



BIBLE LENS

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

Man

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from the **Golden Text**

[Genesis 1:26](#)

God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

Hebrew literature often employs parallelism—a pairing of corresponding ideas—to emphasize a point. Here the paired phrases “in our image” and “after our likeness” underscore the status of man (including male and female; see v. 27) as entirely Godlike. (Other instances of parallelism can be found in [Psalms 9:1](#), [Proverbs 12:28](#), and [Isaiah 53:5](#).)

from the **Responsive Reading**

[Deuteronomy 4:23](#)

Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee.

Because idol worship was virtually universal in the Promised Land, Israelites needed reminders of their commitment to the one God. Deuteronomy summarizes the covenantal laws given to them during the Exodus. The book’s name comes from the Greek word *deuteronomion*, signifying a second law-giving. (The first law-giving—Moses’ sharing of the Covenant Code—is found in Exodus, [chapters 20–23](#).)

from **Section 1**

2 | [Psalms 115:12](#)

The Lord hath been mindful of us: he will bless us.

Translation

*The LORD will not forget
to give us his blessing; . . .*

—Contemporary English Version

3 | [Ecclesiastes 12:13](#)

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

Translation

After all this, there is only one thing to say: Have reverence for God, and obey his commands, because this is all that we were created for.

—Good News Translation

from **Section 2**

5 | [Genesis 2:21, 23](#)

The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; . . . And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

“Deep sleep” (Hebrew, *tardēmâ*) describes two other biblical instances of unconsciousness, in accounts of Abram learning of the dark period of slavery to come to his heirs (see [15:12](#)) and David taking King Saul’s spear from him (see [I Samuel 26:12](#)). In Proverbs, *tardēmâ* refers to complete inactivity: “Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep [*tardēmâ*]; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger” ([19:15](#)).

Bone and flesh are terms that combine to indicate kinship several other times in Hebrew Scripture. Laban tells his nephew Jacob, “Thou art my bone and my flesh” ([Genesis 29:14](#)), for example—and the tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel identify themselves to David this way before anointing him as king (see [II Samuel 5:1](#)).

6 | [Isaiah 2:22](#)

Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

Translation

Put no more confidence in mortals. What are they worth?

—Good News Translation

Warning about the futility of human pride, the prophet exhorts his people to quit their reliance on the devices of mortals and place wholehearted trust in God. A commentary offers this wording: “Cast off your vain confidence in man, . . . and consider that you are dealing with God.”

from **Section 3**

7 | [I Corinthians 13:9–12](#)

We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

Translation

Our knowledge is incomplete and our ability to speak what God has revealed is incomplete. But when what is complete comes, then what is incomplete will no longer be used. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, thought like a child, and reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I no longer used childish ways. Now we see a blurred image in a mirror. Then we will see very clearly. Now my knowledge is incomplete. Then I will have complete knowledge as God has complete knowledge of me.

—GOD’S WORD® Translation

Amplifying his counsel about love (see vv. 1–8, 13), Paul presents two images to illustrate a limited knowledge of God and ourselves—a child’s perception and a likeness in an imperfect mirror. The apostle’s message probably isn’t meant to denigrate understanding already gained but to inspire and strengthen believers. Ultimately, he promises, the faithful will know themselves as God knows them—as the reflection of His love, expressing wholeness and perfection.

8 | II Corinthians 3:18

We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Translation

None of our faces are covered with a veil. All of us can see the Lord’s glory and think deeply about it. So we are being changed to become more like him so that we have more and more glory. And this glory comes from the Lord, who is the Holy Spirit.

—New International Reader’s Version™

Paul has just depicted the Israelites’ blindness to God’s Word as a veil: “Even unto this day . . . the veil is upon their heart” (v. 15). In this case, his mirror metaphor portrays the clarity of spiritual vision.

Open is translated from the Greek verb *anakalyptō*, pointing to unveiling or revealing (here applied to a condition or character). This unveiling—the removal of spiritual ignorance (see vv. 14, 16)—comes inevitably to all who look to God’s glory as exemplified by Christ Jesus.

from **Section 4**

10 | II Corinthians 4:6

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Translation

God once said, “Let the light shine out of the darkness!” And this is the same God who made his light shine in our hearts. He gave us light by letting us know the glory of God that is in the face of Christ.

—International Children’s Bible®

Paul surely speaks from his heart. His own awakening on the road to Damascus—and his ensuing healing of blindness—evidenced Christ’s light shining in his own consciousness. Now he encourages the Corinthians, recalling the biblical record of spiritual creation (see [Genesis 1:3](#)).

Prosōpon, the Greek term translated *face* in this verse, can signify presence as well. As the light of divine creation was commanded to shine, so God makes His glory known through the spirit of the Christ.

11 | [Matthew 8:14, 15](#)

When Jesus was come into Peter’s house, he saw his wife’s mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

Ancient households typically comprised extended family. Peter’s support of his mother-in-law shows his regard for the Commandment to honor one’s parents (see [Exodus 20:12](#))—a law Jesus clearly respected, citing it to the Pharisees: “God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death” ([Matthew 15:4](#)).

Ministry frames this short story: Jesus ministers to this woman, and she in turn ministers to him. “This structure,” a scholar remarks, “may make emphatic the model for discipleship: after Jesus transforms a person, the person serves him.”

The healing of Peter’s mother-in-law is third in a sequence of three in this chapter (see also [8:1–13](#)). All three of the individuals the Master healed—a leper, a Gentile, and the woman—would likely have been denied full participation in Jewish society. And each of them would have undoubtedly felt the inclusiveness of God’s love in their interchanges with the Master.

13 | [Hebrews 1:1–3, 9](#)

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; . . . Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Translation

In the past, God spoke to our people through the prophets. He spoke at many times. He spoke in different ways. But in these last days, he has spoken to us through his Son. He is the one whom God appointed to receive all things. God also made everything through him. The Son is the shining brightness of God’s glory. He is the exact likeness of God’s being. He uses his powerful word to hold all things together. He provided the way for people to be made pure from sin. Then he sat down at the right hand of the King, the Majesty in heaven. . . .

*“ . . . your God has placed you above your companions.
He has filled you with joy by pouring the sacred oil on your head.”*

—New International Reader’s Version™

“Sundry times” and “divers manners” denote the varied ways in which God’s Word had been imparted in the past—not all at one time but according to the people’s need, receptivity, and understanding. The writer of Hebrews argues that while no previous prophecy or revelation had declared the whole of divine truth, now God’s Word is fully manifested in the Savior.

One source explains the characterization of Christ Jesus as “the brightness of [God’s] glory” and “the express image of his person” this way: “As the rays are intrinsically related to the sun, with neither one existing apart from the other, so the Father and the Son are essentially one. Further, the Son is the express image or imprint (as of a die [a metal shape used in manufacturing] perfectly representing the original design) of the Father’s person (nature). The radiant light implies the oneness of the Son with the Father; the imprint expresses the distinctness of the Son from the Father.”

from **Section 5**

14 | [Ephesians 4:17, 18, 20–24](#)

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: . . . But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Translation

With the Lord’s authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. . . . But that isn’t what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

—New Living Translation

In strong terms similar to Paul’s admonitions in [Romans 1:21–32](#), this author urges Gentile converts to separate themselves from “other Gentiles” (those ignorant of Christly teachings and steeped in immoral behavior). This passage elevates the focus from human logic—prized by many Greeks—to divine control and portrays renewal as a spiritual activity.

A Bible authority reflects: “There is no middle ground of neutrality in the Christian life. Either one is succumbing to the powerful influences that cause moral corruption or one is being empowered by the Lord to . . . pure attitudes and behavior.”

from Section 6

17 | [Jeremiah 31:3](#)

The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

Drawn (Hebrew, *māšak*) refers to drawing out or sustaining. Several modern translations of this text use wording about God’s unceasing love, and one paraphrase has, “God told them, ‘I’ve never quit loving you and never will. Expect love, love, and more love!’ ”

from Section 7

19 | [Psalms 17:6, 15](#)

I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. . . . As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

Translation

*I pray to you, God,
because you will help me.
Listen and answer my prayer!*

.

*I am innocent, LORD,
and I will see your face!
When I awake, all I want
is to see you as you are.*

—Contemporary English Version

To some scholars, verse 15 depicts awakening from death, and to others, rousing from a “sleep” of sorrow and sin.

The Hebrew noun rendered *likeness* here (*t^e mûnā*) is distinct from the word translated *likeness* in Genesis 1:26 (*d^e mût*). *T^e mûnā* appears just a few times in Scripture—for instance, in the deuteronomic version of the second Commandment (see [Deuteronomy 5:8](#), Responsive Reading) and in a description of God’s intention toward Moses: “With him will I speak mouth to mouth, . . . and the similitude [*t^e mûnā*] of the Lord shall he behold” ([Numbers 12:8](#)).

Read a related article, “‘In Christ shall all be made alive’ ” by Sibyl Henry, at jsh.christianscience.com/in-christ-shall-all-be-made-alive.

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