



BIBLE LENS

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

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from the **Responsive Reading**

I Timothy 6:20

Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.

In ancient Greek society, philosophers regularly argued points of contrasting doctrines in the search for wisdom. One source interprets their deliberations as “the pointless discussions and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.” (In the verse from First Timothy, *science* is translated from the Greek word *gnōsis*, meaning knowledge.)

Parathēkē, the noun rendered “that which is committed to thy trust,” is a legal term for something entrusted to someone’s safekeeping. Here it refers to true wisdom—the gospel of Christ.

Psalms 135:15–18

The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them.

Virtually identical to [Psalms 115:4–6, 8](#), this candid description of idols is intended to show that “our Lord is above all gods” ([135:5](#)). [Isaiah 44:8–18](#) employs similar language in its detailed proof of the fallacy of graven images—and in answer to its own affirmation “Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.”

from **Section 1**

1 | [Daniel 2:20](#)

Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his.

Praising, blessing, and giving thanks to God’s name were basic to Hebrew worship. These reverent acknowledgments of His nature occur dozens of times in Hebrew Scripture, most frequently in the psalms (see examples in [Psalms 8:1](#); [20:7](#); [72:17](#)). A Bible authority notes, “Since the name of God is associated with the presence, character, and identity of God, it is understood to be as authoritative and as holy as the very presence of God. . . .”

2 | [Job 23:13, 14](#)

He is in one mind, and who can turn him? . . . For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.

Translation

*But he alone is God,
and who can oppose him?*

.

*and he will do exactly
what he intends with me.*

—Contemporary English Version

In the midst of deep soul-searching, Job asserts that no one can alter God’s will. *Šalam*, the Hebrew verb rendered *performeth*, signifies completing or carrying out.

from **Section 2**

6 | [Jeremiah 2:5, 11, 13](#)

Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain? . . . Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. . . . For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Translation

This is what the LORD says:

*“I was fair to your ancestors,
so why did they turn away from me?
Your ancestors worshiped useless idols
and became useless themselves.*

.

*Has a nation ever exchanged its gods?
(Of course, its gods are not really gods at all.)
But my people have exchanged their glorious God
for idols worth nothing.*

.

*My people have done two evils:
They have turned away from me,
the spring of living water.
And they have dug their own wells,
which are broken wells that cannot hold water.”*

—New Century Version®

In what some scholars view as a courtroom scene, God questions His people about their faithlessness to Him. Even pagan idolaters, He declares, remain loyal to their deities—gods that don’t really exist or have power. But Israelites have done the unthinkable, rejecting the one omnipotent God.

Jeremiah adopts two metaphors for emphasis, a fountain and a cistern. Where an ever-flowing spring exists, using a cistern—especially a broken one—to collect water is absurd. God is an infinite wellspring of good, yet His children have turned from Him to worship gods that cannot provide for or protect them.

7 | Galatians 6:8

He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Translation

Those who plant only for their own benefit will harvest devastation from their selfishness, but those who plant for the benefit of the Spirit will harvest eternal life from the Spirit.

—Common English Bible

“If we sow to please the Spirit,” a commentary remarks, “we will grow in holiness and reap eternal life. . . . The crop may seem a long time growing, but every act of kindness is another seed sown.”

8 | 1 Kings 13:1, 3–6

There came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Beth-el: . . . And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out. And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord. And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Entreat now the face of the Lord thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.

In this account, an unidentified prophet arrives in the Northern Kingdom of Israel to admonish its first king, Jeroboam. This monarch has cemented the split from the Southern Kingdom of Judah, whose two tribes worshiped at Jerusalem, by setting up idols for the remaining ten tribes at sanctuaries in Bethel and Dan. (Jeroboam is later designated the monarch who “made Israel to sin”; see [16:26](#).)

Now, at the dedication of the Bethel altar, Jeroboam's actions are denounced by the visiting seer. When the unrepentant king attempts to arrest the prophet, his outstretched hand is withered and the altar destroyed. In a tacit recognition of God's power, Jeroboam asks for healing—and receives it from the man whose rebuke he has rejected.

9 | Isaiah 58:11

The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

Translation

. . . I will always guide you and satisfy you with good things. I will keep you strong and well. You will be like a garden that has plenty of water, like a spring of water that never goes dry.

—Good News Translation

from Section 3

10 | Psalms 30:2, 10, 11

O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. . . . Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be thou my helper. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.

Scholars see this poem as heartfelt thanks for recovery from a deadly illness. One observes, however, “In a real sense, the psalmist’s deliverance is not so much from physical sickness to physical health as it is from a deadly misunderstanding of human security (vv. 6–7) to a lively awareness of God’s presence in all of life (vv. 11–12).”

12 | [Luke 13:11–17](#)

There was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Christ Jesus heals on the Sabbath several times. In addition to this instance, he cures a man with a withered hand, an invalid, and a blind man (see [Matthew 12:10–13](#); [John 5:1–9](#); [9:1–7](#), [14](#)). Each time, he is met with objections from Pharisees and others who cite the Fourth Commandment (see [Exodus 20:8–11](#)). The Master shifts the focus from a rigid interpretation of religious codes to obedience to God’s law, which includes compassion and healing.

In calling the synagogue ruler a hypocrite—a condemnation of Jewish elders recorded repeatedly in Matthew’s Gospel—Jesus alludes to the dissembling and artifice typical of a stage actor (the most common meaning of the Greek word *hypokrites*).

13 | [Romans 8:16](#)

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

Translation

God’s Spirit makes us sure that we are his children.

—Contemporary English Version

from **Section 4**

14 | [Proverbs 2:1, 2, 9–11](#)

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; . . . Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good

path. When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee.

Translation

My child, believe what I say.

And remember what I command you.

Listen to wisdom.

Try with all your heart to gain understanding.

.

Then you will understand what is honest and fair and right.

You will understand what is good to do.

You will have wisdom in your heart.

And knowledge will be pleasing to you.

Good sense will protect you.

Understanding will guard you.

—International Children’s Bible®

16 | Matthew 16:1–3

The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

Translation

The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus, wanting to trick him. So they asked him to show them a miracle from God. Jesus answered, “At sunset you say we will have good weather, because the sky is red. And in the morning you say that it will be a rainy day, because the sky is dark and red. You see these signs in the sky and know what they mean. In the same way, you see the things that I am doing now, but you don’t know their meaning.”

—New Century Version®

Jesus has just fed thousands of people with a small amount of bread and fish (see [15:32–38](#))—a sure sign of his God-given

status. But the Hebrew leaders, likely hoping to downplay this display of spiritual authority, demand a cosmic event like the miracles of their prophets. God’s might was revealed through Moses, Samuel, and Isaiah, for example—with manna from heaven, with thunder and rain, and with the backward movement of the sun (see [Exodus 16:4](#); [I Samuel 12:16–18](#); [Isaiah 38:4–8](#)).

The Master responds with a play on the reference to heaven. They are able to read the sky, he contends, but don’t understand the divine “signs of the times”—the many healing works that confirm him as the promised Savior.

Peirazō, the Greek verb translated *tempting* here, also appears in Gospel passages about the devil’s testing of Jesus (see [Matthew 4:1, 3](#); [Mark 1:13](#); [Luke 4:2](#)).

17 | [Job 32:8](#)

There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

Translation

*... it is the spirit of Almighty God
that comes to us and gives us wisdom.*

—Good News Translation

from **Section 5**

19 | [Psalms 52:1](#)

The goodness of God endureth continually.

Translation

... God’s faithful love is constant.

—Christian Standard Bible®

20 | [Psalms 119:33, 37, 39](#)

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. ... Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way. ... for thy judgments are good.

Translation

LORD, teach me how your orders direct me to live.

Then I will live that way to the very end.

.

Turn my eyes away from things that are worthless.

Keep me alive as you have promised.

.

Your laws are good.

—New International Reader’s Version™

21 | [Psalms 143:8, 10](#)

Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: . . . Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God:thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

Translation

*Let me hear of your unfailing love each morning,
for I am trusting you.*

.

*Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God.*

*May your gracious Spirit lead me forward
on a firm footing.*

—New Living Translation

“*In the morning*,” one source writes, “. . . contrasts the darkness of the underworld with the morning light of salvation, points to the immediacy (‘quickly,’ [v. 7](#)) of [God’s] salvation, and signifies the temporal shortness of his dark night in comparison to the duration of his salvation.”

“The land of uprightness” describes a path of moral rightness as opposed to sin’s ways, commonly characterized as crooked (see [Psalms 125:5](#) and [Proverbs 2:15](#), for instance). Another commentator suggests, “The psalmist likens a Spirit-led life to a journey on level roads through otherwise rugged terrain.”

Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God.

Translation

Dear friend, don't imitate what is bad but what is good. Whoever practices what is good belongs to God.

—Common English Bible

from Section 6

Quench not the Spirit. . . . Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Translation

Do not quench [subdue, or be unresponsive to the working and guidance of] the [Holy] Spirit. . . . But test all things carefully [so you can recognize what is good]. Hold firmly to that which is good.

—Amplified® Bible

Paul is urging both inspiration and practice. Prophecy and revelation are to be kept alive, their genuineness proved in daily experience.

In this counsel the apostle presents two images—fire and the testing of metal. Spiritual inspiration needs careful tending (guarding from worldly influences) so that its flame isn't quenched. And spiritual perception needs testing or proving to determine its authenticity.

Read a related article, “[Woman uplifted, humanity redeemed](https://jsh.christianscience.com/woman-uplifted-humanity-redeemed)” by Robin Hoagland, at jsh.christianscience.com/woman-uplifted-humanity-redeemed.

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