



BIBLE LENS

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Shining a light on the weekly Bible Lessons published in the *Christian Science Quarterly*®

Truth

July 19–25, 2021

from the **Golden Text**

Jeremiah 22:29

O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.

References to “the word of the Lord” appear well over two hundred times in the Hebrew Bible. In a majority of cases, *word* is translated from the Hebrew *dabār*, occasionally rendered *commandment*, *counsel*, or *promise*. Representing God, it connotes the power depicted in [Isaiah 46:11](#): “I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.” Scholars explain that *word* encompasses both speech and the thought behind it.

Earth (from the Hebrew term *’eres*) can mean “the inhabitants of the earth” or “the people of the land.” By repeating it three times, Jeremiah urges obedience to God.

from the **Responsive Reading**

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Greek term translated *word* (*logos*) was familiar to both Greeks and Jews. To Greeks, it could signify a controlling but abstract principle of the world. To Jews, it described the creative force that brings things into being.

One commentator notes “a stair-step progression of thought” in verse 1—“. . . from the existence of the Word (v. 1a) to the relationship of the Word with God (v. 1b) to the identity of the Word as God (v. 1c).” He continues, “. . . John states that the Word is what God is and the Word does what God does.”

Proverbs 8:14, 20

Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. . . . I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment.

In this chapter, wisdom is portrayed as a woman speaking in the first person. What may seem like a self-promoting style is intended as a kind of résumé of wisdom’s meaning and value for humanity. [Job 12:13](#) presents the qualities listed here as attributes of God as well: “With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.”

Tûšîyâ, the Hebrew word rendered *sound wisdom*—denoting clear thinking for those in positions of power—occurs throughout the books of Job and Proverbs. It is distinct from the more common term for wisdom (*hokma*), signifying prudence and shrewdness.

from Section 1

2 | [Psalms 33:8, 9](#)

Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

fear: deeply respect

inhabitants: people who live in a particular place

stood fast: held firm

from Section 2

7 | [I Kings 3:5, 6, 9](#)

In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. . . . Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

In the early days of his reign—before the building of the Temple at Jerusalem—Solomon traveled to the tabernacle at Gibeon to offer a sacrifice. Gibeon was the Canaanite city where Joshua commanded the sun to stand still (see [Joshua 10:12](#)). Later it was given to the tribe of Benjamin and became a major “high place” for Israelite worship (see [I Chronicles 16:1, 37, 40](#) ; [21:29](#)).

Of David’s 19 sons, Solomon was chosen by the king to inherit the throne as promised to the boy’s mother, Bath-sheba (see [I Kings 1:16, 17, 29, 30](#)). (At that time, the precedent that the firstborn son inherit the throne was not yet established in Israel.) Bible authorities believe Solomon was in his early teens (but possibly closer to twenty) when he became king.

Understanding is translated from the Hebrew word *šāmaʿ*. It is rendered *hear* in the well-loved Jewish Shema: “Hear [*šāmaʿ*], O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” ([Deuteronomy 6:4](#)).

7 | [I Kings 3:16, 17, 19, 20, 22](#)

Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. . . . And this woman's child died in the night; . . . And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. . . . And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son.

After the period of the Hebrew judges (perhaps two to three hundred years following the Exodus), kings took on the judgment role. Solomon's story emphatically illustrates this function—and the insight it called for.

Because prostitutes weren't respected members of society, it's likely their word was suspect. And in this case there was no recognized father to corroborate their accounts or identify the child in question. Solomon's God-given wisdom was therefore widely recognized (see [v. 28](#)).

One source cites two precedents for dividing possessions in property disputes (see [Exodus 21:35](#) ; [II Samuel 19:29](#)). By this standard, the woman who agreed that the baby be divided was legally correct. But the king's judgment came down on the side of love, with the touching irony that the mother who was willing to give up her son was granted him back.

from **Section 3**

8 | [John 1:14](#)

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

“Here we come to the sentence for the sake of which John wrote his gospel,” suggests a scholar. “He has thought and talked about the word of God, that powerful, creative, dynamic word which was the agent of creation, . . .” Now John reminds believers of their crucial witness to the incarnate Word. With the affirmation “the Word was made flesh,” he also refutes the claim of some early Christians that Jesus was purely spiritual, only seeming to have appeared humanly.

In this Gospel, the New Testament concept of truth is a prevailing theme. Another scriptural authority explains, “The Hebrew word [*ʾemet*] stood for ‘faithfulness,’ ‘trustworthiness,’ ‘permanence,’ and ‘sureness,’ while the Greek [*alētheia*] had the meaning of ‘truth’ as opposed to ‘falsehood,’ or of ‘reality’ as opposed to mere ‘appearance.’”

8 | [John 1:18](#)

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Translation

No one has ever seen God. God's only Son, the one who is closest to the Father's heart, has made him known.

—GOD'S WORD Translation

9 | [John 4:46–48](#)

There was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

Signs and wonders occur together multiple times in the New Testament, signifying extraordinary phenomena, miracles, or remarkable events. Here the nobleman must have perceived something beyond the miraculous in his son's healing. When he learns of the coincidence of the cure and Jesus' words "Go thy way; thy son liveth" ([v. 50](#)), "himself believed, and his whole house" ([v. 53](#)). He moves from simply seeking healing to fully embracing Christ's teachings.

10 | [John 8:31, 32](#)

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Translation

Jesus said to the Jews who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teaching. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

—Common English Bible

"Jews which believed on him" were Jews who accepted Jesus' Messiahship. The Master, however, required a fundamental shift in perspective from his followers. As a commentary brings out, "... he at once puts this faith of theirs—perhaps ignorantly expressed—to a proof absolutely necessary for the salvation of his hearers."

from **Section 4**

11 | [Hosea 4:1](#)

Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

Translation

*Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel!
The LORD has brought charges against you,
saying:
“There is no faithfulness, no kindness,
no knowledge of God in your land.*

—New Living Translation

“Hear the word of the Lord”—like the announcement “Thus saith the Lord”—was a traditional prophetic phrase calling the people to listen to and obey God (see other examples in [Isaiah 66:5](#) ; [Jeremiah 31:10](#) ; [Ezekiel 34:7](#)). In this verse, Hosea introduces legal imagery with the word *controversy* (Hebrew, *rîb*, rendered *indictment* in some translations). God is seen as bringing His people to judgment for their unfaithfulness and immorality.

12 | [Matthew 22:29](#)

Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

Translation

... “You are all wrong because you know neither the Scriptures [which teach the resurrection] nor the power of God [for He is able to raise the dead].”

—Amplified® Bible

13 | [Isaiah 50:4, 5, 7](#)

The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. . . . For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded.

Translation

*The Lord GOD gave me the ability to teach
so that I know what to say to make the weak strong.
Every morning he wakes me.
He teaches me to listen like a student.
The Lord GOD helps me learn,
and I have not turned against him*

*nor stopped following him. . . .
The Lord GOD helps me,
so I will not be ashamed. . . .*

—New Century Version

the learned: those who are well educated

in season: at the right or most helpful time

rebellious: disrespectful toward authority; unwilling to obey rules

14 | [II Timothy 2:7, 15](#)

The Lord give thee understanding in all things. . . . Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Translation

. . . the Lord will grant you full insight and understanding in everything. . . . Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.

—Amplified® Bible Classic

from **Section 5**

15 | [Acts 4:32, 33](#)

The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: . . . And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

Translation

The group of believers were joined in their hearts, and they had the same spirit. . . . With great power the apostles were telling people that the Lord Jesus was truly raised from death. And God blessed all the believers very much.

—International Children's Bible

16 | [Acts 5:17–21](#)

The high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.

Sources note the Temple’s significance in this story. It was the center of power for the high priest, so the apostles’ decision to teach there—especially at daybreak, the Israelites’ morning worship time—was a direct challenge to his authority. Yet as a scholar points out, “They and not the Sanhedrin elders are the legitimate leaders of Israel; they are the ones who are called and empowered by God to teach the people.”

Sect is translated from the Greek *hairesis*, the basic meaning of which is choice or choosing. Though it came to represent heresy (and is the source of that English word), here the signification is closer to “school of thought.”

This is the first of three accounts of the imprisonment of believers who are freed by divine might (see also [Acts 12:1–11](#); [16:19–26](#)).

16 | [Acts 5:34, 35, 38, 39](#)

Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; and said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. . . . And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

had in reputation: well known and respected

as touching: about; with regard to

nought: nothing

haply: perhaps; maybe

18 | [Galatians 5:7](#)

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

Translation

You were running a good race. Who stopped you from following the true way?

—New Century Version

from **Section 6**

19 | [I Thessalonians 2:13](#)

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Translation

... we always thank God because of the way you accepted his message. You heard his message from us, and you accepted it as the word of God, not the words of men. And it really is God's message. And that message works in you who believe.

—International Children's Bible

effectually: well; thoroughly

20 | [James 1:25](#)

Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Translation

... there are those who study the perfect law, the law of freedom, and continue to do it. They don't listen and then forget, but they put it into practice in their lives. They will be blessed in whatever they do.

—Common English Bible

Read a related article, "[God's Word is not spoken in vain](#)" by Joyce C. Leddy.



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