



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

Is the Universe, Including Man, Evolved by Atomic Force?

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from the **Responsive Reading**

I Chronicles 29:11, 12

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

At the outset of this chapter, David pledges his personal wealth and resources for Solomon's building of the Temple—a task he has long desired to undertake himself—and asks the congregation to contribute as well, which they do enthusiastically (see [vv. 2–9](#)). The Chronicler's doxology, a Bible authority suggests, "expresses an uncompromising monotheism in which all things come from an omnipotent God."

Verse 11 foreshadows the concluding lines of the Lord's Prayer: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever" ([Matthew 6:13](#)).

Isaiah 40:12

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

God's sovereignty contrasts strikingly with minuscule human capacity. Even the most impressive elements of nature are as items measured in inches or centimeters, ounces or grams. (Similar contrasts occur in [Job 38:4, 5](#), citation 2, and [Proverbs 30:4](#).)

from **Section 1**

1 | [Hebrews 11:3](#)

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

People in many ancient cultures thought the world had been formed from preexisting matter. Jewish doctrine, however, taught that God created the world by His Word. A psalmist writes, for instance, “He spake, and it was done” ([Psalms 33:9](#)).

Discussing this assertion from Hebrews, one source observes: “Not only is the eternity of matter denied, but from the beginning a warning has been given against a materialistic philosophy. The first page of Scripture is designed to teach the constant presence and work of the Creator.” Faith enables us to see beyond matter to the invisible divine creation.

2 | [Job 38:1, 2, 4, 5, 25, 31, 32](#)

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? . . . Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? . . . Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; . . . Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?

For most of Job’s story, he grapples with doubts about God’s nature and intent toward His creation. Now God answers Job, not with final statements, but in four chapters of questions describing His supreme power and wisdom (see [chaps. 38–41](#)).

A scholar explains, “God’s numerous questions to Job are designed to challenge Job’s understanding and to increase knowledge, not shut it down.” Another notes, “God does not humiliate or condemn him.” God’s responses, he adds, “succeed in bringing Job to complete faith in God’s wisdom and goodness.”

Job is humbled, saying, “I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee” ([42:2](#), citation 3). His willingness to worship God without reservation is rewarded by the restoration of abundance and peace in his life (see [42:10–17](#)).

from **Section 2**

6 | [Psalms 62:11](#)

God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.

Like other declarations in wisdom literature, this statement uses the convention of mentioning a number and then raising it by one—a means of expressing certainty or emphasis. Examples of these “numerical proverbs” are also found in [Proverbs 30:15–31](#) and [Amos 2:4](#), as well as in these words from Job: “He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee” ([5:19](#)).

9 | [II Kings 4:1–7](#)

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

Considered a major biblical prophet, Elisha was active in the northern kingdom of Israel circa 850–800 bc. Although he was commissioned by Elijah rather than receiving a direct divine call—and though his ministry was built on the foundational work of Elijah—his lifework turned out to be fuller and of much longer duration than that of his predecessor.

Elisha is sometimes viewed as milder and more social than his fierce and solitary mentor. Yet he demonstrated stern resolve during the reigns of several kings, counseling and admonishing them in the name of God. Of Elisha's many miracles, two resembled those of Elijah: this multiplication of oil for a widow and the raising of a child from death. Others included purifying noxious waters and deadly food, healing Naaman of leprosy, floating an ax-head, and saving Israel from the Syrian army (see [II Kings 2:19–6:23](#)).

from Section 3

11 | [Psalms 93:3, 4](#)

The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.

God's dominion over the chaos of surging waters is celebrated throughout Scripture, beginning with the first flood account and the parting of the Red Sea (see [Genesis, chap. 7](#); [Exodus 14:15–30](#)). Elsewhere, the Psalmist affirms that God “stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves” and “sitteth upon the flood” ([Psalms 65:7](#); [29:10](#)). One commentator reflects, “In the faith of the psalmists, . . . God is enthroned triumphantly over the powers that threaten to plunge human history into meaningless disorder and chaos.”

14 | [Luke 8:22–25](#)

Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

In this story, Christ Jesus and his disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee. Located 690 feet (210 meters) below sea level, this body of water is ringed by hills. The collision of cold mountain air with warmer air in the sea basin generates hurricane-force winds to this day.

Remains of an ancient fishing boat were discovered at the sea in 1986. Archaeologists date it to the first century ad, making it likely typical of the disciples' boat. It measures 27 feet long by 7.5 feet wide (8.2 by 2.3 meters) and would have had oars, a mast, and a sail. Clearly this small craft wouldn't have afforded much shelter to Jesus, yet his rest is undisturbed.

The Savior's authoritative quieting of the stormy sea is immediately followed by his equally decisive calming of the demon-possessed Gadarene (see [vv. 26–35](#)).

from **Section 4**

16 | [Luke 5:12–17](#)

It came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed. And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

Jesus' healings impel multitudes to seek him out—and both his works and the crowds draw the attention of Jewish religious leaders. Here the Pharisees and scribes (identified as teachers or doctors of the law) are watchful, not combative. And the Gospel writer appears to include them as possible recipients of healing.

from **Section 5**

17 | [Psalms 119:89, 111](#)

For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. . . . Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.

Psalms 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,” remarks a Bible expert, “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 of gifts of a good God.”

18 | [Philippians 3:13–15](#)

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

Paul freely admits that he has not reached the level of understanding he seeks. But just as a runner keeps his eyes on the goal before him, the apostle’s focus is on the prize of God’s call in Christ. In this “race,” the goal is purely spiritual—and it far outweighs outward evidences of piety (see [vv. 4–7](#)).

from **Section 6**

19 | [Romans 15:13](#)

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

To the Israelites, hope was not gained through human effort. It was a gift from God, an assurance of goodness flowing from His loving nature. One source points out that “because hope is God-grounded, God-sustained, and God-directed, hope is a reality within which men may dwell.”

Read a related article, “[Prayer can solve world problems](#)” by Marilyn Jane Rimmington, at jsh.christianscience.com/prayer-can-solve-world-problems.

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