



## BIBLE LENS

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

# God the Only Cause and Creator

November 28–December 4, 2022



from the **Golden Text**

[Psalms 9:1](#)

*I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.*

“Gratitude for one mercy refreshes the memory as to thousands of others,” writes a commentary. “One silver link in the chain draws up a long series of tender remembrances. Here is eternal work for us, for there can be no end to the showing forth of all his deeds of love.”

from the **Responsive Reading**

[Psalms 8:1, 3–6](#)

*O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. . . . When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.*

Most scholars read in this passage a reference to [Genesis 1:26–28](#), the record of God’s conferring dominion on man. And [Hebrews 2:6–8](#) cites this psalm to describe Christ Jesus.

Putting things “under feet” is a frequent scriptural indication of authority or superiority. [Psalms 47:3](#) praises God this way: “He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.” Paul uses this metaphor in the assurance “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” ([Romans 16:20](#)) and as the basis of his argument “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet” ([I Corinthians 15:26, 27](#)).

## from **Section 1**

### 1 | [Isaiah 40:5](#)

*The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

Israelites understood God to be invisible, but expected and celebrated evidence of His nearness. In their early history, these theophanies—sometimes in the form of clouds—were known as “the glory of the Lord” (see examples in [Exodus 16:10](#); [40:34, 35](#); [Numbers 16:42](#)). “The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (also used in [Isaiah 1:20](#), [58:14](#), and [Micah 4:4](#)) is emphatic. Here it conveys God’s guarantee that everyone will see His glory.

### 1 | [Isaiah 40:26](#)

*Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.*

Captive Jews in Babylon had been exposed to the belief that many gods held control over the heavens. By contrast, this poetic text portrays the vast host of stars and planets as an army under the direction of a powerful general—an image of the one God’s omnipotence and omniscience.

### 2 | [Isaiah 55:8, 9](#)

*My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

#### **Translation**

*“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD.*

*“And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.*

*For just as the heavens are higher than the earth,*

*so my ways are higher than your ways*

*and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.”*

—New Living Translation

### 3 | [Revelation 4:11](#)

*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

### **Translation**

*“Our Lord and God, you deserve to receive glory, honor, and power  
because you created everything.  
Everything came into existence and was created because of your will.”*

—GOD’S WORD® Translation

## **from Section 2**

### **5 | Psalms 143:7, 8**

*Hear me speedily, O Lord: . . . Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know  
the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.*

### **Translation**

*Answer me, LORD —and quickly! . . .  
Tell me all about your faithful love come morning time,  
because I trust you.  
Show me the way I should go,  
because I offer my life up to you.*

—Common English Bible

### **6 | I Samuel 16:1, 4–7, 10–12**

*The Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine  
horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. . . . And  
Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Beth-lehem. . . . And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to  
the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord’s anointed is  
before him. But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have  
refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the  
heart. . . . Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The Lord hath not chosen*

*these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.*

At this time King Saul's disobedience to God has brought about the impending end of his reign—a circumstance that Samuel is mourning (see [15:35](#)). Admonishing him for his grief, God directs the prophet forward to the next divinely appointed candidate to rule over Israel.

Samuel's search for and anointing of the young shepherd David is a secret affair. Saul is still on the throne, and the ensuing narrative includes no mention of this episode. But from this point on, David moves from obscurity to roles of increasing significance (see examples in [vv. 14–23](#), citation 8; [17:32–50](#), citation 11).

Sources note that God's choice of David sets aside traditional preferences for firstborn males and recalls the selections of other younger sons, whose spiritual maturity and preparedness commended them over their older brothers (Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over Reuben, and Moses over Aaron, for instance; see [Genesis 21:5–12](#); [27:1–40](#); [37:3–11](#); [49:22–26](#); [Exodus 3:1–10](#); [4:27–31](#)).

## *from* **Section 3**

### 7 | [Psalms 5:3, 4](#)

*My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.*

#### **Translation**

*. . . you hear my voice in the morning;  
at sunrise I offer my prayer  
and wait for your answer.  
You are not a God who is pleased with wrongdoing;  
you allow no evil in your presence.*

—Good News Translation

That evil is entirely incompatible with God was a distinctly Jewish concept. (Pagan worshipers attributed both good and evil to their deities.) A Bible authority observes: “The psalmist begins with a phrase that describes the essential nature of Yahweh from which human consequences flow: . . . Where God is, evil cannot exist.”

In this passage, the Hebrew term translated *dwell* (*gûr*) implies temporary visitation rather than permanent residence. Often rendered *sojourn*, it depicts Abraham's stays in Egypt and Philistia (see [Genesis 12:10; 21:34](#)). Here it imparts the sense that evil cannot coexist even temporarily with God.

## 8 | [1 Samuel 16:15, 16, 22, 23](#)

*Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. . . . And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.*

The activity of Spirit frames this account. As David receives the divine Spirit (see [16:12](#), citation 6), the king's mental instability is calmed by David's music. Commentators point out that *rāwah* (the Hebrew verb rendered *refreshed*) relates to the word *rûah* (meaning breath or inspiration). Both inspiration and refreshment assuredly emanate from Spirit.

One scholar compares Saul's condition with that of his nation: "Saul is a troubled man, and as the people's king he reflected troubled Israel. . . . Both Saul and Israel are alienated from God. David is God's solution for both."

## from **Section 4**

## 10 | [Psalms 18:2](#)

*The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*

### **Translation**

*The LORD is my protector;*

*he is my strong fortress.*

*My God is my protection,*

*and with him I am safe.*

*He protects me like a shield;*

*he defends me and keeps me safe.*

—Good News Translation

## 11 | [1 Samuel 17:4, 10, 11, 32](#)

*There went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. . . . And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid. . . . And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.*

A race of giants is mentioned before the story of Noah (see [Genesis 6:4](#)). Later, at the end of the Exodus, spies sent to view the land of Canaan report seeing giants there (see [Numbers 13:17–33](#)). Known as “the sons of Anak,” these frightening warriors are largely vanquished by Joshua (see [Joshua 11:21, 22](#)).

Thought to be one of the remaining Anakim, Goliath is so intimidating that his challenge to Saul’s army goes unanswered for forty days (see [I Samuel 17:16](#)). Opinions vary as to his size, but some sources think his height could have been well over nine feet (2.74 meters). At the time, the average height of a male is believed to have been about five and a half feet (1.67 meters).

## 11 | [I Samuel 17:45, 49, 50](#)

*Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. . . . David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.*

Although King Saul is commander of the Jewish troops, David calls them “the armies of the living God” ([v. 36](#))—the standpoint that ensures victory. And David trusts in God’s covenant with Israel, articulated in such divine pledges as “The Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you” ([Deuteronomy 20:4](#)).

Expertise with a sling was common in the ancient Near East. [Judges 20:16](#) describes seven hundred left-handed Benjamite soldiers: “Every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss.” And [II Kings 3:25](#) reports the role of slingers in Israel’s victory over Moab.

One of the earliest weapons, a sling could project a stone with great force several hundred feet. Two current scholars explain that while recognized as an effective weapon, it commanded less respect than those used in hand-to-hand combat. Yet because an ancient javelin (likely one of Goliath’s more highly regarded weapons) could cover only about twenty yards, David’s choice of the sling enabled him to remain out of the giant’s range.

## from **Section 5**

## 12 | [John 7:42](#)

*Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?*

From the outset of Jesus’ ministry, people puzzled over his God-given status. This question is part of a crowd’s debate about it (see also [vv. 40, 41, 43](#)). Yet those present at the recent feeding of a multitude asserted, “This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world” ([6:14](#), referring to the oracle in [Deuteronomy 18:15](#)).

On this occasion, popular speculation about Jesus’ Messiahship prompts an attempt by Temple officers to take him prisoner—an effort the friendly Pharisee Nicodemus helps to deflect (see [vv. 44–53](#)).

### 13 | [Acts 10:38](#)

*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*

Seven major speeches by Peter are recorded in the book of Acts (see also [chaps. 2–5, 11, 15](#)). In this one the apostle is speaking to Gentiles at the home of Cornelius, recounting Christian history to introduce and validate his message. And, as at Pentecost (see [2:1–4](#)), the influx of the Holy Spirit is felt by everyone there (see [10:44](#)).

### *from* **Section 6**

### 15 | [Psalms 66:1, 4, 5](#)

*Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: . . . All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Come and see the works of God.*

#### **Translation**

*Shout to God for joy, everyone on earth! . . .*

*“Everyone on earth bows down to you.*

*They sing praise to you.*

*They sing the praises of your name.”*

*Come and see what God has done.*

—New International Reader’s Version™

### 16 | [Isaiah 61:1](#)

*As the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.*

#### **Translation**



*The LORD will bring about  
justice and praise  
in every nation on earth,  
like flowers blooming  
in a garden.*

—Contemporary English Version

Springing forth as a plant from the ground is a repeated image in the book of Isaiah, portraying God’s activity on behalf of humanity (see also [42:9](#); [43:19](#); [45:8](#)). God’s purpose may be invisible, yet—like a seed hidden under soil—its fulfillment is certain.

A scriptural expert remarks: “It’s a common feature of Old Testament prayer, as the Psalms illustrate, that you begin praising God for answering your prayer when you have *heard* the answer, even if you have not yet *seen* it. . . . the prophet thus declares his determination to keep praying until he and his people see God’s faithfulness expressed in God’s act of deliverance.”

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Read a related article, “[‘Faithful over a few things’](#)” by Louise Knight Wheatley, at [jsh.christianscience.com/faithful-over-a-few-things](https://jsh.christianscience.com/faithful-over-a-few-things).

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