YPS young

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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 8,829, Derby, DE1 0SY, UK, and is available separately from the main magazine.

YOUNG.PRECIOUSSEED

Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the November issue of YPS.

Here are more articles for you to enjoy, and I hope you find them to be a help and blessing.

Andrew Dutton

Seeing the world through a biblical lens – The value of the family unit



STEPHEN G. BAKER, LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

Statistically, strong family units are consistently linked to better health and mental well-being. It is commonly accepted that children in secure families show higher resilience, adults report lower rates of depression and anxiety, and family support reduces the impact of poverty and stress. Globally, negative family relationships are correlated with higher risks of depression (11%) and anxiety (7%). In contrast, positive family functioning improves outcomes across generations. This information comes from a variety of sources that can be readily accessed online.[1]

It should not be surprising to anyone who reads the Bible carefully that the evidence points to the fact that living within a secure family unit is advantageous for health and mental well-being.

We have already seen in this series that God created 'male and female' as unique individuals with common characteristics but at the same time having very distinctive qualities. We will see in a later article that the marriage of a man and a woman is part of God's design for the well-being, stability, love and support of human beings. Added to this, we discover that there is an additional aspect of relationships and community that is vitally important for our well-being – the family. The family is not just something that conveniently evolved. It was specifically designed by God. After the flood judgement of the world, Genesis chapter 10 records the list of descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth – the three sons of Noah. Each part of the family tree was grouped in four ways – by land, language, families and nations. So very early on in Bible history the concept of the family unit is clearly seen.

Being part of a family should be wonderful – but realistically, I know every family has its 'ups and downs'. It is a place where we belong (I know that there are always exceptions); it is a place where we feel secure, we are loved; it is OK to be you and so on. The family unit was intended for the health and well-being of society, and the evidence is that it is the best way for good community and social cohesion. We are worse off as individuals, and as a society, when the health of the family unit is ignored.

In Genesis chapter 12 verse 3, God gives Abram the promise of future blessing. One of the blessings is that 'in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed' NKJV. The blessing of faith in God through the promised Messiah is ultimately seen in the blessing of families. It is wonderful how often God saves whole families – it is not guaranteed, but it is often the case (see Acts 16. 15, 32, 33; 1 Cor. 16. 15).

David, the shepherd boy who became king, wrote about the family in several Psalms. He was from a big family that would have had the normal stresses and strains of family life. Still, he had discovered the importance that God had placed on the family. He writes that God is 'A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows . . . in His holy habitation. God sets the solitary in families', Ps. 68. 5, 6 NKJV. I love the fact that God is a Father to those who have no father and intends that a lonely (solitary) individual is included in family life.

One last reference and then I will leave you to ponder the significance and value of a family. In Psalm 107, an unknown writer states, 'Yet He sets the poor on high, far from affliction, and makes their families like a flock', v. 41 NKJV. Our God frees and liberates people. He rescues people experiencing poverty from trouble and makes their families like flocks of sheep. Sometimes God does this in this world and on other occasions in the next, but one thing you can be sure of is this – the picture is that God protects, cares for and feeds those who are needy and trust Him. The incidental but significant lesson we learn from this is – families should be places where we are protected, cared for and provided for. If this is the case in your life, you should be thankful.

It is what God intended. If this is not true for you, please remember God is your Father, you are part of the family of God (if you are saved) and you have brothers and sisters who can do for you what your natural siblings have never done.

[1]SSPH+ | Positive and Negative Family Relationships Correlate With Mental Health Conditions -a Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. https://www.ssph-journal.org/journals/public-health-reviews/articles/10.3389/phrs.2025.1607381/full

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Book of the Revelation – Part 2, What John Saw

DAVID MCGAHIE, KELLS, NORTHERN IRELAND

Last time, we noticed that the book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, 1. 1, and, from the start of the book, we cannot miss that. In the introduction, 1. 1-8, He is identified as the loving Saviour who died for us, v. 5, but who is clearly alive again; He is the one who rightfully has glory and dominion forever, v. 6, and who is coming back again, v. 7. We see that He is not just relevant for so-called 'Christian' nations, but that on His return **everyone** on earth will be impacted. When He is identified as the beginning, v. 8, we are reminded that it was by Him that **everything** was made, John 1. 3. As previously explained by Paul, 1 Cor. 15. 24, 25, this book will also demonstrate that He is the ending of all things as well. The introduction closes by reminding us that He is **the Almighty**. So, from the very start of the book, it is clear that Jesus Christ is God, and the end of **all history** is bound up in Him. We are also clearly aware that He is in total control, and worthy to be worshipped. These themes are so important to have in mind when following our studies in Revelation. We will see that they pop up often in various forms throughout the book. Whether looking at the past, present, or future, we cannot miss the obvious conclusion: He is the **theme of it all**.

Talking of past, present, and future, that is what John is to record, 1. 19, and send to the seven churches located in the Roman province of Asia, v. 11, part of modern-day Turkey.

While a lot of Revelation covers 'things which must shortly come to pass' (the future), v. 1, the key to understanding John's writings about both the future and the present is 'the things that thou [John] hast seen', v. 19 – that is, the past when he was writing. What does he record that was already past when he was told to write? In keeping with the theme of the whole book, it's a vision of the Lord Jesus, vv. 1, 9-18, which gives us the basis for understanding aspects of the whole book!

Let's just look at some parts of this vision quickly:

His clothes, v. 13, indicate a priest,[1] reminding us that even in the worst situations to be revealed later, He still represents His own people.

His head and hair, v. 14, recall the vision Daniel had of the 'Ancient of Days'[2] in the Old Testament, Dan. 7. 9-14. That reveals again that Jesus Christ is God, the same as the Jehovah of the Old Testament. He is one who as Son of man will conquer and rule over all kingdoms of the earth. He will also judge earth's rebel leaders from the opened books. If you have read the whole of Revelation, you will immediately see why that part is relevant! He will not miss anything with those blazing eyes.

His feet of brass, v. 15 – the metal which resists fire and speaks of judgement. He is the one whose ways in judgement are perfect and who will never be condemned as He treads the world in judgement.

From His mouth, a sword, v. 16 – a symbol of the word of God. Again, this is very relevant – the one who created all things by speaking will also judge all nations and destroy all enemies by the authority of His word. And so, this vision really sets the scene for the theme of the revelation of future events.

However, it also sets the scene for the messages to the churches in the present. In the next article we will look at those. Relevant parts of the vision appear in those letters to the churches in the next two chapters.

Finally, note two more things:

1) When John turns to see who speaks, the first thing he sees is the seven churches. When people in this world start to look for Christ, the first thing they see is the Christians. We need to ensure that when they see us their eye is drawn to Christ.

2) John, who knew Jesus very well on earth, falls as though dead at the majesty of the exalted Christ. The glorified Lord Jesus is the same person who once walked on earth, but there's no easy familiarity now. John falls in worship. The one revealed here is majestic in every way. This majestic one will dictate the letters we look at next.

[1] Compare with Exod. 28. 4, 31

[2] While some authors identify the 'Ancient of Days' in Daniel as the Lord Jesus, others as the Father, and others simply as God, it is clear that He is the Jehovah of the Old Testament, where individual members of the Trinity are often not clearly distinguished.

Christian basics – The Will of God



STUART SCAMMELL, CARDIFF, WALES

Unless otherwise indicated, quotations are from the New King James Version.

The will of God is an important issue; in fact, Ephesians chapter 5 verse 17 tells us that we would be unwise not to understand the will of God.

When we think about God's will, we are often searching for direction in our lives. All Christians should crave to know this. As a new believer, the Apostle Paul asked, 'Lord, what do You want me to do?' Acts 9. 6.

In one sense, God's will is carried out regardless of anything that we do. His sovereign will demonstrates His ultimate control over all creation, and His purposes will happen. 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure', Isa. 46. 10.

God declares to us His moral will. This is revealed through the instruction of scripture. Micah makes a statement about the moral will of God being declared to man, and that we have a responsibility to follow the instruction that we receive. 'He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?' Mic. 6. 8.

Practical instruction is given in the scriptures for this. Christians are to live holy lives, with different standards from the 'world'. Paul writes, 'For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication', 1 Thess. 4. 3 KJV. We must not allow the world's standards of morality to become acceptable to us. Rather, we must live pure lives, where sexual activity is reserved for marriage.

In the very next chapter, we learn more of the instruction of God revealing His will to us. We are reminded to, 'Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you', 1 Thess. 5. 16-18. When we do this, we are acknowledging that, whatever circumstances we find ourselves in, we will find reason to be grateful to God for our blessings. When we pray, we are aligning our will to God's will and seeking to walk the path that He has designed for us.

Our lives are to reflect the character of God in the community around us. The example that the Lord Jesus left us was that He 'went about doing good', Acts 10. 38. The will of God is that we emulate this as a testimony to those who would deny the existence of God and be vocal about it. Peter wrote, 'this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men', 1 Pet. 2. 15.

There are other examples of the will of God being made explicit in scripture, and these should be evident in the lives of each believer.

When Christians ask about how they can know the will of God, they are often referring to personal, specific **direction from God in their lives**. In this regard, the Christian who is not living the way that God would have them live and is not obeying the 'this is the will of God' statements in the Bible, cannot expect to know His direction.

In response to what our Lord did for us upon the cross, we should ask daily what we can do for Him. We can only know joy and God's blessing when we listen to the commands of God and respond with open obedience, as the servants did in response to Mary at the wedding at Cana, when she said, 'Whatever He says to you, do it', John 2. 5.

Yet, how do we discern the will of God?

We cannot expect God's will to be revealed to us while thinking we know best. His direction will be revealed to us when we, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding', Prov. 3. 5. We need to acknowledge God in everything, if we are to truly know God's promise, 'And He shall direct your paths', v. 6.

If we live lives that are no different from the world, we will not think like God and discern His will. We must not be 'conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind', Rom. 12. 2.

God's will is not going to contradict His word. He speaks to us through the Bible, 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path', Ps. 119. 105.

God's will is given when we allow our will to be aligned with His. To do this we need to be praying; the psalmist encouraged this, 'Seek the Lord . . . Seek His face evermore!' Ps. 105. 4.

When God reveals His will to us, it is often a step of faith to move forward trusting those plans. His plan is always best. Jeremiah the prophet, at a certain point in time, wrote down God's plan for His people. Although it is specific to them at that point, it reveals the heart of God to those who trust Him. 'For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope', Jer. 29. 11.

As we seek the will of God, we are not alone. God gives us older, wiser believers to provide counsel. We are reminded that as we embark on this lifelong task of doing God's will, the Holy Spirit is there throughout to lead us. We can be encouraged as we seek God's will that, those who 'are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God', Rom. 8. 14.

Saints' CVs: C.H. Spurgeon

BY JEREMY SINGER, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND



C.H. SPURGEON 1834-1892

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was known as the 'prince of preachers' in Victorian England.[1] Thousands of people flocked to hear his messages each week. His sermons were transcribed in shorthand while he preached on Sunday, then edited by himself on Monday and sent to the printers for widespread distribution a couple of days later.[2] Although there are no recordings of Spurgeon's voice, it was described at the time as a 'silver bell'.[3] We might well imagine his booming tones as we read his powerful sermons today. WARREN WIERSBE was an admirer of his preaching style, selecting many of Spurgeon's sermons in the Kregel series of 'Classic Sermons' books.[4]

Although we might not agree with Spurgeon's stance on local church order or his views on future events, we can benefit from reading his work. WIERSBE advises us to 'plunge right into his sermons . . . and revel in the grace of God that was so real to this mighty preacher'.[5]

Born in Essex in 1834, Spurgeon was saved at the age of fifteen on a snowy Sunday as he took refuge from the winter weather in a Methodist chapel. The text that day was 'Look unto me, and be ye saved', Isa. 45. 22. In later life, Spurgeon recalled how the preacher 'pointed to where I was sitting under the gallery, and he said, "That young man there looks very miserable" . . . and he shouted, as I think only a Primitive Methodist can, "Look! Look, young man! Look now!" . . . Then I had this vision – not a vision to my eyes, but to my heart. I saw what a Saviour Christ was . . . and I did believe in one moment. And as the snow fell on my road home from the little house of prayer, I thought every snowflake talked with me and told of the pardon I had found, for I was white as the driven snow through the grace of God'.[6]

Spurgeon was a gifted and prolific preacher. At the age of twenty, he was appointed as pastor of New Park Street Chapel in London (which later became the Metropolitan Tabernacle). Notable celebrities of the time came to listen to Spurgeon, including politician William Gladstone and social reformer Florence Nightingale.

Spurgeon had a way with words; so many of his striking quotations are often repeated all these years later.

- 'I know of no better thermometer to your spiritual temperature than this, the measure of the intensity of your prayer'.[7]
- 'It is a good rule never to look into the face of a man in the morning till you have looked into the face of God'.[8]
- 'Remember, Christ's scholars must study upon their knees'.[9]
- 'Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the book widens and deepens with our years'.[10]

Of all his writings, my top picks are the *Treasury of David and Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith*. The *Treasury of David* records his comments on the Psalms; this monumental multi-volume work took him two decades to complete. The *Cheque Book* is a daily devotional which uses the banking metaphor that we can draw upon God's promises by faith, being sure that the divine credit account will never be exhausted.

Spurgeon also composed some beautiful poetry. We often sing one of his hymns when we break bread on a Lord's day morning:

Amidst us our Beloved stands,
And bids us view His pierced hands,
Points to His wounded feet and side,
Blest emblems of the Crucified.

Another of his poems which I enjoy describes a saint's anticipation of heaven:

When tears are banished from mine eye,
When fairer worlds than these are nigh,
When Heaven shall fill my ravished sight,
When I shall bathe in sweet delight,
One joy all joys shall far excel,
To see Thy face, Immanuel!

As well as preaching and writing, Spurgeon had a heart for people in need. He was a friend of George Müller, who cared for orphans in Bristol. Spurgeon set up a similar orphanage ministry in Stockwell, London, in 1867.[11] He suffered from poor health in later life, frequently travelling to mainland Europe where the climate was better. He died in France in 1892 at the age of fifty-seven.

1 www.princeofpreachers.org.
2 CHARLES RAY, *A Marvellous Ministry: The Story of CH Spurgeon's Sermons*, Passmore and Alabaster, 1905.
3 www.spurgeon.org/blog/10-public-speaking-tips-from-charles-spurgeon
4 For instance, I have WIERSBE'S 'Classic Sermons on the Word of God' and three of the eleven sermons are by Spurgeon.
5 WARREN W. WIERSBE, *50 People Every Christian Should Know*, Baker, 2009.
6 MARY ANN JEFFREYS, *Spurgeon's Conversion*, Christian History Magazine, Issue 29, 1991. christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/issue/charles-spurgeon-englands-prince-of-preachers
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