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Editor's Introduction

Thanks for reading Young Precious Seed (YPS). If this is the first time you have read YPS, welcome. If you are a regular visitor, thank you for your ongoing interest. Our aim at YPS is to promote the teaching of the New Testament and to encourage young Christians to learn and live out the truths of the word of God. No matter where you stand on matters of faith or your views on how to practise New Testament Christianity, we are delighted to have your company and trust that you will find it helpful and informative.

The Bible is a book that should be studied as well as read. What I understand by the word 'study' might be different to you. Essentially, to get the most from Bible reading, time needs to be spent on it. It is only too easy to get your 'read and pray fix for the day'. You, in effect, say to yourself – 'It's done, my conscience is eased and now on to the next job on my list'. In the busyness of life, there will be times when you can only read a little, but we all need to make time regularly when we can think about what we read. Meditating and thinking are habits that really need to be cultivated and practised, Ps. 1. 2.

Hopefully, this magazine, the main magazine, and both of our websites, will help you with this (the latter are currently being redeveloped, so, as they say, 'watch this space'). All the articles that have been in previous issues of the magazines are available through the websites. You can access these by browsing the site or by using the search facility which is an excellent tool. Just type in a word or a topic, and if we have an article on this, you will be taken straight to it. Why not give it a try? I am sure that you will find it very useful.

In this issue of YPS, we are concluding our series 'Career Choices'. I hope that you have found it interesting and helpful. I have enjoyed seeing how God worked in different people's lives, and the convictions that were produced through their experiences.

I am working on a few new series of articles. One should help you get a working knowledge of the Bible; others will address biblical answers to questions we all have – what the Bible teaches on various topics. I'll let you know what they are once I have writers allocated to them.

In the meantime, enjoy this issue and may the Lord bless you through His word.

Stephen Baker

Edited by
STEPHEN BAKER

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YOUNG PRECIOUS SEED is a supplement of *Precious Seed*, designed for those young in the 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 young believer and career choices – working in the Public Sector

BY MALCOLM BEATTIE, BELFAST, N. IRELAND



I have been in the civil service for over forty years and recommend public service as a career worth considering in that it provides secure employment, while allowing a believer to serve the Lord and to fully participate in the assembly of which they form a part.

Serving the public good

The vast UK public sector at national, regional and local government level covers matters as diverse as environment, agriculture, police and courts, social welfare, revenue collection, defence, foreign affairs and many more.

Individuals serving in the public sector each make a small but important contribution towards stable government, the support of those 'that are in authority', and the maintenance of conditions that allow us to 'lead a quiet and peaceable life', 1 Tim. 2. 2. New Testament passages have much to say about the role of government and governors, and how the governed ought to behave, Rom. 13. 1-7; 1 Tim. 2. 1-3; 1 Pet. 2. 13-17.

In effect, someone entering the public sector will be involved in serving the greater public good. The vast majority of jobs will be suitable for a believer, and they will feel comfortable about the purpose and what they are required to do.

Old Testament examples

Interestingly, those who do work in public service follow in the footsteps of two of the finest characters in the Old Testament. Both Joseph and

Daniel rose to the highest level of government in their day. How they behaved are bright examples of the qualities to be displayed by those who would maintain testimony for the Lord in public service. Both were noted for their wisdom and effectiveness, which took them to the highest ranks. While few ever rise to such heights, believers today are called upon to emulate Joseph and Daniel for their integrity and reliability, qualities that are expected of all public servants. In fact, a believer may not be the most highly qualified or even the most capable person in the office, but they are to be renowned for their honesty and integrity at all times.

The main commitments in work life

Most public service roles should not interfere with a believer's responsibilities in their own assembly. In my time, my work always allowed me to attend the assembly meetings, participate in assembly activities, and to contribute to gospel outreach locally and elsewhere.

Working with politicians

Sometimes in public service a believer may be assigned to work directly for an elected representative,



some of whom may hold views and promote party policies that are contrary to the revealed will of God, as set out in scripture. In a liberal democracy, public servants are, of course, required to implement the policies and follow the directions of elected representatives, such as Ministers, Mayors or Councillors. A conflict is only likely to arise when a believer is asked to do something that in all conscience they simply cannot do. In such a situation, it is best to ask for a move to a different role, and in large public sector organizations this should always be feasible. While I have never been placed in such a position, I am aware of one believer who was, and, in that instance, the politician in question accepted the believer's preference not to be involved in the matter. Daniel chapter 6 provides us with an extreme example of a situation where the believer's position is completely incompatible with the edicts of the state – remember Daniel ended in the den of lions because he wouldn't comply with the King's edict in relation to prayer.

Working with colleagues

Taking up employment in the public sector (or indeed any large organization) will inevitably bring a believer into contact with colleagues of different ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs, and political

outlooks. On a personal level, these will often be fine, pleasant and likeable people. It is increasingly possible that amongst them will be individuals who hold beliefs or live lifestyles that will be in conflict with scripture, and maintaining a professional working relationship will require wisdom. Today, all public sector employers have policies which mean that a believer stating their beliefs could be censured and even disciplined, and, perhaps, dismissed. It is important, then, for the believer to work alongside all colleagues with integrity, dignity, and respect, and allow their manner of life and distinct testimony to speak powerfully to work colleagues. Should opportunity arise, 'be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear', 1 Pet. 3. 15. All such conversations should always be guided by the ultimate principle of 'speaking the truth in love', Eph. 4. 15.

Conclusion

In summary, public service is a career worth considering for the reasons stated, although over time it is likely to become more challenging for a believer as society in general becomes even more secular and the move away from scriptural principles accelerates.



Paul's I am Series

BY ANDREW DUTTON, NORWICH, ENGLAND

I am apprehended – Phil. 3. 12

'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus', Phil. 3. 12.

I was not much of an athlete at school and merely dabbled with cross-country, resulting in only once being asked to represent the school in a sports competition! I learned from the experience that sport requires singleness of purpose, dedication, serious training, and sacrifice of other pursuits. The Greek athletic games would have been well known at the time Paul wrote his Epistles and he drew on the image of a race to illustrate the Christian life and experience.¹ Paul uses that technique here in Philippians chapter 3.

We will look at an overview of the teaching Paul is presenting in this section of Philippians, particularly that linked with 'the race'. We will also focus on the statement, 'I am apprehended of Christ Jesus', v. 12, before concluding with some applications for us as believers in the Lord Jesus.

Overview of Philippians chapter 3 verses 12 to 16

In the first section of chapter 3, Paul outlines his 'CV'. He had an impressive Jewish heritage and, whilst he would have been proud of this before he was saved, now he has no 'confidence in the flesh', v. 3. He counts it all 'loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus [his] . . . Lord', v. 8. As a believer in the Lord Jesus, Paul is now relying on being 'found in' Christ, v. 9, and his ambition is to 'know him', v. 10.

It is in verses 12 to 16 that Paul explains his present

status and goal as a follower of Christ. We learn that Paul's experience was progressive, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect', v. 12; he recognized that perfection and full enjoyment of redemption would be in his resurrection body, cp. 'I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead', v.11.

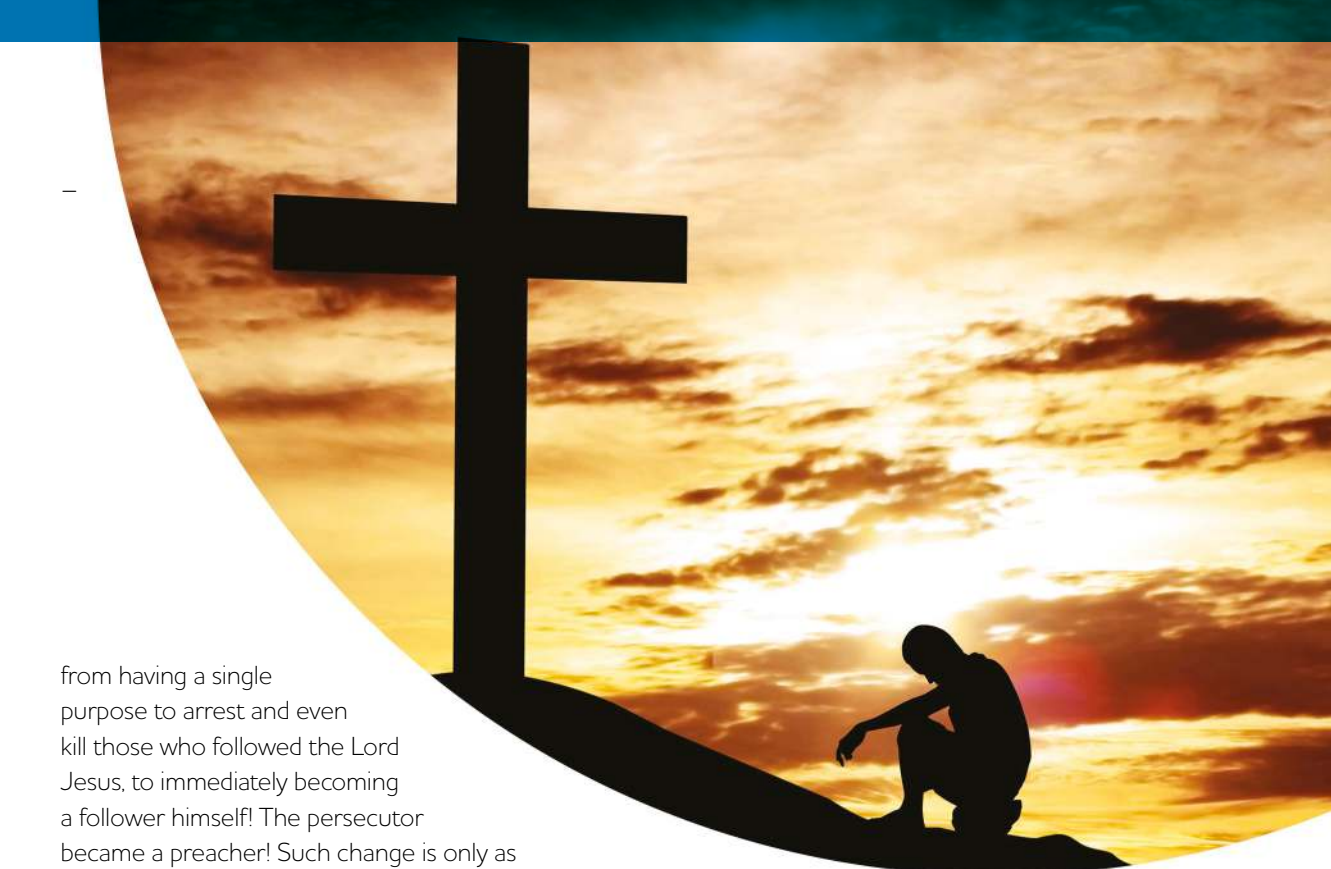
Also, we see 'the race' as an example for Christian experience:

- Paul does not look back but reaches for the 'things which are before', v. 13. Just as the runner is always looking forward, so should the believer be.
- Paul pursues the goal 'for the prize', v. 14. There are no distractions for the runner; all effort and energy go into the race; the prize is the single purpose of life.
- Paul keeps to the 'rule', v. 16. Just as the runner obeys the rules for the race, the believer needs to be obedient to the word of God.

I am apprehended of Christ Jesus

'Apprehended' comes from the Greek word *katalambano*. According to STRONG, it means to 'lay hold of so as to make one's own' and also has the idea of 'Christ by his holy power and influence laying hold of the human mind and will'.² Paul experienced this on the road to Damascus when his life was transformed through salvation; the risen Christ apprehended him, taking ownership of his life. Think of the dramatic effect that his conversion had on Paul's mind and will





from having a single purpose to arrest and even kill those who followed the Lord Jesus, to immediately becoming a follower himself! The persecutor became a preacher! Such change is only as a result of the power of God.

Before Paul states, 'I am apprehended', he indicated that he was apprehending, 'but I follow after, if that I may apprehend', v. 12. Because Christ had apprehended him, Paul was following after, to lay hold of the life and experience that the Lord desired him to have. The ESV puts it like this, 'I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own'; or, as HENDRIKSEN puts it, 'Paul is pursuing with the purpose of overtaking and laying hold on'.³ It seems from verses 13 and 14, that Paul recognized that he would need to continue pursuing until the point when he was with the Lord Jesus in heaven.

Applications

Whilst the change of life brought about by Paul's conversion was spectacular, all believers can say with Paul, 'I am apprehended of Christ Jesus'. At the point of salvation, every believer comes under the ownership of the Lord Jesus who, by His power, lays hold of the mind and will to bring about a complete change. Positionally, 'I am apprehended of Christ Jesus' and that will never change. However, the challenge of this verse is practical: do I live day-by-

day in the enjoyment of being within the complete ownership of the Lord Jesus? Or do I allow the world around me and the flesh within me to influence my actions so my life experience conflicts with this? May the Lord help us to live out what we are.

Just as Paul desired to follow after, or pursue, in order to lay hold of the kind of life that demonstrated he was owned by the Lord Jesus, we should do the same. As with the athlete running in a race, dedication and a single purpose is required. May we, with determination and with the goal in view, seek to live for the Lord Jesus.

¹ Paul refers to running or a race in several passages, including: Rom. 9. 16; 1 Cor. 9. 24-27; Gal. 2. 2; 5. 7; Phil. 2. 16; 3. 12-14; 2 Tim. 2. 5; 4. 7, 8.

² JAMES STRONG, *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Hendrickson Publishers.

³ WILLIAM HENDRIKSEN, *Philippians*, The Banner of Truth Trust, pg. 171.

A to Z of Priests – Four Bad Priests

BY JEREMY SINGER, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND

The Bible is packed with good examples of characters we can emulate, since ‘things . . . written aforetime were written for our learning’, Rom. 15. 4. Conversely, there are also many bad examples, people whose traits we must avoid. Such examples should serve as salutary warnings to us as believers.

In this article, we will consider a set of priests who made poor decisions that damaged their testimony with serious repercussions for themselves and others around them. There is a stringent list of physical qualifications for priestly service, Lev. 21. 16–24. Although the priests we examine in this article would have satisfied these physical requirements, they all had some spiritual deficiency; they lacked some aspect of the fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5. 22, 23, which adversely affected their activity.

Urijah: a priest without faithfulness

King Ahaz had visited Damascus, 2 Kgs. 16. 10, where he encountered an idol altar central to that city’s false system of worship. Ahaz was most impressed by this altar’s size and style, so the wicked king of Judah sent a blueprint of the foreign altar to Urijah the priest in Jerusalem. Ahaz requested Urijah to construct a replica altar after the Damascene original; the priest was asked to instal this copy in the Jerusalem temple.

What did Urijah do? Would he remain loyal to God and refuse to follow the king’s wicked instructions? No! Instead, Urijah chose to aid and abet the king in vandalizing the temple by rearranging the divinely appointed order of worship. Urijah was not faithful to God’s word, which he had been taught.

Application to us: Modern-day believers require a firm grasp of biblical truth, particularly regarding local assembly principles. Then, we must practise this doctrine and defend it vigorously. Such faithfulness to God and His word is urgently needed in an era of widespread departure.

Pashur: a priest without meekness

We covered Jeremiah the priestly prophet in a previous study in this series. Pashur was part of the temple’s political hierarchy in Jeremiah’s time, Jer. 20. 1. Pashur haughtily rejected Jeremiah’s word from the Lord, refusing to acknowledge Jeremiah’s God-given mandate or message.

When Jeremiah continued to preach, Pashur silenced him, then vindictively arranged to have the prophet flogged. Any assault on the Lord’s servant is an assault on the Lord Himself, as Paul discovered in the dust of the Damascus road, Acts 9. 4. Pashur was guilty of this deliberate show of defiance against God’s word, so he was condemned to an exile’s death in Babylon, Jer. 20. 6.

Application to us: We might imagine, like proud Pashur, that we are above correction and beyond the need for advice. We might doubt that God would use other people to speak to us. When the Lord does have a message for us, we might suppose we can afford to ignore it as Pashur did. Rather, we should have gentle, loving hearts that are meekly receptive to others. We must be tuned in to hear God’s word to us, whether it comes directly from the scriptures or indirectly through fellow believers.



Nadab and Abihu: priests without temperance

This pair of Aaron's sons was included among Israel's original set of priests, Exod. 28. 1. Tragically, the priestly careers of Nadab and Abihu were cut short when they offered 'strange fire' before the Lord, Lev. 10. 1. Their innovation in incense ingredients resulted in immediate judgement. It was essential for God's commandments to be obeyed. There was no scope for human creativity in interpreting the Lord's instructions to Moses.

The subsequent narrative hints that this fatal action of Nadab and Abihu was made when they were under the influence of alcohol, v. 9. Clouded perception can lead to poor decision making; recall Lemuel's advice on why rulers should abstain from alcohol, Prov. 31. 4.

Application to us: The need for self-control is paramount. Temperance, so vital in effective Christian testimony, can be compromised by alcohol. 'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit', Eph. 5. 18. In summary, spiritual sensibility is essential in every act of priestly service for the Lord.



The glory of the person of Jesus Christ

BY LUKE HOWDEN, HELIONS BUMPSTEAD, ENGLAND

If the world wasn't in enough turmoil pre-Covid-19, it is now. Financially, politically, socially and culturally, wave after wave of bad news bombards us through every form of media. It is enough to depress even the most optimistic person. Where on earth can Christians turn to be cheered up? I commend to you the person of Jesus Christ – thoughts about Him will soon make us look past the mess our world is in.

Think about His first coming. It was in obscurity and humility. He veiled the outward display of His glory and 'took upon [him] the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men', Phil. 2. 7. The next time He comes to earth will be entirely different in that glory will characterize His appearance. He will appear then as He appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, shining brighter than the sun; no longer the lowly 'man of sorrows', Isa. 53. 3, but then 'the King of glory', Ps. 24. 8. At the future revelation of Christ, every eye will see Him, Rev. 1. 7; Matt. 24. 30.

The glory of His person

Titus chapter 2 presents two appearances of the Lord Jesus. In both verses, 11 and 13, the words 'appeared' and 'appearing' come from the word 'epiphany'. It is a word that means to 'make visible or to be manifest'. In verse 11, grace was made visible in the person of the Lord Jesus. This is in the past tense. In the Gospels, grace is associated with Christ as to His character and conduct. The figure of speech here in Titus is 'personification', where an object or concept is presented as a person. Grace has appeared – it was Christ!

In verse 13, it is glory that is personified in the person of the 'great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ'. 'The blessed hope' and the 'appearing of the glory' JND, I think, are the same event.¹ The thought is that when the Lord Jesus comes to earth again, there will be, in His person, a manifestation of glory. The scene is described in Revelation chapter 19 verses 11 to 21, with the Lord Jesus coming on a white horse, His eyes as a flame of fire and His robe dipped in blood. He has a name written – 'King of kings, and Lord of lords'.

Think of John chapter 19 verse 5 – 'behold the man!' Pilate made that announcement as the representative of

humanity. That is the last the world saw of Him; 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief'. A man disfigured and beaten; His form so battered He no longer looked like a man. I am using poetic licence now – but when the world hears that phrase once again, it will not be the representative of human government but the almighty God that makes the pronouncement. The volume will be greater, the audience larger and the response will no longer be 'we will not have this man to reign over us'; no longer the Man of sorrows, but the Messiah in splendour. Zechariah chapter 6 verse 13 says that in a coming day, 'he shall bear the glory'; He will be seen as a priest on His throne. The passage goes on to say, 'the counsel of peace shall be between them both', meaning that the office of prophet and priest will be united in Christ.

It is at this time that all of humanity will bow the knee and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord. The Lord will be King over all the earth, and His reign will be glorious. The angels of God will worship Him, and all the universe will proclaim His worthiness. The mess of this world will be gone. The glory of His person will remain. In the words of 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 28, 'Now when all things are made subject to him, then the Son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him, **that God may be all in all**'.

D. W. WHITTLE wrote this well-known hymn which sums these thoughts up aptly:

*Our Lord is now rejected, and by the world disowned.
By the many still neglected and by the few enthroned;
But soon He'll come in glory!
The hour is drawing nigh.
For the crowning day is coming by-and-by.*

*O the crowning day is coming, is coming by-and-by,
when our Lord shall come in power and glory from on high.
O the glorious sight will gladden each waiting, watchful eye
in the crowning day that's coming by-and-by.*

¹ Editorial note – 'Our brother is correct here since the one article in the Greek text closely unites the two substantives, confirming that this is one event – see the comments of A. T. ROBERTSON in *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, pg. 786.