



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.

Volume: 22 Issue: 1  
**FEBRUARY 2025**



YOUNG.PRECIOUSSEED

## Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the February issue of YPS.

With a new year, we have some new series of articles. Stephen Baker introduces a series intended to help equip Christians to face issues of our day – 'Seeing the world through a biblical lens'.

Also, Richard Smith is back drawing lessons from the kings of Judah – 'Gone, but not forgotten – epitaphs of the kings of Judah'. There will be negative examples, but these are very instructive for dangers to avoid in practical Christian living.

I hope you enjoy this issue and find it to be helpful and encouraging.

Andrew Dutton

## Seeing the world through a biblical lens – Introduction

STEPHEN G. BAKER, LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

Andrew Dutton has asked me to work on a new series with him. I am delighted to do this and to continue contributing to Young Precious Seed.

So, what are we trying to achieve? Hopefully, the title is self-explanatory. We want to revisit a range of topics and issues that face Christians today and discover what the Bible has to say about them. Our aim is not to be controversial or to directly disagree with what other people think (though this may well happen at some stage), but to highlight and focus on what the Bible has to say about each subject.

We live in a world of diversity, where everyone has an opinion; people are taught that no individual's view is more significant than anyone else's. Many people feel that there is no such thing as absolute truth and that one of the worst sins is to be dogmatic about what you believe. We beg to differ. We will not be discourteous or dismissive of other people's opinions, but we are convinced we can be sure of the absolute truth about the critical areas of life.

If I were an electrician, I would want to know facts about my trade, the principles on which electricity operates, and to be clear that what I was doing was right before I signed off a job and told my customer that things were working correctly and safely. If I were having heart surgery, I would be very concerned if my surgeon and all the theatre staff did not have a clear and accurate view of what they were doing before operating on me. I can hear you say that these are specialist disciplines that have developed over a long time so that we can trust them. But this is also the case with the moral and ethical issues we all face. How do I know?

I know because I have the manual from the manufacturer in my hands – the Bible. The Bible is the word of God. It has been proven to be an inspired document. Time has tested the Bible to be authentic. It is authentic in two ways:

1. What we are reading today is an accurate translation of what was initially written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
2. It has been demonstrated to be accurate in that what it teaches meets the needs of the human heart and has transformed the lives of millions who have come to trust in the author and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not my intention to prove these two points to you as there are sufficient sources to testify to the truthfulness of these statements.<sup>1</sup>

So, we will take our information (truth) entirely from the Bible. We are not going to apply a subjective interpretation but quote the statements of the Bible and leave you to search and see if the truth stacks up – I think that is a fair approach.

I had considered giving you a list of topics and issues we will discuss, but it might be easier to see how things develop and where we go with this series. Really, I would love you to turn to YPS as soon as you get your *Precious Seed* magazine because you are so intrigued to discover what we will be discussing in 'Seeing the world through a biblical lens'. I hope you do, and that you will find it an important tool as you develop your convictions about life and living for God in the 21st century.

<sup>1</sup> There are many studies available including the following three books which are widely available:

F. F. BRUCE, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*, InterVarsity Press, 2000.

J. McDOWELL, *God Breathed, The Undeniable Power and Reliability of Scripture*, Shiloh Run Press, 2015.

B. M. METZGER, *The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions*, Baker Publishing Group, 2001.

# Gone, but not forgotten Epitaphs of the kings of Judah

RICHARD SMITH, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND



## 1. Jehoram

In the series *We 4 Kings* we looked at the first four kings of Judah after the division of Israel under Rehoboam. In summary:

**Rehoboam:** was a king with **no conviction**.

There were three areas of conviction that we considered:

1. **The word of God** must be the only authority for our opinions and actions. Otherwise, we are subject to our own whims and those of others. We must read, understand, and live by the word of God.
2. **The house of God** is the place where God has set His name. For the Jews that was the temple in Jerusalem; for us it is the church. How highly do we value the principles of the church?
3. **The people of God** are extremely precious to Him. Our thoughts of the Lord's people are a strong indication of our thoughts towards Him.

**Abijah:** had **conviction** without **courage**.

**Asa:** possessed **conviction** and **courage**; but he couldn't handle **criticism**.

**Jehoshaphat:** was the best king since David, an excellent king, in fact! However, he lacked **consistency**. His mistaken marriage alliance with Ahab led to his son Jehoram marrying Athaliah, Ahab's daughter, and the result was disastrous for Judah.

**Jehoram's** first recorded royal act was to murder his brothers and some of the princes of Judah, 2 Chr. 21. 4. He followed his father-in-law's wickedness in the worship of Baal, and all the evil that accompanies idolatry. He made Judah go astray, v. 11. This caused the people to revolt. Previously, the Philistines and Arabians brought gifts to Jehoshaphat, 17. 11; during Jehoram's reign they returned and took back more than they had given, including his wives and most of his sons, 21. 16, 17. Finally, the Lord struck him with an incurable disease and he died in great agony, vv. 18, 19.

**Jehoram's** eight-year reign was a complete disaster. The people did not mourn him. They buried him in the city of David, but not in the kings' tombs. His youngest son Ahaziah became king, and he continued the lifestyle of his father and maternal grandfather, Ahab; his mother was his counsellor in doing wickedly, 22. 3. He reigned for one year and was murdered by Jehu, the incoming king of Israel. His mother set out to destroy the royal family of Judah and, although she failed, she nearly succeeded. What stopped her? God's plan will never be thwarted. The King of kings was to come from the line of Judah and the wickedness of God's enemies will never defeat God's plan. Despite Jehoram's vile behaviour, God had made a covenant (a promise) to David that his throne would endure; He would not break that promise, 21. 7.

In this series, we will be looking at memorable statements made about some of the kings, how they will be remembered. Of Jehoram, it was said in 2 Chronicles chapter 21 verse 20:

**HE DEPARTED WITHOUT BEING DESIRED (KJV)**

**HE DEPARTED WITH NO ONE'S REGRET (ESV)**

**NO ONE WAS SORRY WHEN HE DIED (CEB)**

The Message puts it more bluntly, 'There were no tears shed when he died—it was good riddance!' He caused Judah nothing but trouble and they were glad to see the end of his reign.

What makes such a devastating conclusion?

**His father's lapse:** How we behave will have an impact on us immediately and the effects of our sinful actions may be felt by others, sometimes for many years. Sexual sin, for example, can lead to many far-reaching problems for us and others. We must strive to maintain God's standard in our lives. However great Jehoshaphat was, his legacy in his son was a direct result of his disobedient alliance with Ahab.

**His fierce longing:** He wanted to be the unrivalled king; no one would get in his way. We must remember that we do not live unto ourselves. We have a responsibility to look on the needs of others (fellow-believers), but also to have a good testimony before the world. Position, power, and wealth are not sinful in themselves; sometimes how they are achieved can be!

**His final legacy:** His son Ahaziah

followed his behaviour. That was Ahaziah's choice, but his example was a poor one. The effect of our behaviour on others cannot be underestimated.

In the Lord's parable of the talents, the profitable servant was told 'well done . . . good and faithful servant', Matt. 25. 21. Let's strive for that epitaph rather than Jehoram's who 'departed without being desired', 2 Chr. 21. 20.



# Christian basics – joining a local church

ANDREW DUTTON, NORWICH, ENGLAND

In the last article, we considered the command for believers in the Lord Jesus to be baptized. This is an essential step for every Christian since the Bible teaches that baptism should follow salvation, Acts 2. 41. But the verse goes on to say that on the 'same day [they] were added'. Therefore, after the Lord Jesus had ascended into heaven, the example of the early believers was that they were saved, immediately baptized, and then added to a local church.

Let's look at **why** Christians should be part of a local church and **what** a local church is.

## Why?

The sequence in Acts chapter 2 is consistent with the teaching of the New Testament Epistles – that all believers in the Lord Jesus should be baptized and in the fellowship of a local church. The single exception is if a believer has been 'put away from' the church because of sin, 1 Cor. 5. 13, or false teaching, Titus 3. 10; in which case, repentance is expected and then restoration to church fellowship. As such, to be obedient to the teaching of the Bible, every believer should either be part of a local church, or making arrangements in life to join a local church.

## What?

'Church' is expressed in two ways in the New Testament:

- All Christians everywhere, since the Lord Jesus returned to heaven. The Lord Jesus said, 'I will build my church', Matt. 16. 18. This is described as 'the church, which is his body', Eph. 1. 22, 23, sometimes referred to as the 'universal church'.
- A local group of believers at a certain place. There are lots of examples in the New Testament, such as 'the church of God which is at Corinth', 1 Cor. 1. 2. This is often referred to as the 'local church'.

We are focusing on the local church and the importance of belonging to one. 'Church' comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, meaning 'assembly' or 'gathering'. It is the group of believers, not the building they meet in. There are various features of a local church summarized in Acts chapter 2 verse 42:

- **'they continued stedfastly'** – the believers were committed to regularly meeting together.
- **'in the apostles' doctrine'** – all they did was based on the authority of the word of God; which is set out for us in the New Testament Epistles.
- **'and fellowship'** – because of a common bond in the Lord Jesus, they shared life experience together. The word means 'sharing in common'.<sup>1</sup>
- **'and in breaking of bread'** – they would meet to remember the Lord Jesus weekly, Acts 20. 7.
- **'and in prayers'** – they would meet regularly for prayer.

Local churches today should seek to follow this pattern.

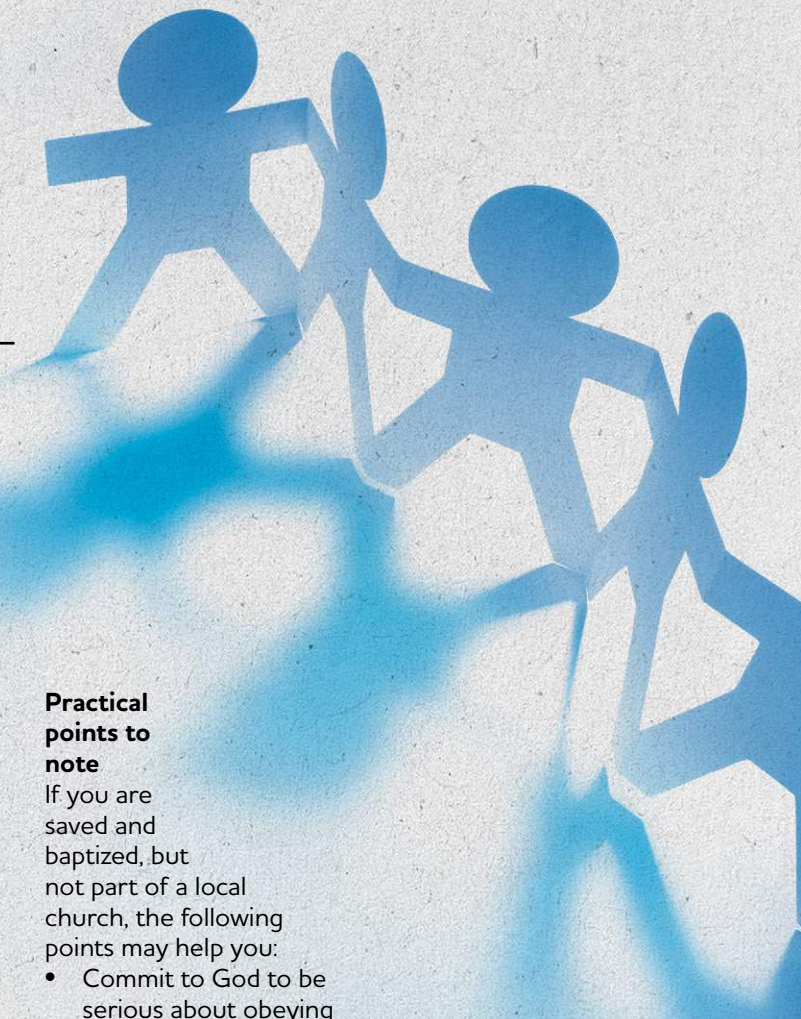
## Practical points to note

If you are saved and baptized, but not part of a local church, the following points may help you:

- Commit to God to be serious about obeying His word, and ask for His help in arranging to join a local church.
- If you are very young and you attend local church gatherings with your family or Christian friends, there may be a need to wait until you are old enough to take on the responsibility of being 'in fellowship'. But now is an opportunity to learn what it means and still to be committed to the local church. Ask the Lord to prepare you and look forward to the time when you can be 'added', Acts 2. 41, to the church.
- If you go along to meetings at a local church, approach the elders to let them know of your desire to join the believers in fellowship. You could do this with the help of a parent or friend. Be aware that the elders will want to talk to you about the responsibilities of joining the fellowship; they will also want to be confident that you will fulfil the responsibilities.
- If you do not attend a local church, or don't even know of a church that seeks to function as described in the New Testament, you will need to find one. Ideally, this should be near where you live. JACK HAY has written a helpful booklet entitled *Which Church?* providing excellent advice on this subject.<sup>2</sup> Also, feel free to contact us at Precious Seed if you need any help.

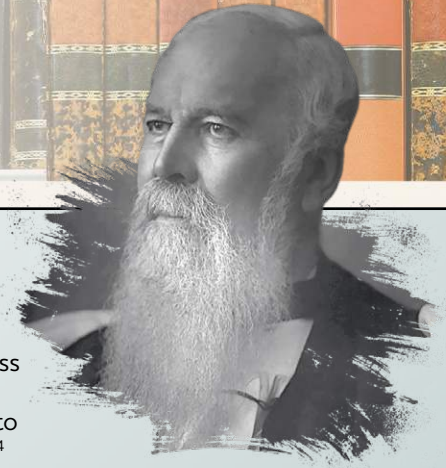
<sup>1</sup> W. E. VINE, *Vine's Complete Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Nelson, pg. 233.

<sup>2</sup> J. HAY, *Which Church?*, Ritchie Christian Media, available at <https://www.ritchiechristianmedia.co.uk/product/hay-which-church>.



# Saints' CVs: J. C. Ryle

BY JEREMY SINGER, BRIDGE OF WEIR, SCOTLAND



## J. C. RYLE 1816-1900

### His background

John Charles Ryle enjoyed a privileged upbringing in Victorian England. The eldest son of a wealthy Cheshire businessman, J. C. Ryle was educated at Eton and Oxford. He captained the university cricket team and was also known for rowing. At a height of 6'4" (1.93m) he towered over his fellow students. However, disaster struck at the age of twenty-five when his father lost their family fortune in a banking crash. RYLE later recalled, 'We got up one summer's morning with all the world before us as usual, and went to bed that same night completely and entirely ruined'.<sup>1</sup>

Originally intending to take up politics, instead Ryle became an Anglican vicar. While we might not agree with some of his doctrinal standpoints or denominational associations, J. C. Ryle was a keen evangelist and a powerful communicator. We can still benefit from his teachings today.

### His faith

Ryle described his conversion experience at Oxford in his autobiography. He arrived late to a service one day, just as the scripture reading was taking place. The reader carefully and deliberately emphasized each word of Ephesians chapter 2 verse 8, 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God'. RYLE said, 'Nothing I can remember to this day appeared to me so clear and distinct as my own sinfulness . . . the need to be born again . . . Before that time I was dead in sins and on the high road to hell, and from that time I have become alive and had a hope of heaven. And nothing to my mind can account for it, but the free sovereign grace of God'.<sup>2</sup>

Christianity in England was highly fragmented in the Victorian age. Many people wanted to reintroduce ceremonial ritual and return to Catholicism, whereas others were sincerely evangelical. Ryle was definitely in this latter camp. He said, 'No one ever reached heaven without repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ'.<sup>3</sup>

His heroes included historical individuals mentioned in previous articles in this series, including Tyndale, the Wesleys, and Whitefield.

Ryle knew much of tragedy throughout his life. He was married and widowed three times, with his first wife dying in childbirth and his second wife suffering a debilitating illness for several years.

### His writing

Due to his accessible style, Ryle's work is entirely readable today, more than a century after his death. He was a gifted communicator who intentionally employed simplicity in his speech and writing. 'Unless you are simple in your sermons

you will never be understood, and unless you are understood you cannot do good to those who hear you'.<sup>4</sup>

His most famous book is *Holiness*, which is an entirely balanced discussion about sanctification. The modern theologian J. I. PACKER describes this book as 'a masterpiece of pastoral indignation'.<sup>5</sup>

Ryle also wrote a commentary series called *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*, covering all four evangelists across seven volumes. My personal favourite is his treatment of John. I remember rainy lunchtimes in my high school library in Liverpool, poring over Ryle's notes on the Lord Jesus' conversation with Simon Peter in John chapter 21. RYLE asserts, 'Well would it be for the church, if all "after-dinner" conversations among Christians were as useful and edifying as this'.

### Liverpool

J. C. Ryle was associated with Liverpool, which during his lifetime grew from a medium-sized town to a major metropolis. Although he worked in the South of England originally, Ryle moved to Liverpool in 1880 and served in the city for twenty years until his death in 1900.

The prime minister, Benjamin Disraeli, selected Ryle to be the first bishop of Liverpool. Ryle was noted for his evangelical disposition. He argued against the construction of a costly cathedral in the city, instead preferring to see money spent on building mission halls around the city.

### Quotes

There are many valuable quotations from Ryle, well worth memorizing. Here is a small selection.

- 'Fear not because your prayer is stammering, your words feeble, and your language poor. Jesus can understand you'. (from *A Call to Prayer*)
- 'Hell is truth known too late'. (from *Practical Religion*)
- 'Do nothing that you would not like God to see. Say nothing you would not like God to hear. Write nothing you would not like God to read. Go no place where you would not like God to find you. Read no book of which you would not like God to say, "Show it to Me"'. (from *Thoughts for Young Men*)

### Recommended reading

J. C. RYLE, *Holiness*. <https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/holiness.htm>.

DAVID HOLLOWAY, *J. C. Ryle: the man, the minister, and the missionary*, The Christian Institute, 2022.

ERIC RUSSELL, *That Man of Granite with the Heart of a Child: A New Biography of J. C. Ryle*, Christian Focus Publications, 2001.

<sup>1</sup> J. C. RYLE, *Bishop J. C. Ryle's Autobiography: The Early Years*, Banner of Truth, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> J. C. RYLE, *Repentance*. [https://www.gracegems.org/24/Ryle\\_repentance.htm](https://www.gracegems.org/24/Ryle_repentance.htm).

<sup>4</sup> J. C. RYLE, *Simplicity in Preaching*. <https://gracegems.org/18/Ryle-%20Preaching.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> J. C. RYLE, *Holiness*, Preface by J. I. PACKER, Evangelical Press, 1979.