

## Editor's Introduction

Another year and here we are again! Time speeds on and things change. For some of our readers, life is still getting busier and things are exciting. There will, however, be some who find the current season of life more difficult, and hard to handle. I hope that, as you read this first issue of YPS in 2020, it will encourage you. I have found reading and editing it very uplifting. My prayer is that the Lord will bless you as you read.

Yours through grace,  
Stephen Baker



Edited by  
**STEPHEN BAKER**

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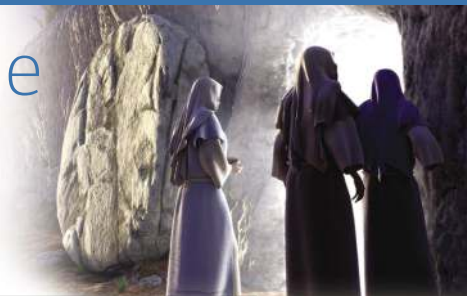
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## Let Her Alone (Part 1)

BY JONATHAN DALTON,  
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Reading: John 12. 1-9a

Mary's outpouring of worship was the subject of divided opinion. Though deemed as waste by man, it brought tremendous pleasure to the heart of God. Her unparalleled appreciation of Christ was clearly manifested by way of this costly deed.

### The subject of worship – her approach

As Christ in all His intrinsic worth reclined before her, Mary simply recognized that she was in the presence of someone greater than herself. Praise be to God that, whilst this humbled her, it did not hinder her. Therefore, she came contritely, aware of her own unworthiness yet full of holy awe. Whilst Martha served and Lazarus sat, Mary stooped. The very word for worship, *proskuneo*, indicates a postural change. It is of no wonder, then, that we find Mary at His feet. She knew well that this was a sweet place to be, for she had been there before. This was the same 'Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet', Luke 10. 39. She chose, on that occasion, 'that good part' and here she does a 'good

#### **YOUNG PRECIOUS SEED**

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work', Mark 14. 6. The first time it was to learn, now to love.

I would surmise, though not adamantly, that this may well be the same occasion as recorded by Matthew and Mark. Whilst they will tell us of her worship upon His head, it is precious that, in the gospel of 'the Son of God', she rises no higher than His feet. In this we learn that she had an appreciation of this perfect man, from the crown of His head to the sole of His feet, Matt. 26. 6-13; Mark 14. 3-9.

Is it with a similar wonder and reverence that we approach Him?

## The substance of worship – her appreciation

Mary's deep affection for His blessed person caused her to give all that she had. The true cost of her worship is calculated, not by what she gave but by what was left over. Indeed, we discover that 'she hath done what she could', Mark 14. 8, and held nothing back. Notice, however, that what she did pour out upon Him was exceedingly choice, among the chief spices, S. of S. 4. 14.



## Purchasing of the ointment

We read of spikenard in the gospel records, that it was 'very precious' and 'very costly'. We're thankful the scriptures give us both its weight and worth; quantified and qualified. One pound's weight of unadulterated and undiluted perfume, worth in excess of three hundred pence, a year's worth of wages. We are reminded of the words of David, who would not offer anything unto the Lord which had not first cost him, 2 Sam. 24. 24.

What a contrast Mary's valuation was to the mere thirty pieces of silver that Judas exchanged, in betrayal of the Saviour.

**To be continued . . .**

# Paul's I am Series

BY ANDREW DUTTON, NORWICH, ENGLAND

## 'I am persuaded', Rom. 14. 14

In a previous article we looked at the first time in Paul's Epistle to the Romans he uses the phrase, 'I am persuaded'. This is about the absolute security of believers; Paul is persuaded that nothing 'shall be able to separate us from the love of God', Rom. 8. 38, 39. We also quoted Wuest's translation of 'I am persuaded' – 'I have come through a process of persuasion to a settled conclusion'.

Now let us look at how Paul is persuaded in Romans chapter 14.

'I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died'.  
Rom. 14. 14, 15

We will start with an overview of Romans chapter 14, and then look at the application of what Paul is teaching in verses 14 and 15, before concluding with some personal challenges.

## Romans chapter 14

These verses are in the middle of the section of Romans (12. 1 to 15. 13) that teaches how believers in the Lord Jesus should live practically. It is set against the backdrop of God's righteousness being shown in this world through Christians who live righteously.

Earlier in chapter 14, Paul deals with the subject of the Christian's attitude to other believers who might be 'weak in the faith', v. 1, and concludes that no one should 'put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's [or sister's] way', v. 13. The background is that some believers held convictions about what they would eat, v. 2, and others would distinguish certain days above others, v. 5. Paul is instructing the Christians not to do anything that would cause another brother or sister to fall.

In verses 14 to 23, Paul, though persuaded 'that there is nothing unclean of itself', v. 14, emphasizes the loving concern that Christians should have for their brothers and sisters.

Outward ritual and ceremony have no value in the things of God. But spiritual things, 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost', v. 17, result in service that is 'acceptable to God, and approved of men', v. 18. Christians acting in a right way towards each other, at peace with one another and sharing in joy, even in view of different convictions, are pleasing to God. The Holy Spirit enables this.

## 'I . . . am persuaded by the Lord Jesus' – application

The teaching from Paul about the freedom to eat anything, whilst considering other believers who may not feel at liberty to eat, may be helpful in our Christian circles today. We must respect the conscience of other believers. Offending a believer is not demonstrating love towards them.

However, the application can reach far wider than what we eat, or don't eat. There are different

views and convictions on many matters among Christians; perhaps linked with generation, culture or background. I interpret Paul's teaching, 'to him that esteemeth any thing to be . . . to him it is', v. 14, to mean that we must respect other believers' convictions. This is providing they are convictions that are not against the scriptures; in all things, the word of God is our guide.

We must not cause others to stumble through our thoughtless actions or words. Therefore, we need to be considerate in everything that we do and say. That was Paul's example; he was thoughtful and careful; this must have been a result of the hours he spent in prayer, study of the scriptures and his reasoning through the things of God. Surely these are the things that will best prevent us being careless and risk causing others to stumble.

Paul states very seriously that the believer that I might offend is the one 'for whom Christ died', v. 15. If we were constantly to look on other believers in this way, not only would it prevent us treating them wrongly, but it would create a wonderful atmosphere of love amongst Christians.

## Personal application

The challenge of the previous article remains. Paul constantly reflected on the truth of God and lived by his convictions. It is important for us to do the same; to reach convictions on matters by carefully and prayerfully working through the word of God. This will benefit us when difficult situations arise; it may even prevent a careless remark or action that causes offence to a brother or sister.

But also, might we resolve in our hearts to be thoughtful and careful Christians towards each other, always keeping in mind how our actions and words affect our brothers and sisters.

# The Dispensation of the Fullness of the Times

BY TM SE ASIA



## 7. Kingdom 'And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed', Daniel 2. 44a.

Throughout history, God has been reaching out to man, in the hope that man might seek the Lord, Acts 17. 27. When man has failed to do this, God has periodically changed his *modus operandum*, to make it easier for man to find Him. We call the different ways in which God expects man to respond to Him, 'dispensations'.

The Greek word for dispensation literally means **house-law**. It is like the world is a great house of which God is the owner, and He has appointed man as the manager or steward of His affairs. But whatever house-rules God has set, the stewards have persistently failed.

Today, we are living under the management system of grace, Eph. 3. 2. But, in the future, God will introduce a new administration – the **dispensation of the kingdom**.

Daniel prophesied that God would establish His kingdom in the world, and even foretold the date of its commencement, Dan. 9. 24-27. Christ, the King, came just a few years before the due date, and offered the kingdom to Israel, announcing, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand', Matt 4. 17.

But when the King was rejected, the offer was withdrawn, Matt 21. 42, 43, with seven years still on the clock. The kingdom has been postponed until such a time as Israel will recognize Jesus for who He is. In the intervening period, God is reaching out to the whole world through the gospel of grace, Col. 1. 5, 6.

The arrival of the kingdom has been delayed, but God has not forgotten. After the church has been caught up to heaven, and the final seven years have run their course,<sup>1</sup> Christ will return to inaugurate the kingdom.

The Lord Jesus Christ will be physically present on earth, reigning as King of kings. If Jeremiah chapter 30 verse 9 is to be understood literally, David will be resurrected to be king over Israel, other nations having their own kings.

In the kingdom, Israel will have special pre-eminence

as the head of the nations, Deut. 28. 10, 13. In fulfilment of the promises to Abraham, Gen. 12. 3, blessing for Gentile nations will be contingent on their deference to Israel and submission to God, Zech. 8. 20-23.

God's law will again be in force, Isa. 2. 3, although, unlike how the law was – an unbearable burden – in Old Testament times, in the kingdom it will be a law of liberty. God will change the hearts of believers and put His Spirit within them empowering them to live righteously, Jer. 31. 31-34; Ezek. 36. 26, 27.

The earth itself will be restored to Eden-like conditions, Isa. 11. 1-12, and there will be worldwide peace and prosperity, Isa. 2. 4. The kingdom will last for 1,000 years, which is why it is sometimes called the Millennium. Satan will be imprisoned, so evil will be greatly diminished, Rev. 20. 1-6.

The kingdom will work better than the other dispensations because Christ will be reigning on the earth, and people will either choose, or be forced, to submit to Him, Ps. 2. 6-12.

However, man's heart will still be sinful, and even this dispensation will end in failure.

After 1,000 years, God will release Satan from prison, and he will be allowed to try and deceive the world, just as he deceived Eve in Eden. He will gather the nations to attack the Lord and His people in Jerusalem. Just like Adam, right at the start, people will still want independence from God. But God will destroy these rebels, and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire, Rev. 20. 7-10.

After this, the final Great White Throne judgement of unbelievers will take place, and they will also be consigned to the lake of fire, Rev. 20. 11-15.

With this, the seven dispensations will have run their course. The present heavens and earth will be dissolved, and God will establish a new heavens and earth, the home of righteousness, 2 Pet. 3. 10, 13. The whole universe will be subject to Christ, and God's great plan for the ages will be complete at last, 1 Cor. 15. 28!

<sup>1</sup>We will consider this seven-year period, the Tribulation, in a future study.

# Principles for Progress

BY ERIC M. BAIJAL, WICK, SCOTLAND



## Praying

I have found prayer the most difficult discipline in spiritual life. Perhaps one of the reasons the testimony of local assemblies is weak is because fewer saints than ever before have a serious prayer life. Do you regularly pray for the assembly, for the overseers, and for lost souls?

The Lord Jesus taught that believers ought to be marked by consistent and active prayer. Read the parable in Luke chapter 18 verses 1 to 8, where the Lord Jesus taught on this point.

## The operation of prayer

1 John chapter 5 teaches that when we, God's people, pray in His will, He hears us. He will answer according to His will. We may have to wait a long time for an answer. James chapter 1 teaches that prayer should be accompanied by faith, with a definite conviction that God answers prayer. Too often, if we pray, we pray outside of God's will, and/or we lack faith!

When we pray, we bring our desires before God. In articulating them in the presence of God there is a refining effect. As I bring my requests before a holy God, my desires ought to be brought into submission to the will of God, Rom. 8. 26.

God clearly has the power to answer prayer irrespective of our spiritual state of health. However, it is clear from the scriptures that our spiritual condition is important when we pray, 1 Tim. 2. 8; Jas. 5. 16. Perhaps our lack of power in prayer is not only down to a lack of faith but also because of the fact that we are in poor spiritual condition and are not regularly confessing our sin.

Sometimes prayer is just too much hard work. It involves the need to get alone with God. We see from scripture that times of intercession had a marked effect on individuals' lives, Gen. 32. These were usually times of isolation and solitude with God. The question is – are you willing to get alone with God?

## Collective prayer

It is true that our collective prayer life, meaning assembly prayer life, will be empty if we have no personal prayer life. Collective prayer is vital to have a strong and healthy local church. It is a key fundamental principle and practice of assembly life, Acts 2. 42, which is why attending the assembly prayer meeting is not an optional extra.

1 Timothy chapter 2 makes it clear that men, marked by holiness, and absence from temper or strife, should lead the assembly in public prayer. Which men pray is not limited by who is the most gifted but by the spiritual condition of the men and whether they come with the desire to pray! The assembly needs young men and women who will pray in the gatherings of the church. Young men should pray audibly and young sisters should pray silently, and we must remember that their contribution is of equal value.

When we gather to pray, we must be careful to have a variety of people we pray for – not just the same people every week. Paul taught that local assemblies should also develop various types of prayer:

- Supplications: prayers with a point about need being met, not just vague requests for sinners to be saved but more pointed, 'that particular man' etc.; supplications make a specific, fresh and good prayer meeting;
- Intercession: prayers on behalf of others, taking hold of God for someone else. Think of the ultimate example of our Great High Priest making intercession for us;
- Thanksgiving: prayers should be marked by gratitude and thanks, rather than simply a list of things that we are asking to happen.

## The individual challenge

- Do you pray at regular times? Do you make time to be alone with God?
- Do you pray in an emergency?
- Do you have a prayer list? A prayer list can be a very useful way of organizing our thoughts and prompting our memory. The risk you will have to be aware of is that it could become something that is repeated without thinking?
- Do you make an effort to establish the facts about situations so you can pray intelligently?
- When you are at the prayer meeting, do you pray along with the brother who is praying? Are you considerate to others when you pray? The assembly prayer meeting is a place for succinct and sincere prayer so that all who want to pray can pray.

# A to Z of Priests – Zadok

BY JEREMY SINGER, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND

Apart from having a HANDEL coronation anthem named after him,<sup>1</sup> Zadok the priest is most distinguished for officiating at the start of king Solomon's reign, during the planning and construction of the temple at Jerusalem.

Various priests are mentioned throughout 1 and 2 Samuel; it seems there were several priestly communities, for example at Nob, 1 Sam. 21. 1; 22. 11, Shiloh, 14. 3, and Gibeon, where Zadok lived, 1 Chr. 16. 39. Some of these named priests were from the Ithamar family tree (particularly Ahimelech and Abiathar, 1 Chr. 24. 3-6) but Zadok belonged to the alternative Eleazar/Phinehas line, to whom an everlasting priesthood was promised (Num. 25. 13, see earlier YPS article on Phinehas).

Zadok's name means **righteousness**, which reminds us of the necessity of spiritual purity in our service for God. There were many wicked priests, like Eli's immoral sons, but an effective priest must have 'clean hands and a pure heart', Ps. 24. 4. How glad we are to know that 'Jesus Christ the righteous' is our High Priest in heaven!

## Zadok in David's reign

Zadok emerged during the early days of David's kingdom, 2 Sam. 8. 17, a period associated with victory, prosperity and godliness.

Because David acknowledged Zadok as 'a seer', 2 Sam. 15. 27, he must have combined the sacred roles of priest and prophet. The man appreciated the value of spiritual vision, not just personally but for all the people of God, 'where there is no vision, the people perish', Prov. 29. 18.

In a moment of national crisis, Zadok accompanied the ark, 2 Sam. 15. 24. Recognizing

its importance as a symbol of the promises, propitiation and presence of God, he desired to be near both the ark and God's anointed king, David. Similarly, we must remain in close communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the ark typifies. As Zadok was marked by faithfulness, both to David and to God, it is likely that he is the 'faithful priest' of prophecy, 1 Sam. 2. 35, anticipated in an era of priestly failure. Can we become more like Zadok – 'faithful amidst unfaithfulness'?

Zadok's son, Ahimaaz, is described by David as 'a good man', 2 Sam. 18. 27. Remarkably, Ahimaaz is the only Old Testament character to receive this delightful accolade.<sup>2</sup> David instinctively recognized that Zadok's son would be the bearer of good news. This reminds us of the importance of a spiritual education programme for children, Prov. 22. 6. Such care for the young is particularly vital for leaders – and here Zadok succeeded where Eli failed. Good priests should be good parents. Note: this also applies to New Testament priests!

## Zadok in Solomon's reign

Zadok's greatest moment arrived when he anointed Solomon as Israel's king. Solomon was a man of peace, the son of David ascending to his father's throne, 2 Sam. 7. 12. This was the fulfilment of a divine covenant, and Zadok had a part in realizing it. As DALE RALPH DAVIS observes,<sup>3</sup> 'God was the One who would establish David's dynasty, and yet that assurance seems to call for a component of human responsibility'. Our God is so gracious that He allows mortal men to assist in ratifying His sovereign purposes.

During the struggle for the succession to David's throne, there were two senior priests – Zadok and

Abiathar. Whereas Abiathar rashly backed Adonijah rather than Solomon, Zadok wisely waited for guidance from David, then faithfully supported Solomon's rightful claim to the kingdom. Zadok's loyalty was rewarded; he became the leading priest at the start of Solomon's reign, 1 Kgs. 2. 35.

Zadok must have been present during the long planning and construction phases of the temple at Jerusalem. With what excitement he must have anticipated the house of the Lord! Some of this joyful expectation is captured in the language of the Psalms, e.g. Ps. 122. 1. It is, however, unclear whether Zadok actually served in Solomon's temple; perhaps he did not live long enough to experience this privilege. However, his immediate descendants 'executed the priest's office in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem', 1 Chr. 6. 10. But there is more to come: Zadok's future descendants will serve in the millennial temple, Ezek. 44. 15, as a reward for their faithfulness in a day of departure.

<sup>1</sup> *Zadok the Priest*, HWV 258, is one of four anthems by HANDEL, traditionally performed at the coronation of every British monarch.

<sup>2</sup> There are only three 'good men' named in the whole of scripture – the New Testament characters Joseph of Arimathea and Barnabas complete the trio. A rare accolade indeed!

<sup>3</sup> DALE RALPH DAVIS, *1 Kings*, Christian Focus Publications, 2002.



# Career Choices

BY DAN RUSSELL, EASTBOURNE, ENGLAND



## A career in the police force

As I look back over the past 27 years as a police officer I am filled with gratitude at the goodness of God. I am so thankful to the Lord for leading me into this profession and his continual guiding and guarding throughout. Truly I have been 'Kept by the power of God'.

When applying to join the police force all those years ago, I had varied advice from believers I loved and respected. There were differing opinions around whether this was the right career path for a Christian. I am so thankful for those who at that time cared for me enough to share their thoughts and feelings with me.

I remember certain questioning of whether the police force was a place for a Christian, particularly in relation to what you could be exposed to and having to work on some Sundays. Others were very supportive and felt, with God's help, I would have unique opportunities to witness to others and that, although my faith would be tested, I would be given the divine help needed.

When faced with all of this differing advice, as a young believer, I had just to rely upon a great God and trust His leading and guiding. I firmly believe that God opens and closes doors and, on this occasion, He saw fit to open this particular career path for me, which at the time was totally unexpected.

Has it had its challenges? Of course, and it still does, as with every profession when we are faithful to the Lord and His word. Has my faith wobbled at times? Yes, however I can genuinely say that I could never have coped as a police officer with all its challenges and heartaches without my faith in a great God.

Throughout my career, God has given me many opportunities to witness and I have never been prevented from doing so. When witnessing, however, it has been essential to be 'wise as a serpent but harmless as a dove'. With God's help I have been able to lead others back to the Lord, I have studied the Bible and prayed with offenders in their cells and been able to share the love of God with hurting colleagues.

God has also given me the opportunity to work with the wider Christian community, e.g., the street pastors, and I have valued the many prayer times we have had in

my office. Once again, wisdom is needed, however their zeal and love for the Lord has been a voice to me.

There are many clear challenges and dangerous situations to be faced as a police officer. We regularly run into incidents which other people are running from. However, there are specific challenges to face as a believer and I will mention three which I have found to be the greatest.

## Sunday working

I have often worked on Sundays and missed meetings and the subsequent blessing as a result. However, shift work gives you other opportunities in the week to be used by God, but for over half my career I have been in roles which have been mainly Monday to Friday.

## Defilement

On the front line, you will sometimes see sin at its worst, and this could cause a believer to fall. However, God has often protected me from seeing such things and my daily feet washing with the Lord has been so real. I needed to stay close to the Lord and maintain my daily devotions.

## Diverse lifestyles

Can I still maintain my beliefs and not have to compromise? Once again, godly wisdom is needed. With God's help, I have been able to remain faithful to the word of God. It has been tough at times, and, on occasions, I have felt very isolated, but God is faithful. It is vital that my beliefs do not affect my attitude to others. I need to show the same compassion and care of God to everyone, no matter who they are.

So, if you are contemplating a career in the police force then my advice to you is to pray, read God's word and seek His will. It is not the career for most but I do firmly believe that God wants, and our society needs, Christian police officers.

And if God has opened this particular door then, please, 'nail your colours to the mast' early in your career. And remember to attend as many meetings as you can, even though you may feel a little tired!!!