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Thanks be to God, which  
giveth us the victory through  
our Lord Jesus Christ.

—I Corinthians 15:57



Christian Science Sentinel  
**Bible Lens**

**Mortals and  
Immortals**

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# Mortals and Immortals

## from the Responsive Reading

### I Corinthians 15:49

*As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

According to one commentary, early Jewish thinkers “distinguished the first man of [Genesis] 1 from the second man of [Genesis] 2”—and “argued that it was the first, heavenly man, not the ... physical man, that bears God’s image.” Paul’s promise about bearing this image is echoed in Second Corinthians: “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image” (3:18).

### II Corinthians 6:2

*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

Here Paul quotes the book of Isaiah: “In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee” (49:8). *Acceptable* (Greek, *euprosdektos*) is interpreted by some as *favorable*, and is assumed to be a reference to Christ’s advent.

The message of immediacy is common to New Testament writers. Paul counsels the Roman church, “It is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Romans 13:11). The author of Ephesians charges, “Now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (5:8). First John has, “Now are we the sons of God” (3:2). And the book of Revelation records this heavenly declaration: “Now is come salvation, and strength, and

the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ” (12:10). As one source says, “The ‘time of favourable acceptance,’ ... the ‘day of salvation,’ is ever, not in the past.”

## from Section 1

### 2 | Ephesians 4:22–24

*That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

Many ancient Greeks believed desires and passions to be corrupting influences, and reason to be the hallmark of maturity. Here the writer elevates the focus from human reasoning to divine control and defines renewal as a spiritual activity.

“After God” is viewed by most scholars as a reference to the image or likeness of God described in Genesis 1:26, 27. Similar wording occurs in Colossians 3:10: “after the image of him that created him.”

## from Section 2

### 5 | Genesis 31:3

*The Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.*

Jacob’s return to Canaan completes the arc of this story—his deception of his father and brother, his two-decade stay in Mesopotamia, his encounter with God there, and his reunion with Esau (see chaps. 27–30,

# An exploration of Bible citations from the *Christian Science Quarterly*® Bible Lessons

“...a lesson on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends.” —Mary Baker Eddy

32, 33). A theme of family conflict emerges in the years-long account. Begun in Canaan between the two brothers, it continues during Jacob’s time with his wives’ relatives. As this part of the saga closes, the inharmony is resolved (see chaps. 29–31).

God’s promise “I will be with thee” repeats the divine pledge to Jacob at Bethel (see 28:15). God’s presence is guaranteed throughout both the Old and New Testaments—to Joshua, Jeremiah, and Paul, for instance (see Joshua 1:5; Jeremiah 1:8; Acts 18:10).

## from Section 3

### 9 | John 8:3–6

*The scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him.*

Under Roman rule, Jews were not allowed to execute anyone. At the same time, Hebrew law apparently required stoning in cases like this. No matter how Jesus answers, the synagogue leaders expect to be able to charge him with a serious infraction of Roman or Hebrew statutes. They may also suppose that by supporting one of these rules, he will contradict his own teachings about the law and forgiveness (see Matthew 5:17, 18; 6:14, 15).

When the Master replies, he speaks from the knowledge that Jews considered no one free of sin. His charge “He that is without

sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her” exposes their hypocrisy and halts their scheming.

## from Section 4

### 10 | John 3:5, 7

*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.... Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

At this time, baptism had only been associated with the conversion of Gentiles. So to Nicodemus, a Pharisee of high standing, the need to submit to a rite of baptism may have seemed incomprehensible, if not humiliating.

Because the Greek word *anōthen* (translated again in verses 3 and 7) has three meanings—from above, anew, first—Jesus’ statement is open to misinterpretation. Yet Nicodemus’ misunderstanding yields vital clarification of the Master’s teaching: A radical spiritual transformation, not physical change, is called for.

Being created anew is central to New Testament doctrine. Paul declares, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (II Corinthians 5:17). Ephesians 4:23 counsels, “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” First Peter refers to “being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the work of God” (1:23).

#### Resources quoted in this issue

**RR:** Keener, Craig S., John H. Walton, eds. *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016; Perowne, John J. S., Alexander F. Kirkpatrick, Frederic H. Chase, Reginald St. John Parry, and Alexander Nairne, eds. *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*. 58 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1882–1922. Also available at [biblehub.com/commentaries](http://biblehub.com/commentaries).

# You are God's song

By Ruth Geyer

From the April 9, 2012, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

I recently read of a sweet practice in an African village in a book called *Wisdom of the Heart* by Alan Cohen. When a woman of the Babemba tribe is pregnant, she takes her friends into the wilderness, where they pray until she hears her baby's unique "song." She teaches it to her friends, and they go back and teach it to the village. They gather and sing the song when the child is born, when he enters school, when he passes through initiation to adulthood, and when he marries. And when he passes on, the tribe gathers at his bedside, just as at his birth, and sings.

There's another important occasion when the villagers sing a person's song. If someone commits a crime or is socially aberrant, the villagers gather at the center of the village, form a circle around him, and sing his song when he seems to have forgotten it himself. They don't chastise or ostracize him, but gather around him and nestle him back into his true nature.

This custom parallels how we view spiritual identity in Christian Science, as that which comes directly from God. Our spiritual identity is a kind of "home base" where we're always safe, authentic, and happy.

The Bible story of Jacob holds a beautiful lesson about the real spiritual identity of each of us. In Genesis 32, we read of how Jacob wrestled an angel prior to meeting his brother. Up until that point, we might consider Jacob's life by conventional standards to have been pretty successful. He outwitted his twin Esau, his father Isaac, and his uncle Laban. But when God led him to return home, old memories and fears flooded his consciousness. He wrestled not a human foe, but an angel message from God that forced him to reckon with his life.

Then with the dawn, Jacob's spiritual recognition came and he received a new name reflecting his new spiritual understanding.

I like to think an angel reminds each of us when we're struggling, too. In the darkness, an angel thought of our better sense regrounds us in God's goodness, grace, and light, and wrestles a sense of error and self to the ground. With self silent, we can hear God singing our true identity.

Of course, to fully realize God's song is not the work of a moment. We may still feel scared or alone in the darkest hours. But practice perfects, and the more one aligns with divinity, the more divine Love reveals answers in pitch-perfect song. To stand in God's presence and simply reflect Him wipes out angst and helps one to see the beauty and safety of true identity. As Mary Baker Eddy wrote, "Man is as perfect now, and henceforth, and forever, as when the stars first sang together, and creation joined in the grand chorus of harmonious being" (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*, p. 188).

When I stop whatever I'm doing and establish that God is here, it's natural to humbly express gratitude in a spontaneous and sweet conversation with God. It's a pure and simple heart song. It may take some time, but I can keep listening and thanking God until I find I'm right in the middle of His song.

What sweetness, substance, and radiance the understanding of our real identity brings!

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to [jsh.christianscience.com/you-are-god-s-song](http://jsh.christianscience.com/you-are-god-s-song).