



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

## Adam and Fallen Man

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### from the **Responsive Reading**

#### I Corinthians 15:45, 47–49

*The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. . . . The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

“Living soul” quotes wording about the creation of Adam from dust, the essence of matter (see [Genesis 2:7](#), citation 4).

“Quickening spirit” describes God’s life-giving nature and activity, demonstrated by Christ Jesus. “The image of the heavenly” further portrays this Christly character, which is understandable by every believer.

John the Baptist uses a version of this *earthy/heavenly* language in distinguishing himself from the Messiah: “He that is of the earth is earthy, . . . he that cometh from heaven is above all” ([John 3:31](#)). And Paul employs the Adam/Christ contrast in his message to the Roman Christians, stating that “as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” ([Romans 5:19](#)).

#### I John 3:1–3

*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

A commentator affirms, “What we shall be has not been revealed; but that in no way overturns the reality that we are God’s beloved children *now* . . . .”

#### I John 5:4, 5

*Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

Victory over the corrupt, ungodly state termed “the world” is a theme throughout the New Testament. Jesus provides this encouragement to the faithful: “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” ([John 16:33](#)). The letters to the churches in Revelation contain promises to the one “that overcometh” (see [Revelation 2:7–3:21](#)), and [Revelation 21:7](#) declares, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”

Believing in Jesus’ identity as the Son of God was—and continues to be—paramount to Christian experience. John’s Gospel and the book of Acts record individual professions of this by the disciple Nathanael, a blind man who had been healed, Lazarus’ sister Martha, and the Ethiopian eunuch, for instance (see [John 1:49](#); [9:35–38](#); [11:27](#); [Acts 8:37](#)). [John 20:31](#) adds this rationale about the Gospel’s accounts: “These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

## from **Section 1**

### 2 | [Genesis 1:1](#)

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

“Biblical revelation begins with a simple, strong, and sublime affirmation,” one source asserts. “Instead of arguing the existence of God, it declares that the very existence of the universe depends on the creative power of God.”

Distinct Hebrew terms related to creation appear in [Genesis 1:1](#) and [2:7](#). In the first record, the verb *bārā’*—to bring into being—is used. It also occurs in [Psalms 104:30](#), “Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created [*bārā’*]”; in many prophecies of Isaiah; and in this profound question from [Malachi 2:10](#): “Have we not all one father? hath not one God created [*bārā’*] us?” In Scripture, *bārā’* refers exclusively to the Divine.

The second chapter account employs the verb *yāsār*—to mold or shape something that already exists, as a potter manipulates clay. While the word often alludes to Yahweh, it can depict the forming of idols (see [Isaiah 44:10](#)) and weapons (see [Isaiah 54:17](#)) as well.

### 2 | [Genesis 1:27, 28](#)

*God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

In the ancient Near East an image of something was thought to hold its essence. In this passage, man in God’s, Spirit’s, image is shown to express His spiritual nature.

Bible authorities understand the Hebrew verb rendered *have dominion* (*rādā*) here to signify stewardship and caregiving. This model represents the ideal of royal government, in which a ruler guarantees the welfare of his subjects (see [Psalms 72:1–17](#), for example). Similarly, *subdue* (*kābaš*)—applied to crops in this verse—is viewed as implying development, not intimidation.

## from Section 2

### 4 | [Genesis 2:7](#)

*The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*

“Lord God” occurs as a name for God over five hundred times in the Bible. Although a tribal deity, the Lord God (known as Yahweh and later called Jehovah) was seen as the source of all creation.

Dust has negative connotations elsewhere in Scripture (see instances in [Ecclesiastes 3:20](#); [Isaiah 52:2](#), citation 13), confirming that the man of dust is not the genuine, Godlike being found in Genesis 1.

## from Section 3

### 6 | [Genesis 3:1](#)

*Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

Modern commentaries point out a wordplay between *subtil* (Hebrew, *‘ārûm*) and *naked* in [Genesis 2:25](#) (*‘ārôm*).

Succumbing to trickery or charm leads not to the power and prestige promised by the snake, but to the vulnerability of nakedness.

The serpent’s craftiness takes the form of insinuation. No coercion takes place—only suggestions that the Lord God may not have His creation’s best interests at heart. At the outset of Jesus’ career, Satan tries the same tactic to raise doubts about the Savior’s divine status: “*If thou be the Son of God*” ([Luke 4:3](#), italics added).

### 6 | [Genesis 3:9, 11–13](#)

*The Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? . . . Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*

*Beguiled* is translated from the Hebrew verb *nāšā’*, meaning to lead astray, delude, seduce, or charm. *Nāšā’* is most frequently rendered *deceive* or *deceived*, as in this warning: “Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive [*nāšā’*] you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed” ([Jeremiah 29:8](#)).

## from **Section 4**

### 10 | [Mark 2:15–17](#)

*It came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

Jesus' friendliness with publicans and sinners is noted several times in the synoptic Gospels (see examples in [Luke 15:1](#); [19:1–9](#)). Hebrew publicans—tax collectors for the Roman Empire—were viewed by other Jews as traitors because they worked for Rome. They were also resented for the additional money they regularly demanded for their own enrichment.

On this occasion Jesus is eating at the home of Levi (sometimes identified as Matthew), the publican he has just invited to join his group of disciples. As a Roman agent in contact with Roman money, Levi is considered impure under Jewish law. At the Pharisees' rebuke, the Master cites a well-known proverb—that those who are well have no need of doctors. While most of his listeners expect only the righteous to be rewarded, he announces his mission to save sinners.

### 11 | [Matthew 19:13, 14](#)

*Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus has recently answered his disciples' question about rank and position in God's kingdom, saying in part, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (see [18:1–6](#)). Yet the disciples fail to see the connection with actual children, so the Savior again commends children as Christly models.

The putting on of hands was part of the ritual of blessing, and became a symbol of consecration and healing.

## from **Section 5**

### 14 | [Luke 8:41, 42, 49–55](#)

*There came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a-dying. But as he went the people thronged him. . . . While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.*

Unlike the Temple at Jerusalem, which was overseen by priests descended from the tribe of Levi, synagogues were governed by lay elders. Jairus was one of these leaders. To be charged with conducting worship services, interpreting the Torah, and exercising some degree of judicial authority, he would have been a prominent, well-educated Jew. His trust in Jesus' healing power, however, set him dramatically apart from the majority of Jewish officials. As a commentator puts it, "He had to cast aside his rank, his prestige, in falling at the feet of an unauthorized, itinerant teacher."

Jesus' characterization of the daughter's condition as sleep, not death, signals the certainty of her restoration to life. And his command to feed the girl confirms her healing, much as his request for food after his resurrection confirms his final victory over death (see [24:41–43](#)).

## from **Section 6**

### 16 | [Galatians 3:26](#)

*Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

A keynote of early Christianity was the inclusion of all believers. Those of Jewish heritage had traditionally scorned "Greeks," a term that had come to represent all non-Jews, as unclean—and often as bitter enemies of the Hebrew people. The teaching that all followers of Christ were children of God through faith required considering every Christian as "Abraham's seed" ([v. 29](#)).

One scriptural authority reflects: "Faith is not a matter of mustering a heroic capacity to believe the odd or the miraculous; . . . It is a matter of reliance on the Word of God as the one truth upon which we stake our lives."

### 17 | [1 John 2:23, 24](#)

*He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.*

During his ministry, Jesus decisively taught that knowledge of his sonship with God leads to knowing God. He declared, for instance, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" ([Matthew 11:27](#)) and "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me" ([John 12:44, 45](#)). First John reemphasizes Christ as the unique and exclusive means to understanding God.

At a period when some believers have left the community, the writer charges the remaining adherents to stay with what they have learned "from the beginning"—the basics of Christian doctrine. A scholar notes, "They already had the promise of eternal life. They did not need a new teaching; they needed only to abide in the teaching they had already received from the Holy Spirit . . . ."

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Read a related article, "[Not two, but one](#)" by Beverly Bemis Hawks DeWindt, at [jsh.christianscience.com/not-two-one](http://jsh.christianscience.com/not-two-one).

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## Resources quoted in this issue

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