



BIBLE LENS

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

Soul

August 8–14, 2022



from the **Responsive Reading**

[Jeremiah 7:21, 23; 32:40, 41](#)

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; . . . Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: . . . And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; . . . Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.

Obedience to God is a primary demand made of His people. Even before they are given the Ten Commandments, God pledges, “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people” ([Exodus 19:5](#)).

Jeremiah repeatedly urges obedience (see additional examples in [11:1–8](#); [26:12, 13](#); [38:19, 20](#)). His many predictions of disaster—seen as the effect of disobedience—seem to eclipse his more hopeful messages. (Today, lengthy laments or prophecies of doom are sometimes called jeremiads.) Yet his vision of God’s goodness to the faithful is clear, recalling [Deuteronomy 30:9](#): “The Lord will again rejoice over thee for good.” And he underscores God’s intention for good with the word *assuredly* (Hebrew, *be^e met*, literally meaning “in truth”; see other instances in [Psalms 111:7, 8](#); [Zechariah 8:8](#)).

from **Section 1**

2 | [Psalms 66:1, 2, 9, 16–20](#)

Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious. . . . Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved. . . . Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: but verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

Translation

*Shout happily to God, all the earth!
Make music to praise the glory of his name.
Make his praise glorious. . . .
He has kept us alive
and has not allowed us to fall. . . .
Come and listen, all who fear God,
and I will tell you what he has done for me.
With my mouth I cried out to him.
High praise was on my tongue.
If I had thought about doing anything sinful,
the Lord would not have listened to me.
But God has heard me.
He has paid attention to my prayer.
Thanks be to God,
who has not rejected my prayer
or taken away his mercy from me.*

—GOD’S WORD Translation

3 | Psalms 86:4, 6

Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. . . . Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.

Translation

*Give me happiness, O Lord,
for I give myself to you. . . .
Listen closely to my prayer, O LORD;
hear my urgent cry.*

from **Section 2**

5 | [Matthew 4:17](#)

Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Translation

... Jesus began to announce, “Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!”

—Common English Bible

Christ Jesus’ imperative “Repent” (Greek, *metanoō*) parallels John the Baptist’s charge in the Judean wilderness (see [Matthew 3:2](#)). Both are demanding a deep commitment to regeneration.

One scriptural authority identifies *metanoō* with the Hebrew verb *šûb*, signifying turn or return. He explains: “. . . it was not original with John or Jesus but was the standard prophetic and Jewish means of reconciliation with God. . . . ‘Get yourself a new orientation for the way you live, then act on it’ catches both the Greek and Hebrew connotations.”

6 | [Matthew 6:6](#)

When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Translation

When you pray, go to your room and close the door. Pray privately to your Father who is with you. Your Father sees what you do in private. He will reward you.

—GOD’S WORD Translation

Although prayer was a sacred daily practice for the Israelites, some “hypocrites” (v. 5) apparently displayed their piety in conspicuously public places. In this counsel Jesus rejects pride and ostentation. *Tameion*, the Greek noun rendered *closet*, refers to a storage room—likely the only separate space in most homes. The Master wasn’t directing petitioners to use such rooms, but to reach out to God privately.

While Hebrew Scripture occasionally mentions God as father (see examples in [Isaiah 64:8](#); [Malachi 2:10](#)), Jesus places God’s fatherhood at the very center of his teachings, almost exclusively calling on Him as Father. (In the single recorded exception—addressing God as “my God”—Jesus is quoting [Psalms 22:1](#); see [Matthew 27:46](#).) Later New Testament authors describe God as Father dozens of times (see instances in [Romans 1:7](#); [Ephesians 4:6](#); [Colossians 1:12](#)).

A commentator reflects: “. . . only in Christianity was the thought of God’s personal, loving relationship to the individual developed. It is through the revelation of his Son that God is known as the Father, not merely of the Son but also of all believers.”

6 | [Matthew 6:9](#)

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

“The Lord’s Prayer,” notes a scholar, “is really the community’s prayer. What stands out in the prayer is its spirit of submission and dependence. It envisions a community that walks with God and looks to him for everything from food to forgiveness.”

Jesus’ wording would have been familiar to Jewish listeners. Its opening lines echo the Kaddish, an Aramaic hymn of praise regularly recited in synagogue services: “Exalted and hallowed be his great name in the world which he created according to his will. May he let his kingdom rule”

from **Section 3**

7 | [Leviticus 26:2, 6, 9, 11, 12](#)

Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord. . . . And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: . . . For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. . . . And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

Translation

Honor My Sabbaths, and treat My sanctuary as a holy place. I am the Eternal One. . . . I will see to it that you have peace in your land. You will be able to go to bed at night without a worry on your mind. . . . I will grant you My favor, and you will be fruitful, multiply, and have many healthy children, and I will continue to honor My covenant with you. . . . I will make my home among you and never turn away from you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be My people.

Tabernacle is translated from the Hebrew word *miškān* (meaning dwelling), and is the name for the portable tent considered God's habitation.

The promise in verse 12 recurs throughout the Bible to celebrate God's covenant with His children (see, for instance, [Jeremiah 30:22](#); [Ezekiel 36:28](#)). Paul cites it in portraying the Christian community as God's temple (see [II Corinthians 6:16](#)). And the Revelator announces, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" ([Revelation 21:3](#)).

9 | [Luke 11:2](#)

Thy kingdom come.

Christ Jesus often speaks about God's kingdom—in Luke alone, the Greek term for *kingdom* (*basileia*) appears dozens of times. Apocalyptic or "end time" writings viewed this realm as a glorious future revival of Jewish power. The Savior characterizes the kingdom as spiritual, already present within each heart (see [17:20](#), [21](#), citation 26).

A Bible expert remarks: "'Kingdom' in the phrase 'kingdom of heaven' is a noun of action . . . Just as God's love means God's acting in love for others, so also God's kingdom means God's active sovereignty over creation. God's kingdom does not exist as an abstraction in and of itself, but is God's act."

from **Section 4**

10 | [Deuteronomy 6:4–6, 18](#)

The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: . . . And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord.

Translation

"The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. . . . Do what is right and good in the LORD's sight, . . ."

11 | [Job 23:11, 12, 13](#)

My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; . . . he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

Translation

*I follow faithfully the road he chooses,
and never wander to either side.
I always do what God commands; . . .
He never changes. No one can oppose him
or stop him from doing what he wants to do.*

—Good News Translation

12 | [Matthew 6:10](#)

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

God’s will has been the subject of thoughtful study over the centuries. Hebrew Scripture defines it in terms of spiritual requirements: “What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?” ([Deuteronomy 10:12, 13](#)). [Micah 6:8](#) likewise asks, “What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”

In this verse Christ Jesus declares honoring God’s will to be integral to prayer. The Master preeminently models humble conformity with the divine will, especially in his appeal to God before his crucifixion: “Not my will, but thine, be done” ([Luke 22:42](#), citation 13). And subsequent New Testament writers record believers’ devotion to God’s will (see examples in [Acts 21:8–14](#); [Romans 12:2](#); [Hebrews 13:20, 21](#); [I John 2:17](#)).

from **Section 5**

14 | [Matthew 6:11](#)

Give us this day our daily bread.

Daily is translated from the Greek adjective *epiousios*, appearing only here and in Luke’s version of the Lord’s Prayer (see [Luke 11:3](#)). It is interpreted variously as “for the coming day,” “for the next day,” or “for all time.”

Bread, according to 16th-century theologian John Heylin, implies “all things needful for . . . the maintenance of the whole man, both body and soul; for each of these have their proper sustenance.” Jesus’ simple petition makes clear God’s willingness and ability to supply all needs—and the expectation that we trust that provision.

15 | [Proverbs 10:3](#)

The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish.

Translation

The LORD will not allow the righteous to hunger [God will meet all his needs], . . .

—Amplified® Bible

16 | [Matthew 12:18](#)

Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

Translation

Here is my chosen servant!

I love him,

and he pleases me.

I will give him my Spirit,

and he will bring justice

to the nations.

—Contemporary English Version

from **Section 6**

18 | [Luke 11:4](#)

Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.

God's forgiveness of sin is acknowledged in the Hebrew Bible (see, for instance, [Isaiah 55:7](#); [Jeremiah 31:34](#)). Now this mercy is tied to the worshiper's forgiveness of others. One source observes, "... the forgiveness [believers] must extend to others is not the basis of their salvation but a prerequisite for daily fellowship with the Father Conversely, one who does not forgive others may actually be revealing that he or she has not really known God's forgiveness (cf. Lk 7:47)."

19 | [Psalms 25:1, 4–7, 11–13, 18, 20](#)

Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. . . . Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day. Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord. . . . For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great. What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth. . . . Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins. . . . O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.

Translation

*To you, O LORD, I offer my prayer; . . .
Teach me your ways, O LORD;
 make them known to me.
Teach me to live according to your truth,
 for you are my God, who saves me.
 I always trust in you.
Remember, O LORD, your kindness and constant love
 which you have shown from long ago.
Forgive the sins and errors of my youth.
In your constant love and goodness,
 remember me, LORD! . . .
Keep your promise, LORD, and forgive my sins,
 for they are many.
Those who have reverence for the LORD
 will learn from him the path they should follow.
They will always be prosperous,
 and their children will possess the land. . . .
Consider my distress and suffering
 and forgive all my sins. . . .
Protect me and save me;
 keep me from defeat.
 I come to you for safety.*

from **Section 7**

21 | [James 1:2–4](#), [12](#), [13](#)

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. . . . Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

Translation

My brothers and sisters, when you have many kinds of troubles, you should be full of joy, because you know that these troubles test your faith, and this will give you patience. Let your patience show itself perfectly in what you do. Then you will be perfect and complete and will have everything you need. . . . When people are tempted and still continue strong, they should be happy. After they have proved their faith, God will reward them with life forever. God promised this to all those who love him. When people are tempted, they should not say, “God is tempting me.” Evil cannot tempt God, and God himself does not tempt anyone.

—New Century Version

Temptations and *trying* are translated from distinct Greek words with similar meanings (*peirasmos*, *dokimion*). Both can imply testing or proving, as coins are tested for authenticity. [Genesis 22:1–13](#) reports God’s testing of Abraham’s faith, and [Psalms 66:10](#) affirms, “Thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.”

Worldly temptations, whether outward afflictions or inner impulses, are to be welcomed joyfully—embraced as opportunities to exercise faith and grow spiritually. First Peter counsels: “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, . . . that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” ([4:12](#), [13](#)).

The person who withstands temptation through reliance on God is depicted by a commentary this way: “A mature believer is one whose character has begun to conform to the image that God intends it to have—the very character of Christ. Such a person may be described as wanting nothing, . . . In other words, integration and wholeness are becoming a reality in one’s faith.”

23 | [Matthew 6:13](#)

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Translation

... do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

—New Revised Standard Version

[James 1:13](#) (citation 21) asserts that God does not tempt anyone. As Jesus illustrates at the outset of his career (see [Matthew 4:1–11](#)), evil is to be resisted and destroyed through God’s power. Later the Savior charges his close followers, “Pray that ye enter not into temptation” ([Luke 22:40](#)). And I [John 5:18](#) proclaims, “He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”

The term *evil*—sometimes rendered “the evil one”—is translated from the generic adjective *ponēros* (encompassing a wide array of wickedness, including harm, malice, sorrow, and pain). Paul confirms divine deliverance: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” ([I Corinthians 10:13](#)).

from **Section 8**

24 | [Psalms 55:16–18](#)

As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice. He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me.

Translation

... I will call to God for help.

And the Lord will save me.

Morning, noon and night I am troubled and upset.

But he will listen to me.

Many are against me.

But he keeps me safe in battle.

—International Children’s Bible

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.

Scholars have long recognized this doxology as an addition to Jesus' prayer. (It is omitted in Luke's Gospel; see [11:2–4](#).) Several draw a comparison with [I Chronicles 29:11](#): "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."

Read a related article, "[A prayer for all seasons](#)" by James Lee Phillips, at jsh.christianscience.com/a-prayer-for-all-seasons.

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