



Edited by
ANDREW DUTTON

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*, PO Box 10544, Grantham, NG31 0HW, UK, and is available separately from the main magazine.

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Editor's Introduction

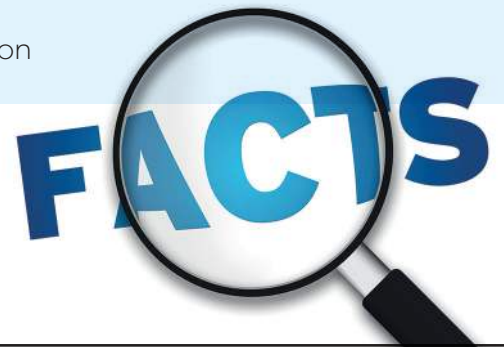
Welcome to the May issue of YPS.

I've really enjoyed reading the articles in this issue. Richard Smith looks at the reign of Jehoshaphat and notes some important lessons that will help us live consistent lives for God.

There is a new series on 'Christian Basics'. If you are a new believer in the Lord Jesus, this is to introduce some of the important aspects of Christian living. For those of us who have been saved longer, these topics will serve as a good reminder. The first article deals with daily Bible reading.

I hope you enjoy reading the magazine and trust that the articles will be a blessing to you.

Andrew Dutton



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

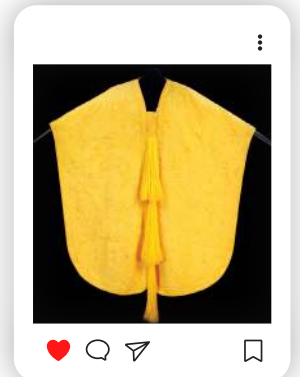
PHIL ARMSTRONG, LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

The spider with golden silk

Golden orb-weaver spiders live in Southern and East Africa, and are among the largest spiders in the world with a massive leg span of around twenty centimetres. The reason for its name is that God has given it the ability to make a beautiful, golden-coloured silk that it spins to make its webs. Interestingly, one of the chemicals in the silk that makes it golden is a carotenoid, the same chemical found in carrots. How the spider spins its intricate web is another story, but when it is formed, the web itself is incredibly strong. Golden orb-weaver webs can stop a bee mid-flight at twenty miles per hour and can also trap small birds. Tanzanian fishermen even use the webs for fishing!



the silk tubes until they rejoin. Every centimetre of nerve guide tube needs ten metres of silk to make it. God has given this awesome material as a gift to the golden orb-weaver spider and has given us humans the ability to investigate and use it for our pleasure and benefit. It really is a mark of His wonderful, creative power.



The golden orb-weaver spider would be shocked to know that her silk has been used for two very different projects. The first was by Peers and Godley, who collected the golden silk from over a million spiders and wove it into a piece of clothing – a golden cape. To get all the silk that they needed, a team of up to eighty people collected spiders every day, then 'milked' them for their silk for around half an hour before returning them, unharmed, to the wild. It took several years to complete this cape, which was said to be the world's rarest piece of cloth. It was first put on display at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and then at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

The second, and totally unrelated use of golden orb-weaver silk, is to help regrow damaged nerves, such as in patients who have suffered a serious accident. A group of scientists in Vienna has teamed up with the University of Oxford to make 'nerve guides'. These are special tubes, with the sides made from the silk produced by silkworms, and the inside filled with dragline silk from our golden orb-weaver spiders. The ends of damaged nerves can grow through

Sources

How was it made? Golden spider silk
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Soul-Searching Scriptures

BY CRAIG MUNRO, GLENCRAIG, SCOTLAND

'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest', Prov. 6. 6-8.

In 1993 my grandfather, Kenneth Munro, suddenly died when I was away studying at university. He had been a spiritual mentor to me and a huge influence in my life. It was at this time, aged 21, that I told my father, Gordon Munro, of my desire to preach the gospel on a full-time basis. My father was incredibly important to me. He was a father, leader, guide, overseer and ruler to me. Even though I knew he had lymphatic cancer, I thought he would live



on; I believed the Lord had shown me this. He was very able in the scriptures. He lived and served in our community, preached the word, took the local funerals, and had a shepherd heart. I had a few series of gospel meetings with my father, and he really connected with people. Seventy-five of the neighbours in the street where he lived attended the last series of tent meetings which he had in his own garden with brother Jack Hay. This has never been repeated.

When he died, the bottom fell out of my world. Not only had I lost my dad, but my 'big plan' was also in tatters. The assembly was small and there were, at that time, few to teach and preach. On the day of his funeral there were hundreds of mourners, and many came back to the house afterwards. I did not want to speak to anyone, and I went to my room distraught. I could not read the Bible as I was too grief stricken, but the Bible fell open on the bed. It landed on Proverbs chapter 6. Verses 6 to 8 were a direct word from the Lord to me. The ants did

not have a ruler, overseer or guide either, but they carried on working. The Lord was telling me clearly that there was work to do in the assembly and in our community; I had a work to do from the Lord and I had better get on with it! This scripture inspired me to knuckle down and do a simple work for the Lord in the assembly.

My wife and I raised our family of three children, and although there were difficult days we have been blessed and looking back we can say 'hitherto hath the Lord helped us', 1 Sam 7. 12.

In the course of time, I did leave my secular employment to preach the gospel, but it was many years after this. The assembly had grown significantly, and many teachers had been raised up allowing us to leave from time to time to have meetings elsewhere. We were taught that 'He shall direct thy paths' even if it is not the path we initially wanted to tread, Prov. 3. 6. God's ways are best.

Christian Basics – Daily Bible Reading

BY ANDREW DUTTON, NORWICH, ENGLAND

'Give attendance to reading', 1 Tim. 4. 13.

The Christian life is a different life. New believers in the Lord Jesus will find that their daily routine will need to change to accommodate fresh priorities as they seek to follow Christ. Others may have been saved for a longer period but recognize that there are still things in life to change. This series of articles will look at 'Christian Basics' and offer advice on how to get started. Our first topic is daily Bible reading.

Daily reading of the Bible is essential for Christians – the word of God is our spiritual food! David, in Psalm 19, understood how the word of God benefits the people of God. He said that the 'law of the Lord is perfect', v. 7, and that it provides refreshment to the soul; the Christian needs refreshment every day to provide strength in an ungodly world. He declared that the 'statutes of the Lord are right', v. 8, and this brings joy to the heart; the Christian needs the joy that is based on the righteous ways of God revealed in His word. David understood that the 'commandment of the Lord is pure', v. 8, bringing clarity of vision; the Christian needs clear direction in relation to the Lord's will and His ways to please the Lord.

Whilst the word of God is essential to Christian living, there are so many pressures on time that make daily reading difficult. Some of those pressures are genuine priorities, such as school, college or university work, family commitments, or helping others. Other calls on time may be less necessary, but an enjoyable part of life.

If daily reading is not part of your schedule, decide to make the change; the following hints may help:

- Commit prayerfully to God to be serious about daily Bible reading and ask for His help in making the necessary changes to your routine.
- Allocate a time that works for you, ideally when you are least likely to be distracted.
- Start small. I have often recommended the daily readings in the next column to those beginning to read, to cover a two-week period. After this, you could read a chapter each day of one of the Gospels, then move to Acts, followed by the Epistles.
- Build up to a goal to read the whole Bible systematically. There are multiple plans and apps available to read the Bible in a year, but decide on a pace that is manageable.¹ Covering the Bible in eighteen months or two years is still of great benefit.

- Accompany reading with prayer; ask the Lord to help and bless His word before reading; after reading, 'pray through' what you have read – is there something that you have read that helps you to appreciate God and His greatness, or something that challenges you?
- Don't be discouraged if you miss a day or find some passages difficult. Keep going!
- Make a note of verses that stand out to you, or those you want to come back to in order to understand better.
- Discuss what you are reading with other Christians, and ask for help on difficult passages.

Discovering the Lord Jesus - Fourteen chapters which you can get through in two weeks if you read a chapter every day.

Luke 2	The Lord Jesus is born
Mark 2	The Lord Jesus begins to work
Matthew 9	The Lord Jesus teaches and heals people
Luke 6	The Lord Jesus teaches and heals people
Luke 15	The Lord Jesus tells some stories
Matthew 25	The Lord Jesus teaches about His kingdom
John 3	The Lord Jesus talks to a ruler
John 4	The Lord Jesus talks to a woman
John 14	The Lord Jesus talks to His friends
John 17	The Lord Jesus talks to His Father
Matthew 26	The Lord Jesus is betrayed
Matthew 27	The Lord Jesus dies
John 20	The Lord Jesus rises from the dead
Luke 24	The Lord Jesus returns to heaven

¹ Most plans contain two Old Testament readings and a New Testament reading each day. This is beneficial because it means that there are no long periods of time without reading the New Testament. I like Choice Gleanings, available as a hard copy calendar and online: <http://gospelfolio.com/category/choice-gleanings/>. There are also apps available to support reading digitally.

We four kings... – Lessons from some of Judah's kings

BY RICHARD SMITH, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND



Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles chapters 17 to 21)

So far, we have investigated the lives of the first three kings after Solomon. We have applied the test of the 'Triangle of Convictions':

1. The word of God.
2. The house of God.
3. The people of God.

In the kings so far we have seen that:

1. Rehoboam lacked any **conviction**.
2. Abijah had conviction but no **courage**.
3. Asa had courage but couldn't handle **correction**.

What about Jehoshaphat? He lacked **consistency**.

Jerusalem must have been an amazing place to live with the wealth of the king's family and the abundant worship of God. What a blessing to be born into a godly family! I will be forever grateful for parents who took the Bible and the church seriously, allowing me to build my own convictions and relationship with the Lord. Sadly, Jehoshaphat saw his father's deterioration into bitterness and rejection of the word of God, and he made sure he wouldn't do the same.

At thirty-five, Jehoshaphat became king. From 2 Chronicles chapter 17 verse 1, a key word of his reign is '**strength**'.

- He strengthened Judah against Israel militarily (the people of God), vv. 1-3.
- He sought the God of his father and walked in His commandments (the word of God), vv. 3, 4.
- He took the high places away, forcing the people of Jerusalem to worship (the house of God), v. 6.

Therefore the Lord blessed Jehoshaphat and the people brought him tribute, v. 5.

Jehoshaphat determined that God's word would be known throughout Judah. He sent teachers out for that purpose, vv. 7-9. They didn't go with their own ideas, they had 'the book of the law of the Lord', v. 9. **It is important that all our teaching and practice is supported by the word of God.** Anyone that claims otherwise should not be trusted.

The Lord blessed Jehoshaphat further, v. 10; Judah experienced peace. His enemies brought tribute. Jehoshaphat became incredibly wealthy, with outstanding military power and a well-defended people. What could possibly go wrong?

Ahab was the king of Israel whom Jehoshaphat had strengthened himself against. Ahab did more to provoke the Lord than any king before him, 1 Kgs. 16. 33. Instead of keeping away, Jehoshaphat entered a marriage alliance with Ahab. From relying on the Lord to prosper him, his son married Ahab's daughter and the two kings became family and friends. 2 Chronicles chapter 18 demonstrates the spiritual inequality between them. Instead

of fleeing when he had the opportunity, Jehoshaphat accepted Ahab's invitation to go to war together and said, 'I am as you are, my people as your people. We will be with you in the war', v. 3 ESV. Jehoshaphat's folly nearly caused his death, v. 31. When he cried out the Lord helped him and, unlike Ahab, he escaped with his life. Friendship with the ungodly will never improve us or draw us closer to the Lord; we must be careful who our friends are. Safely home, he was visited by Jehu the son of Hanani the seer. Jehu must have been anxious. His father criticized Asa and ended up in prison! Jehu had similar news for Jehoshaphat. How would Jehoshaphat react?

2 Chronicles chapter 19:

- He brought the people back to the Lord, v. 4. He appointed judges to apply the law of the Lord, vv. 5-7.
- He acknowledged the absolute justice of God, v. 7.
- He appointed Levites and priests to deal with hard cases, vv. 8-11.

Jehoshaphat determined not to repeat his father's mistakes. He accepted criticism and adjusted his own behaviour. What an example!

Sadly, his failure caused the peace he had enjoyed to break, and he came under enemy attack in 2 Chronicles chapter 20. His response? He set his face to seek the Lord, v. 3; Judah sought help from the Lord, v. 4. Jehoshaphat acknowledged God's sovereignty, his past behaviour with Judah, and outlined the need he now faced. Our prayers should acknowledge God's person, His past help, and include specific requests. The answer was that 'the Lord will be with you', v. 17. He was! The battle was a complete victory and Jehoshaphat expressed sincere thanks, v. 21.

Jehoshaphat's reign was hugely successful. He was faithful to the Lord and was mightily blessed by Him.

'Those who honor me I will honor', 1 Sam. 2. 30 ESV.

2 Chronicles chapter 20: Jehoshaphat made a business alliance with Ahaziah (son of Ahab), vv. 35, 36, and the whole venture met with disaster – the Lord destroyed what they had made, v. 37. He was a wonderful king but lacked **consistency**, repeating past failure.

What lessons can we learn from Jehoshaphat?

1. Repeat what is good about the past.
2. Learn from the mistakes of others.
3. Don't get too involved with the ungodly.
4. Don't repeat the mistakes that got us in trouble in the first place.

Let's be men and women having conviction about:

1. The word of God.
2. The house of God.
3. The people of God.

Saints' CVs: John Newton

BY JEREMY SINGER, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND

JOHN NEWTON 1725-1807

*Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*

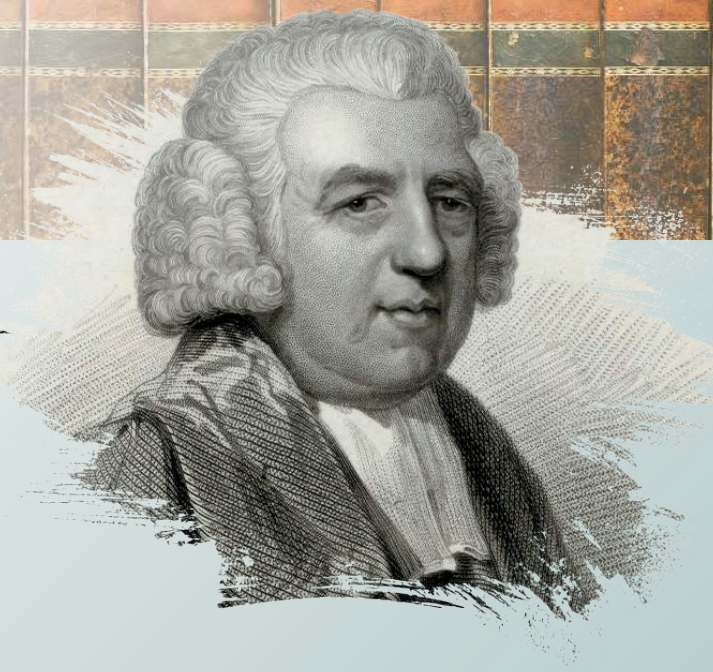
John Newton's *Amazing Grace* may be the most famous hymn in the world – it's instantly recognizable, whether played by a piper on an Edinburgh street corner or sung a cappella by US president Barack Obama at a memorial service. In fact, many famous singers have recorded versions of *Amazing Grace*, including Elvis Presley, Aretha Franklin, and Celine Dion.

Amazing Grace was 250 years old in 2023, since the hymn had its first rendition on New Year's Day, 1773. In any 'top ten' compilation of Christian hymns, *Amazing Grace* is ever present in the list and often right up at number one.

The man behind the hymn certainly experienced God's amazing grace: John Newton started out as a wild-living sailor. After deserting from the Royal Navy, Newton became involved in the slave trade. He sailed on ships transporting people from Africa to America. During one voyage in 1748, Newton's vessel was caught by a dreadful storm, and he cried out for God's mercy. Later, he remembered that day as the time when he began to trust the Lord – 'the hour I first believed'.

After quitting the sea for health reasons, he worked in Liverpool for several years as a tide surveyor. His interest in evangelism grew over this period. He was ordained as a curate in the Church of England and was sent to the Buckinghamshire parish of Olney in 1764. Here, at St. Peter and St. Paul church, he preached several times a week and composed many hymns for the congregation to sing. Along with his poetic friend and neighbour William Cowper, he collated 348 songs into a volume of *Olney Hymns*. Newton's contributions include hymns we continue to sing today, like:

Amazing grace: Come, my soul, thy suit prepare; and How sweet the name of Jesus sounds. The Cowper and Newton museum at Olney has interesting exhibits about Newton's life and times. However, the notebook containing the transcript for his



'Amazing Grace' sermon on 1 Chronicles chapter 16 verses 16 and 17 is lodged at Lambeth Palace in London.

Newton wrote about his experiences of the slave trade, admitting in retrospect that it was an 'unhappy and disgraceful branch of commerce' in which his personal involvement was a 'subject of humiliating reflection'. Newton had a great influence on William Wilberforce, both spiritually and in terms of campaigning against slavery.

John Newton died in 1807 at the age of eighty-two. One of his final sayings was, 'Although my memory is fading, I remember two things very clearly: I am a great sinner—and Christ is a great Saviour'.¹ In his speaking, as in his writing, Newton was blessed with a wonderful turn of phrase. Some of his memorable quotations are listed below.

'I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am'.²

'If two angels were to receive at the same moment a commission from God, one to go down and rule earth's grandest empire, the other to go and sweep the streets of its meanest village, it would be a matter of entire indifference to each which service fell to his lot, the post of ruler or the post of scavenger; for the joy of the angels lies only in obedience to God's will'.³

'How unspeakably wonderful to know that all our concerns are held in hands that bled for us'.⁴

Further reading

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