



Christ shall give thee light.

—Ephesians 5:14



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

Reality

**September 21–
27, 2020**

Reality

from the Responsive Reading

Psalms 119:159, 160

Consider how I love thy precepts:... Every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.

Psalm 119 is a meticulously constructed ode to God's law. In 22 stanzas—each corresponding to a letter of the Hebrew alphabet and made up of exactly eight verses—the author celebrates not mere legal code or even Mosaic law but the Word of God.

"The sheer existence of this extraordinary meditation on God's Torah," writes a commentator, "is a telling reminder that Israel's Law was no heavy burden laid upon a people, constricting its life and energies. Rather, God's Law is presented as the best gifts of a good God."

from Section 1

5 | Isaiah 66:1

The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.

God's boundless being is a recurring theme in the Bible. In dedicating the Jerusalem Temple, Solomon prays, "The heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built?" (I Kings 8:27). And Stephen cites Isaiah in his eloquent defense before his accusers: "The most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool; what house will ye build me? saith the Lord" (Acts 7:48, 49).

from Section 2

7 | Isaiah 43:2, 3

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.

Images of water and fire often represent danger and trouble in Scripture, and are commonly accompanied by words honoring God's protection and care. Psalms 66:12 says, "We went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."

"The Holy One of Israel" as a name for Yahweh occurs nearly thirty times in the book of Isaiah—more than in the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures. Isaiah portrays the God of Israel as the one God, whose covenant relationship with His people ensures their redemption.

9 | Daniel 3:24, 25

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

Scholars suggest that Nebuchadnezzar, a pagan king, identified the fourth man as a

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

godlike being or angel rather than the Jewish Messiah. And while he blesses “the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,” he does not require reverence toward their God. Rather, he decrees that no one “speak any thing amiss” against Him, saying, “There is no other God that can deliver after this sort” (vv. 28, 29). By contrast, after Daniel was delivered from the den of lions, King Darius commands “that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel” (6:26).

from Section 4

13 | Jeremiah 10:19

Woe is me for my hurt!

Speaking on behalf of Yahweh, Jeremiah laments the unfaithfulness of the Israelites (see vv. 17–22). The prophet became known for his chastisements—and centuries later *jeremiad* became a term to describe long complaints. But he is also remembered for such comforting reminders as God’s declaration “I have loved thee with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3).

from Section 5

18 | Luke 13:14, 15

The ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

Christ Jesus healed on the Sabbath several times. In addition to this instance, he cures a man with a withered hand, an invalid, and a blind man (see Matthew 12:10–13; John 5:1–9; John 9:1–7, 14). Each time, he is met with objections from Pharisees and others who cite the Fourth Commandment (see Exodus 20:8–11). The Master shifts the focus from a rigid, ritualistic interpretation of religious codes to a higher sense of obedience to God’s law, which includes compassion and healing.

In calling the synagogue ruler a hypocrite—a rebuke of Jewish elders recorded multiple times in the Gospel of Matthew—Jesus points to the pretense of a stage actor (the original meaning of the Greek word *hypokritēs*).

from Section 6

19 | Mark 1:14, 15

Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Kingdom, writes a Bible authority, “designates not simply the realm or place where God reigns, but ... the ‘active ruling of God.’” This divine activity is “at hand”—immediate and lasting.

To learn more about the *Christian Science Quarterly* Bible Lessons, go to biblelesson.com.

Resources quoted in this issue

RR: Harrelson, Walter J., ed. *The New Interpreter’s Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003.

Cit. 19: Mays, James L., Joseph Blenkinsopp, et al., eds. *The HarperCollins Bible Commentary*. Rev. ed. New York: HarperCollins, 2000.

Citizenship in heaven

By Julia M. Johnston

From the June 1950 issue of *The Christian Science Journal*

One of the greatest sayings recorded in literature was uttered by a man who lived in a province under the authority of Rome at the beginning of the Christian era.

To those who thronged this holy man—to the bewildered, oppressed, and broken in spirit, to the sick, sinful, and sorrowful—there came from his lips an utterance that was to outlast his human experience and the rule of the Roman Empire. This utterance was the immortal declaration (Luke 17: 21), "The kingdom of God is within you."

In declaring that the kingdom of heaven is within man, the son of God, the Master implied that man's true citizenship is in spiritual existence; a very different picture from the one presented by the physical senses. Yet, he proved what he said.

The kingdom of God within is closer to an individual than any external form of human government. Human law would have annihilated the Master and his work. Divine government delivered him from destruction and perpetuated his mission.

Christ Jesus taught that man's privileges as a citizen of heaven are divine, inalienable rights. Human rights can be trampled upon and abrogated; divine rights are preserved and energized by immutable law. Oneness with God, freedom from evil, mental integrity, preservation of individuality, and everlasting spiritual dominion are among the divine rights of man.

In the kingdom of God the citizens do not run or ruin the government; they are obedient to it and glorified by it, for God works in them "both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). True knowledge of this delivers human experience from mortal misjudgment and mismanagement.

Under divine government nothing can arise that menaces existence; nothing can rob the individual of aught that he has inherited from his Father-Mother God; no one can encroach upon his aloneness with his Maker. In God's kingdom man never becomes friendless, debased, or forgotten. He cannot vary from his high status of divine offspring.

Christian Science has come to awaken humanity to the presence of the universal kingdom of God at the center and circumference of all true being. Wherever a person may be, whether in a poverty-stricken country, a compulsory labor camp, or removed beyond all seeming possibility of human aid; whether without country, lost to family, or oppressed by political aggression; whether helpless, imprisoned, or wandering over the face of the earth, the presence of divine Love is with him to claim him as a citizen of the kingdom of God. As he acknowledges this true status of his being, the laws of his eternal homeland operate in his behalf to deliver him to the uttermost. Then he finds that man has never been separated from the power of his heavenly kingdom; he has never been pressed by circumstances beyond the reach of its authority.

Obedience to spiritual government solves political as well as physical problems. And as man's spiritual citizenship is acknowledged and faithfully practiced by the inhabitants of earth, the signs of our times will be the world-wide appearing of the kingdom of God.

To read the entire article, which has been adapted to fit this page, go to
**jsh.christianscience.com/
citizenship-in-the-kingdom.**