



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

Soul and Body

from the Golden Text

[Psalms 90:1](#)

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

Dwelling place is translated from the Hebrew noun *māʾôn*, which can also mean refuge or protector. In this psalm, the only one attributed to Moses, its mention captures the spiritual significance of home for a people who had no fixed habitation for over forty years.

from the Responsive Reading

[Psalms 27:7, 8](#)

Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

Seeking God's face or countenance is a biblical metaphor for turning to Him for help. And although God warned Moses, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live" (Exodus 33:20), this imagery eloquently portrays the desire for close communion with Him. A commentary describes the humble willingness to seek God this way: "A gracious heart readily answers to the call of a gracious God. . . ."

[Psalms 62:5, 6](#)

My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.

Virtually repeating verses 1 (citation 1) and 2, this text emphasizes that the role of protector, deliverer, and defender is exclusive to God. (Some sources surmise that David is writing during Absalom's rebellion; see [II Samuel, chaps. 15–18](#).)

Sixteenth-century English poet and cleric John Donne offers this interpretation:

[God] is my rock, and my salvation, and my
defense, and my refuge and my glory.
If my refuge, what enemy can pursue me?
If my defense, what temptation shall wound me?
If my rock, what storm shall shake me?
If my salvation, what melancholy shall deject me?
If my glory, what calumny shall defame me?

from Section 1

1 | [Psalms 62:1](#)

Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.

Translation

*It is surely true that I find my rest in God.
He is the God who saves me.*

—New International Reader’s Version™

2 | [Psalms 84:1–5](#)

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee.

While *amiable* usually means pleasant or agreeable, the Hebrew adjective in this affirmation (*yādîd*) signifies well loved. It is the term of endearment in the assurance “The beloved [*yādîd*] of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him” ([Deuteronomy 33:12](#)). To the psalmist, God’s dwelling is dearly loved and cherished.

“Courts of the Lord” likely refers to the Temple complex, where two outer chambers led to the inner sanctuary—the space set aside for Yahweh’s presence.

3 | [Joshua 22:1, 2, 4, 5](#)

Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you: . . . And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and

unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side Jordan. But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.

At this time the Israelites are moving into Canaan under Joshua's leadership. The tribes listed here had been assigned territories east of the Jordan (see [13:15–32](#)) but had been called to assist their fellow Jews in settling west of the river. Now Joshua sends them back to their homes with a reminder of their ongoing commitment to honoring the one God.

4 | [Psalms 90:1](#)

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

Translation

O Lord, you have always been our home.

—Good News Translation

from Section 2

5 | [Psalms 62:5](#)

My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.

Translation

*Only God gives inward peace,
and I depend on him.*

—Contemporary English Version

6 | [Isaiah 54:2, 3](#)

Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left.

Most homes of this period would have been built from the plentiful stones in the region. In this passage, *tent* is symbolic,

depicting a habitation that can be extended and broadened beyond physical limits.

Rāhab, the Hebrew verb rendered *enlarge*, occurs multiple times in scriptural prophecies of expansion. Its literal sense appears, for instance, in the account of the geographical area provided for Isaac’s family at Rehoboth (see [Genesis 26:22](#)). Figuratively, it signals God’s activity in one’s steps and heart (see [II Samuel 22:37](#); [Psalms 119:32](#)).

Break forth is translated from the term *pāras*, which is also employed in God’s promise to Jacob “Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad [*pāras*] to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” ([Genesis 28:14](#)).

7 | [II Kings 4:8–12, 14–17](#)

It fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there. And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. . . . And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door. And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.

Shunem was a village in the Jezreel valley in Galilee. “Great woman” indicates a woman of rank or riches, just as the word *great* pertains to men of wealth in [I Samuel 25:2](#) and [II Samuel 19:32](#). Many scholars assume the “chamber . . . on the wall” to be a small upper room, probably located on the flat roof of the house.

In the ancient Near East, childlessness was imputed solely to women and deemed one of the greatest misfortunes a couple could face. To Jews, however, children were considered gifts from God, and infertility a divine judgment. Significantly, the lives of three Hebrew luminaries (Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph) were brought about by God’s reversal of barrenness (see [Genesis 21:1–3](#); [25:21, 24–26](#); [30:1, 2, 22–24](#)).

Although the Shunammite woman is certain she cannot conceive, God’s power again brings a son to a childless couple.

from Section 3

8 | [Psalms 66:8, 9](#)

O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

*You people, praise our God.
Loudly sing his praise.
He protects our lives
and does not let us be defeated.*

—International Children’s Bible®

9 | [II Kings 4:18–22, 25–27, 32, 33, 35, 36](#)

When the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out. And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. . . . So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite: run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well. And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. . . . And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. . . . Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

Throughout this story, it is the Shunammite woman rather than her husband who makes decisions in her family, likely a departure from the norm for this patriarchal society. After taking her son to Elisha’s room, she determines to go to the prophet, who is over 25 miles (forty km) away. She offers her husband no explanation but replies to his question about why she is visiting Elisha, “It shall be well” ([v. 23](#)). This statement is translated from the universal Hebrew greeting of peace, *Salôm*. (It is identical to her response to Gehazi in verse 26, there rendered “It is well.”) Her resolve and expectation are clear—to speak with Elisha directly and to find healing for her son.

from Section 4

10 | [Psalms 43:5](#)

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Translation

*Why am I discouraged?
Why is my heart so sad?
I will put my hope in God!
I will praise him again—
my Savior and my God!*

—New Living Translation

[Psalms 42 and 43](#) were originally one poem and share the refrain “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? . . . I shall yet praise him” (see [42:5, 11](#)). The Hebrew term *yē šû’â*, commonly translated *salvation* or *deliverance*, is rendered *health* here and *help* in [42:5](#). “In time of doubt and stress,” a scriptural authority explains, “the poet urges his inner being, by the power of God, to keep believing.”

11 | [Psalms 25:1, 15](#)

Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. . . . Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

Translation

*To you, O LORD, I offer my prayer;
.
I look to the LORD for help at all times,
and he rescues me from danger.*

—Good News Translation

from Section 5

13 | [III John 1:2](#)

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Translation

Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit.

—New Living Translation

Only two books of the Bible are considered personal letters—this one and Paul’s dispatch to Philemon. The Pastoral Epistles, while addressed to Timothy and Titus, are more official in nature. And other New Testament letters are thought to be intended for churches, communities of Christians, or a general audience.

Third John is the shortest document in the New Testament by word count (Second John has fewer verses). Written by a Christian elder to an associate named Gaius, its tone is deeply affectionate, as seen in the greeting “unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth” ([v. 1](#)). “Even as thy soul prospereth” may be an acknowledgment of Gaius’ spirituality.

15 | [Mark 3:1–5](#)

[Jesus] entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

Christ Jesus’ two questions present a dilemma to the synagogue officials. With the first, they are bound to admit the lawfulness of doing good and unlawfulness of doing evil. With the second, they are challenged to place human life above religious tradition—and by extension, to drop their plots to put Jesus to death.

“To the Pharisee,” a commentator suggests, “religion was ritual: it meant obeying certain rules and regulations. . . . To Jesus, religion was service. It was love of God and love of others. Ritual was irrelevant with love in action.”

from Section 6

16 | [Psalms 16:2, 8, 9](#)

O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: . . . I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

Translation

*I said to the LORD,
“You are my Lord. . . .”*

.

*I always keep the LORD in front of me.
When he is by my side, I cannot be moved.
That is why my heart is glad and my soul rejoices.
My body rests securely. . . .*

—GOD’S WORD® Translation

Though ascribed to David and written in the first person, this psalm came to be viewed as a description of the promised Messiah. Centuries later, the Apostle Peter cites verses 8–11 in speaking about Jesus on the Day of Pentecost (see [Acts 2:22–28](#)). And Paul refers to verse 10 in a synagogue sermon (see [13:35–37](#)).

Read a related article, “[Life’s law and the evidence of healing](#)” by Russ Gerber, at csjournal.com/evidence-of-healing.