



## BIBLE LENS

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

# Christ Jesus

August 21–27, 2023

## from the **Golden Text**

[John 4:42](#)

*We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

After a Samaritan woman's announcement about meeting the Christ (see vv. 28–30), a group of her fellow townsfolk unequivocally confirm his status. The event is noteworthy on many levels: An unnamed woman acts as a witness; men listen to her in spite of her gender; hostility between Jews and Samaritans is set aside; and Jesus' mission is acknowledged as universal.

*Sōtēr*, the Greek noun rendered *Saviour*, was typically applied to Roman authorities or pagan gods. In the New Testament it often refers to God (see [Luke 1:47](#), for instance) and is also used as a title for Christ Jesus, the Savior sent by God (as in this text).

## from the **Responsive Reading**

[Philippians 1:3, 6, 10, 27](#)

*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, . . . Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: . . . That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; . . . Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*

Paul's letter to the Philippian Christians is addressed to a church he had founded with Timothy and Silas a decade before. Now Paul is in detention (likely in Rome) and possibly in chains (see v. 7). Yet he expresses great joy throughout this epistle. (*Joy* and *rejoice* appear nearly twenty times; see other instances in [2:17, 18](#); [4:4, 10](#).)

*Conversation* is translated from the Greek verb *politeuō*, pertaining to citizenship. A scholar explains: ". . . the apostle is

not adding civic responsibilities to their Christian ones as if the gospel demanded loyalty to Rome alongside loyalty to Christ. Rather he reminds them of their loyalty to the gospel and thus to their citizenship in heaven.” This theme is reiterated in [3:20](#), using a related noun: “Our conversation [*politeuma*] is in heaven.”

## Philippians 2:5, 9–11

*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: . . . God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

In this passage, words expressing supreme and peerless quality serve to emphatically extol Christ Jesus. The phrases “every knee should bow” and “every tongue should confess” echo words spoken by God about Himself in [Isaiah 45:23](#). Though honor is to be given to Jesus’ name here, the purpose of this praise is to glorify God.

## from Section 1

### 2 | [Matthew 16:13–17](#)

*When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

Hebrew tradition held that Elijah or another prophet would return before the arrival of the Messiah. Malachi, for instance, writes, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful [awe-inspiring] day of the Lord” ([Malachi 4:5](#)). And John the Baptist was asked, “Art thou Elias?” ([John 1:21](#)).

Now, near the end of his ministry in Galilee, Jesus seeks to ensure that his closest followers recognize his God-given identity. While Peter has professed this understanding at least once before (see [John 6:69](#)), his reaffirmation here earns the Master’s blessing.

### 3 | [John 1:3, 4](#)

*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

#### Translation

*We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy.*

—New Living Translation

#### 4 | I John 4:15

*Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*

#### **Translation**

*If we declare that Jesus is the Son of God, we live in union with God and God lives in union with us.*

—Good News Translation

In this context, *confession* (Greek, *homologeō*) has nothing to do with admission of guilt. Those who declare Jesus to be God’s Son decisively demonstrate their own unity with God.

One commentary points out: “. . . faithful, loving discipleship is not simply an emotional experience of being loved or a response to an ethical command. It is not even loving conduct, although all of these things are significant. . . . John’s vision of discipleship demands our minds as well as our hearts.”

### *from* **Section 2**

#### 5 | John 3:1, 2

*There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

As a ruling Pharisee, Nicodemus exemplifies the class of educated Jewish thinkers. Unlike his fellow religious leaders, Nicodemus acknowledges God as the source of Jesus’ healing power—and his questions of the Savior (see vv. 4, 9) are evidently genuine. Jesus responds with one of his most deeply loved statements: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (v. 16).

#### 6 | Mark 3:7, 8, 10, 11

*A great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judæa, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. . . . For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.*

At this early point in Jesus' career, news of his healing works had already spread to areas beyond the land where Judaism was the main religion. The sites listed here designate regions to the south (Judea, including Jerusalem, and Idumea) and east (beyond Jordan). Tyre and Sidon lay to the north. Idumea was associated with the ancient people of Edom, thought to be descendants of Esau.

## 7 | [Matthew 9:37, 38](#)

*Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*

### **Translation**

*Jesus said to his followers, "There are many people to harvest but only a few workers to help harvest them. Pray to the Lord, who owns the harvest, that he will send more workers to gather his harvest."*

—New Century Version®

## from **Section 3**

## 9 | [Psalms 46:1, 7](#)

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. . . . The Lord of hosts is with us.*

### **Translation**

*God is our shelter and strength,  
always ready to help in times of trouble.*

. . . . .

*The LORD Almighty is with us; . . .*

—Good News Translation

## 10 | [John 5:2–9](#)

*Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.*

*When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked.*

Though this man's infirmity is not identified, scholars compare his condition with that of the palsied man in [Mark 2:3](#)—an invalid who has friends to carry him. The man at the pool apparently has no help and is singled out as having a long history of disability. With spiritual authority, Jesus annuls both his helplessness and the duration of his case.

## 11 | [Revelation 12:10](#)

*Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.*

### **Translation**

*“Our God has shown  
his saving power,  
and his kingdom has come!  
God’s own Chosen One  
has shown his authority.”*

—Contemporary English Version

## *from* **Section 4**

## 12 | [Matthew 23:8](#)

*One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.*

### **Translation**

*. . . you have one teacher, and all of you are brothers and sisters.*

—Common English Bible

Following a contentious dialogue with some Sadducees and Pharisees (see [22:23–46](#)), Jesus cautions the faithful against modeling their behavior after these officials. One of their habits is seeking public homage—being recognized as a teacher or master in the marketplace (see [v. 7](#)).

For believers, Christ Jesus is the only teacher, and the faithful are equal in stature to each other. (Jesus illustrates this when he washes his disciples' feet, charging them to treat one another with this unvarying respect and love; see [John 13:12–15](#).)

## 15 | [Mark 9:2–5, 7](#)

*Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: . . . And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.*

About a week after his teaching at Caesarea Philippi (see [Matthew 16:13–17](#), citation 2), Jesus takes three disciples to a “high mountain” (traditionally considered to be Mount Tabor, west of the Sea of Galilee). Peter, James, and John had also been chosen to witness the healing of Jairus’ daughter and would later accompany Jesus into the garden of Gethsemane before his crucifixion. Some Bible authorities think their attendance at the transfiguration was intended to strengthen and sustain them in the coming events.

Several Hebrew Scripture allusions occur in the transfiguration story: a mountain, often viewed as a place of God’s communications; the cloud of the divine presence; a shining face (see examples in [Exodus 24:12, 15, 16; 34:29, 30](#)); and the figures of Moses and Elijah. One source observes that the interchange with the two Hebrew Bible luminaries “connects earlier stages of God’s revelation—the law and the prophets—with the present revelation, the Son, as God the Father affirms ([Mark 9:7](#)).”

A fuller was a launderer; whiteness, the result of their work.

## from **Section 5**

### 17 | [John 14:1–3, 6](#)

*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. . . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

#### **Translation**

*Jesus said, “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. And trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father’s house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you to be with me so that you may be where I am. . . . I am the way. And I am the truth and the life. The only way to the Father is through me.”*

from **Section 6**

18 | II Timothy 3:15

*From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

**Translation**

*You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus.*

—New Living Translation

“From a child” refers to the custom that Hebrew boys learn “the holy scriptures” early—and suggests that Timothy’s mother and grandmother have raised him in the Jewish faith (see 1:5; Acts 16:1). This writer emphasizes the pivotal role of Bible texts in gaining wisdom, while making it clear that the path to salvation is found only through faith in Christ.

A commentator remarks: “. . . the assumption is that the gospel is the outworking of Scripture. . . . That is to say that the gospel’s saving power is of a piece with the saving power of scripture, or it is not gospel.”

19 | I John 4:2, 3, 14

*Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: . . . And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*

After Jesus’ ascension, his followers strongly testified to his status as Savior (see examples in Acts 2:22–36; 13:16–39). This witnessing was crucial, forestalling doubts and addressing denials about him in subsequent years. Responding to his Jewish captors, for example, Peter unequivocally describes Christ Jesus: “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

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Read a related article, “[Lessons from a pronoun](https://cssentinel.com/lessons-pronoun)” by Ralph Byron Copper, at [cssentinel.com/lessons-pronoun](https://cssentinel.com/lessons-pronoun).

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