engineering covers a wide spectrum of occupations in various fields. The definition of an engineer is given as ‘a person who, designs, builds or maintains engines, machines or structures’. The field of engineering in which I am employed falls into the latter category of structures. Building services engineering is responsible for the design of the services contained within a building in order to maintain a comfortable and safe environment. Building services itself tends to be split into the two sub-disciplines of mechanical and electrical services. Mechanical services deal with the design of plumbing, drainage, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, as well as renewable technologies. The electrical services include power, data, lighting, fire and security systems. Building services is part of a larger collection of professions including architects, civil, and structural engineers that, as a group, form what is referred to as the ‘Design Team’ for a specific project.

The origin of intelligent design can be traced back to the opening words of the Bible – ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth’. The following verses detail the awesome work of the great Creator in forming a source of light, a source of heat, and a breathable atmosphere, the fundamentals that make earth sustainable for human life.¹ There are many examples of builders and engineers throughout the scriptures from Cain, who constructed the first city on earth,² through to Nehemiah the architect,³ leader, and site foreman of the restoration of Jerusalem. After a thorough survey of the ruins, Nehemiah presents his plans to the Jews, priests, nobles, officials and labourers. The response of the people is, ‘Let us arise up and build’⁴ and so they strengthened their hands for the good work. Notable builders and engineers in the scriptures include Noah,⁵ the marine engineer who built the first known ship having never set eyes on one before, and King Solomon⁶ who constructed both the house of the Lord and his own dwelling, projects

the likes of which have never been repeated.

In most accounts of building projects in the scriptures, there are those who seek to oppose the building process, and those who would seek to build are often faced with adversity. A Christian who seeks a career in the modern building industry will no doubt face some challenges and adversity as they seek to live out their life as a believer in the workplace.

Building services engineering involves office-based design work, together with visits to building sites for various meetings and site inspections. Office hours are typically adhered to, although the company which I work for permits flexible working hours. This generally allows me the freedom to attend my local assembly and to structure my hours so that I can help out in some local summer Bible ‘kids clubs’ held in the evenings. I have never been called upon to do any work on a Sunday, and Sunday working in the industry would be the exception rather than the norm. As design project deadlines occur, occasionally some overtime has to be worked to enable projects to be completed on time. In the majority of cases, workload is such as can be carried out in the typical 37.5 hour working week. As seniority within the company increases, I have found that expectations become higher – to do whatever is necessary to complete work on time. It does take a little care and management to ensure a healthy balance between work-life and assembly, family, and social commitments. In a time where instant communications have become the norm and work emails are accessible from your phone, it can take some discipline to switch off from the office and leave work in work. Many of the projects with which my office is involved are located in the UK mainland, and therefore some travel is required. Typically, this involves an early start for a 6 a.m. flight, usually returning the same day. Whilst this occurs not more than a couple of times per month, it can mean missing mid-week meetings, if the trip falls on the same day.

Working in the building industry you meet people from all walks of life. As perhaps is typical of building sites in what is still a predominantly male environment, you will encounter those whose language, jokes, etc. will be particularly unsavoury. This is perhaps more limited to encounters on building sites, rather than interactions within the office environment with colleagues or members of the design team. Over the years since commencing my career in this industry, I have been fortunate to have one or two other Christians working in the same firms. Currently, I work in a reasonably large firm with around sixty-five employees in the Belfast office and whilst I was disappointed when one of the Christian colleagues that I’d worked closely with left, another Christian joined the firm shortly after.⁷

In the building services industry, work is designed to specific standards, regulations and specifications. I have never been called upon to misrepresent calculations, finances, installations, etc. that would compromise my beliefs as a Christian.

This has been my personal experience working in the building services industry and there may be others within the industry who have had different experiences to myself.

¹ Gen. 1. 1ff.

⁵ Gen. 6. 14.

² Gen. 4. 17.

⁶ 2 Chr. 3. 1.

³ Neh. 2. 5.

⁷ Deut. 32. 6.

⁴ Neh. 2. 17.

Who's Who of Bible Priests – Aaron

BY JEREMY SINGER, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND

Alphabetically and historically, Aaron was Israel's number one priest. Older brother of Moses, Egyptian slave turned divine spokesperson, Aaron was individually chosen by God to serve as high priest, Exod. 28. 1. In this article, we will compare and contrast Aaron with the Lord Jesus, our great high priest.

Aaron's sympathy

After his solo audience with Jehovah at the burning bush, Moses wanted the reassuring presence of his brother when he returned to Egypt. Aaron helped Moses in negotiations with both Pharaoh and the Israelites. Aaron supported Moses throughout the Exodus narrative, exemplified when he upheld Moses' intercessory hands at Rephidim, 17. 12.

These episodes demonstrate Aaron's character to be 'merciful and faithful', Heb. 2. 17. Having spent the best part of a century in slavery with the Israelites, Exod. 7. 7, he was able to sympathize with them, as Christ does with us, Heb. 4. 15.

Aaron's faults

Aaron's sympathy frequently softened his resolve, making him easily influenced by others. The Israelites incited him to instigate idolatry with the golden calf, Exod. 32. 1-6. In rapid succession, Aaron broke several of the ten commandments before their publication. How remarkable that someone who participated in immoral and false religion should be graciously allowed to have such a major role in the Levitical worship of Jehovah! As Paul told the Corinthians, 'Such were some of you', 1 Cor. 6. 11.

Later on, Miriam was the ringleader when the siblings criticized Moses, Num. 12. 1. How inconsistent that Aaron, whose role was to bless God's people, 6. 22-27, actually spoke against Moses, the man of God. So

frequently in human experience, 'from the same mouth comes both blessing and cursing', Jas. 3.10.

Aaron must have been grateful that God made provision for sinful priests, Lev. 4. 3, especially when, on the Day of Atonement, he sacrificed 'first for his own sins, and then for the people's', Heb. 7. 27. This is in stark contrast to our sinless Saviour, who is 'holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners', v. 26.

Aaron's uniform

We know very little about Aaron's physical appearance, apart from one tantalizing reference to his lengthy beard, Ps. 133. 2. However, we are given extensive details of his priestly clothing, which was divinely designed and communicated to Moses at Sinai. All priests wore fine linen clothes, indicating righteousness, Exod. 28. 39-41; Rev. 19. 8. The high priest had extra accessories to wear on top of his linen, Exod. 28. 4. Specialist commentaries focus on details. Here we restrict ourselves to a cursory overview. Aaron's uniform was made from the same fabric as the tabernacle, v. 5, materially linking him with God's house. Notice the names of the Israelite tribes on his breastplate, showing his heart's affection, and on his shoulders, suggesting his strength to carry them. However, the name supreme above all others was that of Jehovah, etched on a gold badge on his hat, v. 36-38. While serving on the people's behalf, ultimately, Aaron was serving God. The Urim and Thummim marked him as a guardian of the will of God, which he had to obey, v. 30.

His clothing 'for glory and for beauty', v. 2, made Aaron a distinctive figure in the wilderness. Christ wore no special clothes but His character was marked by priestly dignity. He came to do the will of God, Heb. 10. 5-10.

Aaron's apparatus was removed from him just before he died. Eleazar, his oldest surviving son, took over as high priest, commencing a line of Aaronic succession, 1 Chr. 6. 3-15. By way of contrast, the Lord Jesus is 'alive for evermore', Rev. 1. 18, so he remains 'a priest for ever', Heb. 7. 17.

Aaron's service

After a week-long ceremony of consecration, Exod. 29. 1-37, Aaron spent the rest of his life in dedicated service to Jehovah. As high priest, there were unique tasks that only Aaron could do. For instance, on the Day of Atonement, Lev. 16. 12-14, he alone could enter the most holy place where the mercy seat was situated. On another occasion, when Israel was experiencing God's punishment, Aaron stood 'between the living and the dead', Num. 16. 47, 48, offering incense for the people.

Aaron's duty was to follow divine directions in his priestly work. He did not have freedom to improvise; as his sons tragically experienced, there were severe consequences for ignoring the Lord's instructions, Lev. 10. 1, 2.

Priesthood was full-time work – priests never had a day off. Their tabernacle tasks of lighting, burning, offering, and serving were continuous, with no time to stop or to sit down! A contrast is set up with Christ, Heb. 10. 11, 12. Having offered a perfect sacrifice for sin, the Lord Jesus sat down – there was nothing more to do, as far as our salvation was concerned. But now, as our great high priest in heaven, 'he ever liveth to make intercession for' us, 7. 25.



Fruit of the Spirit

BY ROBERT THOMPSON
KINROSS, SCOTLAND

Peace

Peace can be defined as a state of quiet or tranquillity; freedom from disturbance. It is a word commonly used to describe the absence of war or conflict. The Hebrew word is shalom, which is a general, friendly greeting communicated by Jewish people asking after the health and welfare of a person, equivalent to our phrase 'how are you?'. It was the routine greeting of our risen Lord Jesus, with deeper meaning and reality, John 20. 19, 21 and 26, as well as being the frequent opening salutation of the New Testament writers in their various letters to believers across Europe and Asia.

The scriptures indicate that peace comes from God, Isa. 45. 7, He is the giver of peace, Num. 6. 26, and the author of a covenant of peace, Isa. 54. 10. Reception of His peace is dependent on trust in God, 'Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace', Job 22. 21. This tranquillity in our souls results from complete confidence in our Lord Jesus Christ and His redemptive work which He accomplished on the cross. However, continuation of this experience is reliant on our love for the word of God, 'Great peace have they which love thy law', Ps. 119. 165, and our thoughts being filled with a consideration of God, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee', Isa. 26. 3.

We were born enemies, at war with God, but, rather than destroy all of humanity, in mercy He sent the 'Prince of peace' to undertake a great work of deliverance. Jesus' birth was announced by angels with the communication to the shepherds that peace had arrived on earth, Luke 2. 14. Indeed, Isaiah had declared centuries before the incarnation that Jesus Christ would not only bear our iniquities, but also that He would endure the chastisement or judgement of a holy God to bring about peace, Isa. 53. 5. The death of Christ has brought an end to the hostility between us and God due to sin, and has enabled reconciliation, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ', Rom. 5. 1. The same transaction has broken down the barrier between Jew and Gentile, being united in the body of Christ which is the universal church.



The believer who is at peace with God should endeavour to live in peace with others in this world; this is evidence of our practical sanctification. 'Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord', Heb. 12. 14. It is this sanctifying work of the Spirit of God which results in peace characterizing our lives rather than anxiety and fear. Indeed, it was one of the great promises made by the Lord Jesus in the Upper Room that He would give us His peace, John 14. 27. Whilst we expect to face trials and troubles throughout our life, the reassurance for us is that Christ has overcome the world, which enables us to maintain a peace in our souls despite such problems, 16. 33. Paul encourages us that if we live in peace then we will experience the presence of God with us, 2 Cor. 13. 11. It is also expected that we are at peace with our fellow Christians, eagerly striving to keep the unity of the Spirit, Eph. 4. 3, as we are engaged in collective worship and testimony for His name.

We ought to be actively praying for peace in our land, Jer. 29. 7; 1 Tim. 2. 2. It is for this reason we pray for those who govern us, seeking to be allowed to live quiet and peaceable lives in godliness and honesty. Such an environment provides freedom for believers to be active in evangelism, informing others of the gospel which proclaims and brings peace to men in Christ. Sadly, peace will not be known completely in this world until the Lord Jesus reigns as Messiah in His millennial kingdom. Only then will the peace experienced by individual Christians be enjoyed on a global scale, Zech. 9. 10.