



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

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YOUNG.PRECIOUSSEED

Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the November issue of YPS.

In this issue Phil Armstrong concludes his series on fascinating facts – evidence of a creator's touch, looking at the amazing building ability of termites.

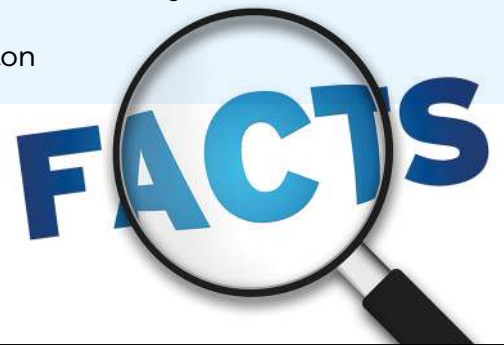
We are also concluding the Soul-Searching Scriptures series, which Stephen Baker initially invited the contributors to write – it's fitting that we hear from Stephen in the final instalment.

Next year, God willing, there will be some other subjects to look forward to. But in the meantime, I hope you enjoy this issue and find it to be a blessing.

Andrew Dutton

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

PHIL ARMSTRONG, LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND



Mighty termites

King Solomon, one of history's most famous builders, was impressed by the preparation and organization of ants, Prov. 6. 6-8. He would certainly have been amazed by the architectural genius of all the social insects – ants, termites, and some bees and wasps – in how they build their different types of nests. Among all the animals that build, including birds, some spiders, crustaceans, fish, reptiles and mammals, it is the social insects, such as termites, that create complex structures most like human architects and engineers. God has given these tiny creatures, with their tiny brains, the instincts and abilities to work so well together.

Termites need massive nests, because there may be millions of individuals in one colony. Nests usually contain a royal bedroom, nurseries, gardens, waste dumps and a ventilation system. While many species dig their homes underground, some build mounds above ground, with the largest ever found being 13 m high! An impressive nest design by the *Macrotermes bellicosus* termite from Africa includes an arch. These miniscule insects build the two bases of the arch separately and then manage to join them at the top. This is only possible when you have a good sense of 3D space, and yet these termites are blind.

The Compass termites of Australia make tall, skinny mounds that are narrow on the sides facing north and south, and wide on the sides facing east and west. This design

keeps a more stable temperature as the narrowest sides face the sun at the hottest time of the day. Lost travellers have found their way by using these nests as compasses. Many termite nests include a complex ventilation system that keeps them cool. One species in Africa makes a nest that can maintain its temperature almost within 1 degree of 30°C. Architect Mick Pearce designed a building in Zimbabwe similar to the structure of a termite mound, greatly reducing the need for expensive air conditioning. It is thought that termite mounds may one day inspire 'living, breathing' architecture.

As we finish this Fascinating Facts series, I hope you have found the articles interesting and that they have provided ample evidence of a Creator God with many reasons to praise Him for His greatness. The Bible not only tells of His great power, Ps. 147. 5, but also of His great love, Eph. 2. 4. How have you responded to His greatness, and to His love for you?

Sources

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Termite (*Macrotermes lilljeborgi*)

Termite mound



Christian Basics – Baptism

BY ANDREW DUTTON, NORWICH, ENGLAND

'They that gladly received his word were baptized', Acts 2. 41.

'Delayed obedience is disobedience' was advice I recently heard a friend passing on to children; it is good advice, and my own children may report that it has since been repeated in our home! Looking back on my own experience, it sums up my response to the command of baptism. I trusted the Lord Jesus as my Saviour at a young age, and I remember, at the age of 11, understanding that I needed to be baptized. But I delayed for years – I disobeyed.

A command for believers

The Lord Jesus commanded that believers should be baptized, Matt. 28. 19; Mark 16. 15, 16.

Baptism is a basic and essential step for Christians and the Bible teaches that it should follow salvation, 'they that gladly received his word were baptized', Acts 2. 41. It is also interesting that the longest recorded period in the New Testament between salvation and baptism is three days, with Saul of Tarsus, Acts 9. 9, 18. This demonstrates that there are no other steps between salvation and baptism; no process of improving lifestyle, or development of understanding in the word of God – just simply: if I have been saved, the next step is for me to be baptized.

A symbol

Baptism is a symbol, explained in Romans chapter 6 verses 1 to 11. It is a symbol of identification with Christ, 'Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life', Rom. 6. 4. As a believer goes down into the water, they are saying, in symbolic form, 'when Christ died, I died!' This is the old 'me', v. 6, that was 'dead in trespasses and sins', Eph. 2. 1, and far away from God, v. 3. The result of this part of the symbol is that the person 'that is dead is freed from sin', Rom. 6. 7. I came into the good of these things the day I was saved, but when I was baptized, I was publicly declaring my irreversible identification with the Lord Jesus.

For the short time a believer is under the water, they are declaring that they 'are buried with [Christ]', v. 4. Burial proves that a death has taken place. Because the old 'me', v. 6, has died, it has also been buried.

On coming up out of the water, the symbol links with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. He has died once to deal with sin and is now alive forever. Having received eternal life, we are linked with Christ in His resurrection, and

we are 'alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord', v. 11. This is in contrast to being 'dead . . . unto sin', v. 11.

The implication of my baptism is that I should live every day 'dead. . . unto sin' and 'alive unto God'.

Practical points to note

If you are saved, but have not been baptized, the following points may help you:

- Commit to God to be serious about obeying His word. Baptism is not a subject that you need to ask for the Lord's guidance in, as His word is clear! But if you have previously resisted, you can ask the Lord to help you learn obedience. There may even need to be repentance from disobedience.
- If you belong to a Christian family, first speak to your parents. Often speaking about it for the first time can be the hardest step to take.
- If you are the only Christian in your family, speak to another Christian – if you go along to meetings at a local church, there may be someone there who has helped you, or who you look up to in Christian things. Ask their advice, particularly in how best to speak to your family. If you are under the age of 18, parental permission needs to be taken into consideration.
- If you go along to meetings at a local church, approach the elders to let them know of your desire to be baptized. You could do this with the help of a parent or friend but be prepared to tell them about how you were saved.
- From that point, elders of a local church should support you. This will include helping you understand baptism, arranging a date and location (baptisms can be held in a variety of places: maybe in a hall with a baptistry, a swimming pool, river, or even the sea; all that is required is water, Acts 8. 36).



Soul-Searching Scriptures

BY STEPHEN G. BAKER, LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

'His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it', John 2. 5

This is the final article of this series. When I started the series, I aimed to ask a range of people to write about a Bible verse that had significantly impacted their lives and had a very sacred place in their hearts. I know there is literature that some people feel is life-changing, but it is rare to come across a book that has had such a universal impact on people's lives. But such is the Bible. It is the 'living word of God', and we should not be surprised at its powerful effect on people's thinking and behaviour.

As I passed the editorship of Young Precious Seed to Andrew, I did not anticipate writing the final article in this series. But here we are, he asked me. Now, it was one thing for me to ask someone else to talk about a life-changing verse; it's quite another thing to bare my soul and write about how God has spoken to me. Looking back over my life, I have concluded that God must have spoken to me many times, and I ignored Him. I hope this is not the case with you, but it is possible to be oblivious to the voice of God as He speaks to you through His word. 'For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not', Job 33. 14.

The verse I want to share with you is part of a narrative describing the first miracle the Lord Jesus performed. He was at a wedding with His mother and twelve disciples. As you would expect, it was a happy day, but a major problem occurred – they ran out of wine. This was quite a crisis, especially at a wedding! But the Lord Jesus was there, and when He is present, problems can be solved.

But the words that impacted my life were not spoken by the Lord Jesus but by His mother, Mary. You probably know the story but let me remind you of it. When the wine ran out, Mary approached her son, Jesus. She told Him the problem – 'they have no wine'. The Lord Jesus didn't agree to fix the problem. Still, Mary, knowing that the Lord Jesus would always do what is right, turned to the people serving at the wedding feast and said, 'Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it'. She knew that just doing what the Lord Jesus instructed would be the right thing to do.

The reason the verse had such an effect on my life was all down to timing. Like many of you, I had read it for a lifetime, but I heard it in a completely different light that day. You see, God's word meets our needs and speaks to the circumstances of our lives. I had been struggling with God's will for my life. My wife and I felt that God was calling us to give up our jobs and serve Him, but we wanted to be sure that we were doing the right thing. We couldn't just assume that we understood God's will; we needed concrete evidence. Over time, the Lord had provided lots of evidence and many confirmations. Still, that year, 2006, God spoke to me as I sat at the Belfast Easter Conference. It was straightforward but powerful. Rolly Pickering, an evangelist from Northern Ireland, got up to preach and read this verse. God used his message from John chapter 2 verse 5 to convince me that I had to do what God told me – leave my business and start serving Him daily in gospel preaching and Bible teaching.

Our heavenly Father will not necessarily use the same scripture to speak to you, but just remember – whatever He says unto you, do it!

Saints' CVs: The Wesleys

BY JEREMY SINGER, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND

SUSANNA WESLEY (NEE ANNESLEY) 1669-1742

If a godly mother is the greatest blessing an infant can know, then Susanna's nineteen children were blessed indeed.¹ She was an intelligent woman with a mature grasp of Christian doctrine. Susanna endured a difficult marriage to an Anglican clergyman, with frequent disagreements leading to long periods of her husband's absence from the family home. The Wesleys also suffered from serious financial difficulties. In this unpromising environment, Susanna educated her

In this article, we will consider three members of a remarkable 18th-century family.

children 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord', Eph. 6. 4. She wrote to her husband, 'I cannot but look upon every soul you leave under my charge as a talent committed to me under a trust'.²

Susanna practised home schooling, starting her children's education when they reached the age of five. They were



expected to learn the complete alphabet on the first day. The children also studied Greek and Latin; one daughter was able to read from the Greek New Testament when she was only eight years old.

However, the most important part of Susanna's motherly

care for her children was her prayer life. She prayed with her young family at home every day; often neighbours would come into her house to listen to these prayers.

The remainder of this article focuses on two of Susanna's sons, namely John and Charles.

JOHN WESLEY 1703-1791

As a youngster aged five, John was rescued from a house fire. From that moment, he saw himself as a 'brand plucked from the burning'.³ After studying at Charterhouse school in London, John went to Oxford University in 1720, where he became an accomplished scholar and was later ordained as a clergyman. He joined a society known as the 'Holy Club' – a prototypical student Christian union in which members read the Bible together and carried out charitable work.

After an unsuccessful visit to America, John returned to London in 1738. He attended a religious meeting in Aldersgate Street one evening, where he heard someone read LUTHER's introduction to the Epistle to the Romans. Recalling the incident years later, Wesley says, 'I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me'.⁴

John Wesley was friendly with George Whitefield, another former member of the Oxford Holy Club. The two men became pioneers of open-air preaching, particularly as their

evangelical message was generally unwelcome in the established church. Wesley stated, 'I look upon all the world as my parish'.⁵ He admitted that he preferred 'a commodious room, a soft cushion and a handsome pulpit, but field preaching saves souls'.⁶

Wesley was frustrated by the lack of spiritual reality and enthusiasm in the established Church of England. He longed for evangelical revival and preached to that end. In the great doctrinal controversy of his day, Wesley sided against the Calvinist doctrine of a limited atonement. He had disagreements with his contemporaries and difficulties in his marriage. Like the best of men, he was only a man at best. Nevertheless, as SPURGEON says, 'The character of John Wesley stands beyond all imputation for self-sacrifice, zeal, holiness, and communion with God'.⁷



CHARLES WESLEY 1707-1788

Charles Wesley was John's younger brother. Born prematurely, his mother wrapped him in wool and the baby didn't cry until he was two months old. He attended Westminster school in London, then followed his brother John to Oxford University. Charles was a founder of the Holy Club, whose members were mocked as 'Bible moths' by other students.⁸

Charles' conversion experience occurred three days before that of his brother John. He was captivated by the thought of 'the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me', Gal. 2. 20. On 21st May 1738, Charles states that he finally 'found [him]self at peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of loving Christ'.⁹

Charles became a prolific poet, writing several thousand

hymns.¹⁰ Many of his works are still popular today, including *And can it be, Love divine, O for a thousand tongues to sing, and Hark the herald angels sing*. Modern scholars agree that Charles Wesley's lyrics are 'richly saturated in scripture'.¹¹ We conclude with a verse from my favourite Wesley hymn.

*Jesus the name to sinners dear,
The name to sinners given;
It scatters all their guilty fear,
It turns their hell to heaven.*



¹ Ten of Susanna's children survived to become adults. See <https://epwortholdrectory.org.uk/family/susanna-wesley/>.

² "Mrs Wesley as Preacher." From the *Journal of John Wesley*. See <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal.vi.ix.vii.html>.

³ Zech. 3. 2. This is also the title of a popular biography of John Wesley: ROY HATTERSLEY, *A Brand From the Burning: The Life of John Wesley*, Little Brown, 2002.

⁴ "I felt my heart strangely warmed". From the *Journal of John Wesley*, *op. cit.*

⁵ From the *Journal of John Wesley*, *op. cit.*

⁶ MARK WATER (ed.), *New Encyclopedia of Christian Quotations*, John Hunt, 2000.

⁷ C. H. SPURGEON, *Defence of Calvinism*. See <http://www.romans45.org/spurgeon/calvinis.htm>.

⁸ See <https://www.wesleysoxford.org.uk/people/holy-club/what-was-the-holy-club>.

⁹ *Journal of Charles Wesley*. See <https://wesley.nnu.edu/charles-wesley/the-journal-of-charles-wesley-1707-1788/the-journal-of-charles-wesley-may-1-august-31-1738/>.

¹⁰ Charles Wesley published 4500 hymns, according to <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Wesley>.

¹¹ *In our time: John Wesley*, BBC Radio 4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000q3m2>.