



BIBLE LENS

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

Truth

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from the **Responsive Reading**

Exodus 34:4–6, 8–10, 14

Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth . . . And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; . . . And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord: . . . For thou shalt worship no other god.

Moses had earlier returned from his first sojourn on Mount Horeb with tablets containing the Ten Commandments. When he discovers his fellow Jews worshiping a golden idol, he breaks the tablets in anger. Now, after pleading with God on behalf of the people, the Hebrew leader is shown God's presence (see [33:7–23](#)). Then he returns to the Mount, where God assures Moses of His unbroken covenant with His children.

In Scripture, clouds often symbolize the presence of God. His cloud protects the Hebrews from Pharaoh's army and guides them in the wilderness (see [13:21, 22](#); [14:19, 20](#)). It appears at the completion of the Temple as well—and, in the New Testament, at Christ Jesus' transfiguration and ascension (see [I Kings 8:10, 11](#); [Luke 9:34, 35](#), citation 12; [Acts 1:9](#)).

from **Section 1**

1 | **Psalms 25:4, 5**

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.

Translation

DEMONSTRATE Your ways, O Eternal One.

Teach me to understand so I can follow.

EASE me down the path of Your truth.

FEED me Your word

because You are the True God who has saved me.

I wait all day long, hoping, trusting in You.

—The Voice™

Setting aside any personal agenda, the Psalmist humbly asks to understand and follow God's plans and purpose. One scholar remarks: "The imitation of God requires a submissive spirit to divine instruction. True godliness is not outward conformity to God's law but a spiritual application of God's law to one's life."

2 | **Psalms 26:3**

For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.

Translation

I see your mercy in front of me.

I walk in the light of your truth.

—GOD'S WORD® Translation

3 | **Psalms 101:2, 7**

I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. . . . He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

Translation

I want to study the way of integrity . . .

.

But the person who acts deceitfully

won't stay in my house.

The person who tells lies

won't last for long before me.

—Common English Bible

Attributed to David, this psalm expresses his commitment to rule in obedience to God's law—and to oppose anything that would undermine it. Deceivers are to have no place in his administration or society. (Deceit and lies are repeatedly denounced in the psalms; see examples in [31:18](#); [43:1](#); [120:2](#).) Applied to private families, this poem has been termed the “householder's psalm.”

5 | [Psalms 145:18](#)

The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

Translation

The LORD is ready to help all those who call out to him.

He helps those who really mean it when they call out to him.

—New International Reader's Version™

from **Section 2**

6 | [Proverbs 12:19](#)

The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

Translation

*Truthful words stand the test of time,
but lies are soon exposed.*

—New Living Translation

A scriptural authority reflects: “. . . truth is what God says about a thing; therefore, it never changes. A lying tongue lasts as long as a wink.” Deception has no lasting power or effect; only the good and true are eternal.

8 | [Genesis 3:1–5](#)

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? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Serpents are mentioned throughout the Bible, nearly always portraying evil in some form (see examples in [Psalms 58:3, 4](#); [Proverbs 23:31, 32](#); [Isaiah 27:1](#)). In Revelation, the “great dragon” is also named “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan” ([12:9](#)).

Jesus promises his followers dominion over evil this way: “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy” ([Luke 10:19](#)).

Of the forbidden tree, Yahweh originally cautioned Adam, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” ([Genesis 2:17](#)). Eve’s wording that they were not to eat of it lest they die seems to lack the certainty of the word *surely*. Some view this as the degree of doubt that opened her thought to the serpent’s contradiction “Ye shall not surely die.”

A commentary observes that of all the mortal traits expressed in this allegory—stubbornness, pride, and rebellion, for instance—“the primal sin may be best defined as mistrust of God and the word of God. . . .”

9 | [II Corinthians 11:3](#)

I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Translation

But I am afraid that your minds will be led away from your true and pure following of Christ just as Eve was tricked by the snake with his evil ways.

from **Section 3**

10 | [John 1:17](#)

The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Some sources emphasize that this contrast between Moses and Jesus isn't a rejection of Judaism. One writes: "The grace received in Jesus is added upon the grace that came through Moses and the law. The association between the two is basically one of continuity, of the partial contrasted with the full. . . . The revelation of God in Jesus is not contradictory to Judaism, but rather the very thing for which Judaism had been preparing."

Scholars also note a distinction between the two verbs in this statement. *Given* (Greek, *didōmi*) describes the action of supplying or delivering. *Came* (Greek, *ginomai*) denotes a state of being or appearing.

11 | [John 14:5, 6](#)

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

One of the 12 disciples, Thomas is remembered largely for refusing to accept that his crucified Master had risen—and for his spontaneous cry "My Lord and my God" upon seeing Jesus alive (see [20:24–29](#)). But earlier he proposed returning with Jesus to the hostile territory of Judea, displaying no small degree of courage (see [11:16](#)). And he is present at the Savior's reappearance on the shore of the Sea of Galilee after the resurrection (see [21:2](#)).

Though use of *the way* to indicate the path to righteousness occurs in other religions and cultures, Jesus' reference to it builds on Hebrew Bible images (see, for instance, [Exodus 23:20](#); [Proverbs 2:6–8](#); [Isaiah 30:21](#); [Malachi 3:1](#)). Only Jesus' self-identification in John 14:6 combines the words *truth* and *life* with *way*, pointing the pathway to an understanding of God.

12 | [Luke 9:38–43](#)

A man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. And as he was yet a-coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.

Just prior to this scene of desperation and failure, an event of sublime success took place—Jesus’ transfiguration (see [vv. 28–36](#)). “But the two pictures are intended to stand together,” remarks a Bible authority. “In both are Jesus’ true messianic status and power set forth: the one whom God approved on the mountaintop is he through whom God now acts on the plain; . . . Jesus’ messiahship is not a detached glory, but is relevant to even the most sordid human situation.”

13 | [Luke 10:1, 17–20](#)

After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. . . . And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Christ Jesus’ commissioning of seventy disciples (recorded solely in Luke’s Gospel) happens after he sends out his 12 closest followers (see [9:1–6](#)). Commentators surmise that sending out 12 may have represented outreach to Israel—and seventy, outreach to Gentiles (an allusion to seventy nations some believe to be listed in [Genesis, chap. 10](#)).

Jesus’ victorious exclamation in verse 18 echoes Isaiah’s resounding prophecy: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” ([Isaiah 14:12](#)).

References to names written in heaven or in God’s “book” are found elsewhere in Scripture (see examples in [Exodus 32:32, 33](#); [Philippians 4:3](#); [Revelation 21:27](#)).

from **Section 4**

14 | [Deuteronomy 32:3, 4](#)

I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Translation

I proclaim the LORD’S name:

Give praise to our God!

The rock: his acts are perfection!

No doubt about it: all his ways are right!

He’s the faithful God, never deceiving;

altogether righteous and true is he.

—Common English Bible

15 | [Psalms 41:4, 5, 7, 8](#)

I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; . . . Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish? . . . All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt. An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.

Translation

“O LORD,” I prayed, “have mercy on me.

Heal me”

But my enemies say nothing but evil about me.

“How soon will he die and be forgotten?” they ask.

.

*All who hate me whisper about me,
imagining the worst.*

“He has some fatal disease,” they say.

“He will never get out of that bed!”

—New Living Translation

16 | [Psalms 43:3, 5](#)

O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. . . . I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Translation

*Send your light and your truth
to guide me.*

*Let them lead me to your house
on your sacred mountain.*

.

*. . . I will praise you again
because you help me,
and you are my God.*

—Contemporary English Version

from **Section 5**

18 | **II Corinthians 13:8**

We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

Translation

I can't do anything to stop the truth. I can only work for the truth.

—New International Reader's Version™

In this concluding chapter of Paul's second letter to the Corinthian Christians, he alerts them to his impending visit—and warns that he will not tolerate continuing disobedience (see [vv. 1, 2](#)). One source explains: “. . . he is asserting his own thoroughness as a champion of the truth, so that it was a moral impossibility for him to do anything against it.”

19 | **John 8:31–34, 37, 38, 40, 44–47**

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. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. . . . I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. . . . But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. . . . Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

The “Jews which believed on him” included many who accepted Jesus' Messiahship but held on to traditional Hebrew precepts, often disagreeing with his teachings. Here they misconstrue the Savior's declaration about freedom, equating it only with liberation from physical servitude. They seem to misrepresent their history as well: While these Jews may have been describing their individual experiences, the Israelites had certainly been slaves and captives—and were under Roman occupation at that time.

Jesus argues that their desire to kill him contradicts their relationship to Abraham and allies them with Satan. Because they are not “of God,” they are unable to discern the truth he is speaking and instead view him as a sinner. (*Elegkhō*, the Greek verb rendered *convinceth*, means convict, reprove, or rebuke.) The interchange ends with the Master’s announcement “Before Abraham was, I am” and an unsuccessful attempt to stone him (see vv. 58, 59).

from Section 6

21 | Zechariah 8:3, 8, 16, 17, 19

Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; . . . And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness. . . . These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord. . . . Therefore love the truth and peace.

From one of Zechariah’s Messianic oracles, these verses proclaim the fulfillment of God’s covenant—the peace, justice, and glory promised to Zion. In this “city of truth,” God’s truth will be discerned, loved, and obeyed—and not by Jews alone. Gentiles from all over the world will flock to Zion to seek and worship the one God (see vv. 22, 23).

Read a related article, “[Universal harmony](http://jsh.christianscience.com/universal-harmony)” by John Richard C. Kenyon, at jsh.christianscience.com/universal-harmony.

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