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We have received, not the
spirit of the world, but the
spirit which is of God.

—I Corinthians 2:12



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Bible Lens

Matter

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from the Responsive Reading

Romans 7:12

The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

Students of Paul's writings point to apparent inconsistency in his attitude toward the law. In some cases he condemns it. He tells the Roman Christians, for instance, "By the law is the knowledge of sin" and "The law worketh wrath" (3:20; 4:15). Yet he celebrates the law in many places, including this verse.

As one scholar explains, the apostle opposes exclusive or literal interpretation of Hebrew code rather than the law itself: "The Jew thought that if he kept the Law he would be saved. Paul taught that man must be saved in order to keep the Law."

I Corinthians 3:18

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

World is translated from the Greek term *aion*, meaning age or era. Those who were "wise in this world" included intellectuals, experts in Jewish law, and popular orators. Paul warns that prevailing opinion that is accepted as wisdom is made foolish by God (see 1:20, citation 4).

The Greek word *mōros*, translated *fool*, is considered a severe denunciation, implying not mere silliness but worthlessness of character. It is the source of the English word *moron*.

from Section 2

4 | I Corinthians 1:20

Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

At this time Paul has been preaching about Jesus' crucifixion. Many people—both Greeks and Jews—were scandalized by the idea of a crucified Messiah. To associate the most humiliating of punishments with God's chosen one was deemed foolish, even outrageous. Yet the cross is central to Christian teaching.

Paul's question addresses incensed reactions to this doctrine. To him, the importance of the crucifixion is indisputable: "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (v. 18). The divine authority manifested by the crucified and resurrected Savior, understood and lived, isn't foolish but the essence of wisdom.

5 | Isaiah 33:22

The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us.

In the ancient Near East, kings generally controlled all functions of the government—what is often separated today into the judicial, legislative, and executive branches. To the Hebrew, Yahweh's divine rule is all-encompassing, as expressed in His covenant with Israel (see examples in Exodus, chaps. 21–23).

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

6 | Exodus 3:11, 12

Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? And he said, Certainly I will be with thee.

Exodus 3:2—4:17 is an example of a “call narrative”—a divine charge to someone God has chosen to carry out His work. Elements of the interchange include God making His presence known, an introduction, the assignment, an objection, divine reassurance, and a sign of God’s power.

For Moses, the burning bush and God’s communication begin the narrative. After the commission and Moses’ objections, God provides several assurances—including the comforting words “I will be with thee.” Finally, signs are given in the form of the snake and rod, as well as the cure of Moses’ leprous hand.

from Section 3

8 | Romans 8:6

To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

To Paul, sin and death are not just closely associated but inseparable. A Bible authority points out: “Death is both the penalty of sin, thought of as transgression, and the final issue of sin, thought of as bondage. But for Paul the relation is even closer than either of these terms suggests. . . . To live in sin is not simply to face the sure doom of death; it is also to be dead in a real sense already.”

9 | Matthew 14:25–27

In the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

Christ Jesus’ appearance on the stormy sea is recorded in all the Gospels but Luke (see also Mark 6:47–51; John 6:16–21). Each account includes the Master’s self-identification “It is I.” Only Matthew, however, tells of Peter’s attempt to walk on the water. And only Matthew records the disciples’ spontaneous confession “Of a truth thou art the Son of God” (14:33).

from Section 4

10 | I Peter 4:12, 13

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings.

Earlier in this letter, the writer compares “the trial of your faith” to the testing of gold by fire (see 1:7). Believers recognized the “fiery” ordeal their Master had undergone. The persecution they now experience, explains a commentary, “is part of the redemptive suffering of Christ: to be reproached for following him is to share in the grace his suffering occasioned.”

Resources quoted in this issue

RR: Eiselen, Frederick Carl., Edwin Lewis, and David G. Downey, eds. *The Abingdon Bible Commentary*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1929.

Cit. 8: Buttrick, George Arthur, Nolan B. Harmon, et al., eds. *The Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 9, *Acts, Romans*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1951–57.

Cit. 10: Mays, James L., Joseph Blenkinsopp, et al., eds. *Harper’s Bible Commentary*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.

Take it to the court of Spirit!

By Dorcas W. Strong

From the June 29, 1968, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

Human law accords men the right of appeal. An unfavorable decision rendered in a lower court may be taken to a higher court, where a reversal of the decision may be sought. Divine law, contained in the Bible and explained in Christian Science, reveals mankind's moral right to appeal injustices of every kind to the court of Spirit. Here divine mercy annuls verdicts that threaten man's life, health, and usefulness.

Precedent for such appeals may be found throughout the Bible, especially in the healing ministry of Christ Jesus. Every phase of injustice imposed by medical beliefs or theological misconceptions yielded to the Master's understanding of the law of Love.

In *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, writes, "Ignorant of our God-given rights, we submit to unjust decrees, and the bias of education enforces this slavery" (p. 381). A little further on she states, "It is man's moral right to annul an unjust sentence, a sentence never inflicted by divine authority." Through an allegory found on pages 430 to 442 of *Science and Health*, Mrs. Eddy illustrates how an understanding of one's God-given rights corrects injustice and restores health.

This allegory depicts the trial of a case of illness in the way cases are tried in court. The defendant, Mortal Man, is tried first in the lower Court of Error, where the testimony before Judge Medicine, including that representing Health-laws, results in a sentence of death. Of this critical point, Mrs. Eddy writes, "Ah! but Christ, Truth, the spirit of Life and the friend of Mortal Man, can open wide those prison doors and set the captive free" (pp. 433-434).

The case is then appealed to the Supreme Court of Spirit, where Mortal Man is defended by Christian Science. Argument based on Scriptural evidence that man is subject to divine law alone annuls the sentence of death and sets Mortal Man free.

We can always take our case to the court of Spirit, where there is recourse to a law that supersedes medical opinion and fallible human judgment.

Our plea before this court is based on the realization that man is the spiritual image and likeness of God. He is not a mortal at the mercy of material laws or adverse circumstances. As the beloved child of God, he is under the jurisdiction of divine Truth and Love. Spiritual laws, the forces of good, sustain his existence and maintain his birthright of dominion over all the earth.

Every appeal to the court of Spirit is granted an immediate hearing. But patient persistence is required in refuting the arguments of material sense with true, spiritual facts until one's belief in the reality of evil is overcome.

Freedom from injustice of every kind will be realized in the experience of each one who humbly and trustingly takes his case to the court of Spirit. As he faithfully pleads his cause according to the divine statutes taught in Christian Science, the truth of Isaiah's promise will be attested: "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our law-giver, the Lord is our king; he will save us" (Isaiah 33:22).

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to jsh.christianscience.com/take-it-to-the-court-of-spirit.