



Edited by
STEPHEN BAKER

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.

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Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the new format of YPS. We have moved to this style of YPS insert as the cost of print and paper has risen significantly over the last 12 months and we are seeking to make sure that we produce our magazine as cost-effectively as possible. As always, this creates some fresh opportunities as well as some restrictions in terms of the size and structure of each article.

So, what have we got for you in this quarter and as we start a new year of publication?

Jeremy Singer, who is well known to many of you, has agreed to write a series on some of the interesting and challenging lives of believers down the centuries of church history. I will leave him in his article to give you a fuller introduction as to how he intends to handle this.

Phil Raggett continues his interesting and helpful series on things that every believer should know. This article is important as it confronts and challenges the current world view on the value of life. Every believer needs to be sure that they know what the scriptures teach on this important issue, and to make sure that this translates into biblical choices when facing tough decisions in life.

We are also starting a new series called 'Soul Searching Scriptures'. I will be asking various believers to write an article on a verse that had a major impact on their life. This might be a verse that brought them to faith in Christ, that strengthened their faith, or gave them the assurance that they were truly saved. Or maybe a verse that changed their direction of life completely. It will be interesting to see how this pans out. I am sure that there are many interesting stories to be told as to how God speaks to people through His word. Hopefully, this will get you thinking and encourage you to listen for God's voice as you read the scriptures.

Finally, we have a new series which hopefully will help young believers understand that the world round about them is full of evidence that God is the Creator and Sustainer of life. Phil Armstrong, as a biology teacher, is well placed to write this series for us. I for one, am looking forward to reading these articles.

Yours through grace,

Stephen Baker

Fascinating Facts – Evidence from nature of a Creator's touch



PHIL ARMSTRONG, LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

The Hawaiian bobtail squid (*Euprymna scolopes*) swims in tropical waters, blissfully unaware that it is marvellously designed by God. It has a neat 'symbiotic' partnership with a glowing bacterium, *Vibrio fischeri*, which lives inside it. This gives the squid a built-in torch to help it camouflage, by a crafty technique known as 'counter-illumination'.

In the first few days of its life, the squid sucks up hundreds of different types of microbes from the sea water and isolates the one type of bacterium to store in its specially designed 'light organ' that will make it glow. The different microbes journey to the light organ through narrow tubes. To appreciate the challenge of this journey, we need to imagine an assault course mixed with a deadly automatic car wash. These tubes are lined with microscopic cilia bristles that sweep in the opposite direction to the way that our microbe contestants are moving. With toxic chemicals and acid, only the *Vibrio* bacteria have what it takes to make it to the end and colonize the light organ. The squid also 'cheers on' the *Vibrio* bacteria with chemicals that attract them down the tube. When the light organ is full, they tell the squid to close the tubes and finish the making of the light organ with lenses. The squid will be able to alter its light to match the glow of the moon.

Every day, the squid squirts out most of the bacteria and the rest reproduce, refilling the light organ for the next glow session that night. It is even more remarkable to know that the bacteria can't make light unless they are inside the squid; they don't glow in the sea water by themselves!

These two organisms were made for each other and co-exist because of complex engineering. Each feature of the system shows purpose, and it is unthinkable that it could have developed from scratch through a collection of unguided errors that would be called 'evolution'. This should amaze us and cause us to glorify our Lord as Creator and Sustainer of life.

Sources

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Things you should know – About life – Part 3

BY PHILIP RAGGETT, PRESTWICH, MANCHESTER, ENGLAND



The world we live in is moving away from the truths and principles set out clearly in the word of God with increasing rapidity. The common view is that only you can decide what is 'right for you' or what 'your truth is'; but the Christian is measured by a higher standard. We should always seek to find out what God says, what His standards are and try our utmost to live by them. One example of this is in the value we place on life. While we cannot deal extensively with this subject, I want to remind you of what the biblical standpoint is on such an important issue, so that you can apply these principles when faced with emotive arguments or presented with difficult circumstances.

Life is precious

The Bible teaches that life is precious and has value because every human being is made in the image of God, Gen. 9. 6. This is the reason why taking a human life is prohibited, as it is explicitly stated in the sixth commandment in Exodus chapter 20 verse 13, 'thou shalt not kill'. This over-riding principle holds true regardless of the temptation to abort life in light of any deformities, disabilities, or deterioration that may exist in the unborn child. Whenever we are discussing abortion or euthanasia, we must remember that God values life and holds us accountable should we choose to violate His prohibition by taking a life – 'Hands that shed innocent blood' are 'an abomination unto him', Prov. 6. 16, 17.

Life is provided

Life and death are in God's hands – Job chapter 33 verse 4 tells us, 'the Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life'. We are also told that 'he giveth to all life, and breath', Acts 17. 25. God not only gives life, but He also sustains it. Our breath is in His hands, Dan. 5. 23, and only He has the moral right to determine when life ends. We do not have the right to determine when someone is no longer fit to live, or of any value in society, and whether their life should be terminated. Every life is precious to Him and is provided by Him. Every child, regardless of physical attributes or mental capability, is a 'heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward', Ps. 127. 3.

Life should be protected

If we believe what the Bible teaches, that life is precious and taking a life is prohibited, then the only question with regards to abortion is at what point does an unborn baby become a human being? We know that killing a child is wrong but does a baby only become a human being when they are no longer dependent on their parents? Or when they are new-born?

Or when they first have a heartbeat? What does the scripture say? While it does not give us a specific timeline, it is clear, from Psalm 139 verses 13 to 16, that God creates, cares for, and knows each baby in the womb in a miraculous way. We are indeed 'fearfully and wonderfully made', v. 14. The words used in verse 15, 'curiously wrought' have the thought of needlework or embroidery, giving us a clear understanding of the intricate care God has for, and the value He places on, babies in the womb. From the point of fertilization, each baby has its own unique set of DNA and is a distinct being that, within a matter of a few weeks, will start developing organs and a central nervous system. In Luke chapter 1 verse 41; chapter 2 verse 12, and chapter 18 verse 15, the same word is used to describe an unborn baby, a new-born baby and infants. From this we see that God places no distinction on the importance of a child's life regardless of the stage of development. From the moment life exists, at the time of fertilization, that life should be cherished and protected, regardless of the challenges that could be faced post-birth or the circumstances that brought about the conception of the child.

Life has purpose

The final point I want to consider is the purpose of life. God provides life and sustains life for a purpose. 'All things are created by him, and for him', Col. 1. 16. God has a purpose for each life – even if life, for some, appears in our limited estimation to be less meaningful or worthwhile. Our lives here on earth are only temporary which makes them even more precious, as it is only in this life that we can prepare for eternity. Therefore, we should live our lives and make our decisions with an eternal perspective. Circumstances that we would not choose for ourselves can develop Christian character and can be used as a means of glorifying God. Many a saint caring for terminally ill loved ones has been a living example of the unconditional love of God. Their gracious character and peace in the face of tremendous difficulties is a bright testimony to carers and unsaved relatives, and, indeed, other believers looking on. Prematurely terminating a life, either at the beginning or end of life, would rob us of the opportunity to glorify Him. Scripture reminds us that 'as for God, his way is perfect', Ps. 18. 30. His will for our lives is perfect, even if our understanding of it is at times clouded by the difficulty of present circumstances that we are called to pass through.

The dilemmas and difficulties that are often raised in relation to this subject need an abundance of grace and compassion. The principles of the preciousness, provision and purpose of life should, however, reaffirm our appreciation of the sanctity of life and instil in us a desire to protect it.

Soul Searching Scriptures

BY JOHN SCARBROOK, KILLAMARSH, ENGLAND

Numbers 23. 19

Integrity is an admirable quality in the character of any man or woman. It is, however, an intrinsic attribute of deity. The Lord Jesus addressed His Father in John chapter 17 as the 'only true God', and as the One whose 'word is truth'. Paul commended the Thessalonians for their conversion to 'the living and true God'. The apostle introduced his letter to Titus with assurance of eternal life promised by 'God, that cannot lie'; not 'may not', or even 'will not', but 'cannot'! The writer to the Hebrews undergirds his whole argument by reminding his readers that it is 'impossible for God to lie', Heb. 6. 18.

With this in mind we understand that our salvation, our future, our destiny, all depend upon the word of God. Which brings me to a scripture that has had a lasting effect on my life. I look back to a moment when, as a young child, I knew in a very simple way that I needed to be saved. The Bible had always been an open book in our home. Sunday school and meetings at the local Gospel Hall are some of my earliest memories. I learned to quote verses of scripture and never remember a time when I did not accept the truth of what was taught from the Bible. One thing, however, caused me concern: the Lord's return. I was fearful of being left behind if my parents and brother were suddenly taken. My brother and I slept in one bed, and I recall one night waking up and reaching across the bed to make sure he was still there. I called my father and told him I needed to be saved. I can still see him as he knelt by the bed and prayed for me. It was a simple conversion, very much like Lydia 'whose heart the Lord opened'. I do not recall the date or even the time of year, but I knew from then I was saved.

I was baptized when I was thirteen, but I have to confess that my school life was largely wasted as far as any testimony or witness was concerned. I managed to steer clear of the excesses of my peers but remember being mocked by one

girl because I never swore like the other lads, which I suppose was some sort of compliment. To gain respect in the 1960s' grammar school I attended, achievement at sport was the determining factor and I opened bowling for the 1st XI cricket team; that carried kudos!

I was glad to leave school and started work in an engineering company at Newport Pagnell. A strange choice as I am the least practical person on the planet! But God overrules and I worked with another Christian who had a fearless testimony and was well known for his beliefs. This encouraged me to make a stand and begin to live as a believer should.

In my late teens I began to have serious doubts about my salvation. I could not share this with anyone, but I had heard preachers say that if we could not pinpoint the time, the date, and the place when we trusted the Lord, then our salvation could be questionable. The fear of the Lord's return re-surfaced, to the extent that I would phone my mother from work to make sure she was still there!

This uncertainty weighed me down as I tried to recall what I had actually said as a seven-year-old; were they the right words? Was it enough? I found myself looking through the scriptures for some assurance; nothing worked, the doubt remained.

Then I awoke one night with a verse running through my head. I must have read it at some time, but I wasn't even sure where to find it, **'God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?' Num. 23. 19.** That was it, my salvation is not dependent on me and my feelings. Scriptures came flooding in: John 3. 16; Acts 16. 31; Rom. 10. 9; my doubts were gone; **my salvation is as secure as God's word!**



Saints' CVs: Introduction

BY JEREMY SINGER, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND

In any high street bookstore, the biography section is always popular. We are naturally attracted to stories about other people's lives; we can relate to them, gaining insight into their successes and, perhaps, their failures. This article introduces a new series covering some believers from history and their circumstances.

Since the church is about 2,000 years old, we will roam the centuries to select believers for consideration. We will look at some recent lives, like Corrie ten Boom who boldly served God among the horrors of occupied Europe during World War II. We will also delve back into history to consider ancient figures like Bernard of Clairvaux, a twelfth-century monk who wrote several beautiful hymns we still sing today, including *Jesus the very thought of Thee*.

Christianity has spread over every continent across the globe. Through our series we aim to give a sense of this geographic diversity, selecting believers from various countries and cultures. Despite these differences, all Christians share a common basis of faith, 'Jesus Christ is Lord', Phil. 2. 11, and the same scriptures, 'the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever', 1 Pet. 1. 23.

Whenever we examine fellow human beings, we will inevitably encounter flaws in their character. The only perfect man who lived on earth was the Son of God; the rest of us are marked by sinfulness. So, as we study the lives of saints, we must be aware they have 'warts and all'.¹ As a preacher now with the Lord, Robert McPheat, used to say when preaching a biblical character study, 'Their virtues I would covet; their vices I would shun'. Our attitude must be the same.

Most of the historical figures we cover will not be featured in secular history books. You probably won't find these characters in the biography section of your local bookstore. In earthly terms, these saints are insignificant. However, heaven has a different perspective. These heroes of faith have their deeds recorded; one day they will be fully rewarded by 'the Lord, the righteous judge', 2 Tim. 4. 8.

What is the motivation for studying the lives of Christians from days gone by? Apart from the biographical interest, there are good spiritual reasons for this study:

- 1) Our faith will be **strengthened** as we read of God's power in the most trying circumstances – whether oppressive governments, lack of access to the Bible, or international conflict. In such extremes, God works in and through His people.
- 2) We will be **thankful** as we recognize the sacrifice made by others, particularly so that we can read the scriptures in our own language.
- 3) We will be **challenged** as we see the faith of others, 'Whose faith follow', Heb. 13. 7. Their trust in God will provoke us to deeper faith, more meaningful dependence on the Lord, and greater commitment to Him.

We'll consider our first character in the next article. If you want to read a good book to get started, I recommend WIERSEB's *50 People Every Christian Should Know*.² Finally, if you have suggestions for saints we might feature in this series, please send them in via the Editor.

¹ This was the instruction Oliver Cromwell gave to his portrait painter, to capture an accurate likeness of his face including his warts.

² WARREN W. WIERSEB, *50 People Every Christian Should Know*, Baker Books, 2009.

