



BIBLE LENS

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

Mind

February 19–25, 2024

from the **Golden Text**

Isaiah 26:3, 4

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever.

To be stayed on God indicates unwavering faithfulness to Him. Following an assurance that the good person “shall not be afraid of evil tidings,” [Psalms 112:7](#) portrays the faithful this way: “His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.” Deep, abiding peace accompanies this spiritual commitment.

from the **Responsive Reading**

Proverbs 16:3, 7, 9, 16, 20

Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established. . . . When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. . . . A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps. . . . How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver! . . . He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.

Chapter 16 of Proverbs opens with an affirmation of God's sovereignty over human speech (see [v. 1](#)). Now the author expands his focus to God's ability—rather than that of human effort—to bring peace and guidance to humanity as well. Similarly, [Jeremiah 10:23](#) professes, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself.” And [Psalms 37:23](#) asserts, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.”

Proverbs 3:13, 15, 17, 18

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. . . . She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. . . . Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

Appearing repeatedly in wisdom writings, “Happy is” introduces the blessed state of wisdom or righteousness (see other

examples in [Job 5:17](#); [Psalms 146:5](#); [Proverbs 29:18](#)). One commentary calls the Hebrew term for *blessed* or *happy* (*’ašrê*) “an explosive word.” He adds: “It implies that God is truly pleased. The person who has discovered wisdom has found a priceless treasure.”

Noting that wisdom was characterized as a woman in many traditions of the time, another scholar points out the corresponding place of some women in Jewish society: “It is clear that women were counted among the ranks of sages in ancient Israel and early Judaism. . . . [The wise woman’s] social, economic, and educational roles demonstrate not only that she held high status in postexilic society but also that she became an exemplar for those who sought to . . . enjoy the fruits of wise living.”

Rubies represent great value in Scripture, though the word rendered *ruby* (*p^e nînîm*) may refer to a different precious stone. Some sources identify it as a pearl, agate, or other gemstone. All agree on its nearly matchless worth.

from **Section 1**

1 | [Romans 11:33, 34, 36](#)

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! . . . For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? . . . For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever.

Translation

Who can measure the wealth and wisdom and knowledge of God? . . .

“Has anyone known

the thoughts of the Lord

or given him advice?”

.

Everything comes from the Lord. All things were made because of him and will return to him. Praise the Lord forever!

—Contemporary English Version

Paul’s heartfelt homage to God in this passage embraces a common subject in New Testament letters—the abundant nature of God’s riches. [Ephesians 1:18](#) and [Philippians 4:19](#) relate divine riches to glory, and [Colossians 2:2](#) describes “all the riches of assurance that come with understanding” (Common English Bible).

One scholar reflects on verse 33: “Paul’s opening words of praise stand on the edge of a cliff, looking down into the fathomless sea of God’s riches. Sometimes, in prayer, one gets a glimpse like this, and the vastness, the teeming life, the power, the overall order and beauty, are beyond words. All one can do is to point, and that is what this first sentence does.”

from Section 2

6 | James 1:8

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Having just compared someone of uncertain faith to a wave in a stormy sea (see vv. 5, 6), the writer now warns against fluctuating trust in God—and later in this epistle he exhorts, “Purify your hearts, ye double-minded” (4:8).

Dipsykhos, the Greek adjective translated *double-minded*, is also rendered *double-souled*. Bible authorities concur that its sense in this text points to doubt, vacillation, or hypocrisy—mental conditions abhorrent to many thinkers of the time. Christ Jesus teaches, “When thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness” (Luke 11:34).

7 | James 3:11, 13–18

Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? . . . Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Translation

Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? . . . If you are wise and understand God’s ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don’t cover up the truth with boasting and lying. For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.

—New Living Translation

8 | Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Translation

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

—New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

from **Section 3**

9 | Psalms 71:1, 5, 21

In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. . . . For thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth. . . . Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

Translation

LORD, I have gone to you for safety.

Let me never be put to shame.

.

You are the King and the LORD. You have always been my hope.

I have trusted in you ever since I was young.

.

You will honor me more and more.

You will comfort me once again.

—New International Reader's Version™

Honor and shame were of vital concern in ancient Near Eastern cultures. Loss of honor devalued one in the community and in enemies' eyes. In these verses, the poet sees God as able to keep him from shame (another meaning of *bûš*, the Hebrew verb translated *be put to confusion*). First Peter later cites his affirmations about relying on God (see 2:6).

10 | Psalms 92:5, 13, 14

O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. . . . Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.

Building on a tree analogy in [verse 12](#), this psalmist commends deep-rooted commitment to God as the key to growth and

prosperity. “The righteous are able to take root, grow, and be fruitful,” one source remarks, “because God is both their foundation and their constant source of nourishment.”

Although the Temple in Jerusalem, including the courtyards in the Temple compound, was viewed as God’s house (see I Kings 9:1; Nehemiah 8:16), here “the courts of our God” signifies the kingdom of heaven. And while this poem’s superscription links it to the Sabbath, its message rings true for worship at all times.

11 | Psalms 145:4, 7

One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. . . . They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.

Translation

Parents praise your works to their children.

They tell about your mighty acts.

.

They celebrate your great goodness.

They sing for joy about your holy acts.

—New International Reader’s Version™

12 | Psalms 37:28, 37

The Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: . . . Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

Translation

The LORD loves justice,

and he will not abandon his godly ones.

They will be kept safe forever,

.

Notice the innocent person,

and look at the decent person,

because the peacemaker has a future.

—GOD’S WORD® Translation

from **Section 4**

13 | **Philippians 4:4, 7**

Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. . . . And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Translation

Rejoice in the Lord always [delight, take pleasure in Him]; again I will say, rejoice! . . . And the peace of God [that peace which reassures the heart, that peace] which transcends all understanding, [that peace which] stands guard over your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus [is yours].

—Amplified® Bible (AMP)

With the Greek verb *phroureō*, meaning to keep watch or protect, Paul suggests the military image of a sentinel standing guard. A commentator observes, “God’s ‘protective custody’ of those who are in Christ Jesus extends to the core of their beings and to their deepest intentions. . . .”

17 | **II Timothy 1:7**

God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Translation

God did not give us a spirit that makes us afraid. He gave us a spirit of power and love and self-control.

—International Children’s Bible®

from **Section 5**

18 | **Isaiah 57:19**

Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him.

Far off and *near* are usually viewed as referring either to all Israelites (in exile and at home) or to both Gentiles and Jews. A scriptural authority enlarges this meaning to all “who were afar off in time, as well as those of the present age.”

20 | **Psalms 18:3, 28**

I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: . . . For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.

Translation

I call to the LORD, ...

Praise the LORD!

.

*O LORD, you give me light;
you dispel my darkness.*

—Good News Translation

21 | Job 22:21, 29

Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee. . . . When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up.

Translation

Surrender to God All-Powerful!

You will find peace

and prosperity.

.

When others are disgraced,

God will clear their names

in answer to your prayers.

—Contemporary English Version

Counsel and prophecy about knowing God appear throughout Scripture. For instance, [Psalms 46:10](#) charges, “Be still, and know that I am God”; [Jeremiah 24:7](#) promises, “I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord”; and [Hosea 6:6](#) declares, “I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”

Jesus equates knowledge of God with immortality: “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” ([John 17:3](#)). And [II Peter 1:2](#) offers this prayer: “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you

through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.”

Šāpal, the Hebrew verb rendered *cast down*, is sometimes rendered *humiliated* or *brought low* in this text.

22 | Isaiah 40:4, 5

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Translation

*“Every valley will be raised up,
and every mountain and hill will be flattened.
Uneven ground will become level,
and rough terrain a valley plain.
The LORD’s glory will appear,
and all humanity will see it together;
the LORD’s mouth has commanded it.”*

—Common English Bible

Powerful poetry depicts a smooth, straight path through rugged terrain—a message that would have been compelling to Hebrew exiles in Babylon. The land between Babylonia and Judah was indeed rough, and the journey would typically be extremely difficult. Now exiles are not only assured of their return to Judah but guaranteed an easy passage. (Luke 3:1–6 cites this prophecy in introducing the ministry of John the Baptist.)

from Section 6

23 | Isaiah 30:15, 21

Thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: . . . And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

Translation

*This is what the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, says:
“If you come back to me and trust me, you will be saved.
If you will be calm and trust me, you will be strong.”*

.

If you go the wrong way—to the right or to the left—you will hear a voice behind you saying, “This is the right way. You should go this way.”

—New Century Version®

24 | Isaiah 33:6

Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation.

Translation

*He will be the sure foundation for your times,
a rich store of salvation. . . .*

—NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®

Read a related article, “[God has given us ‘a sound mind’](https://cssentinel.com/sound-mind)” by Giulia Nesi Tetreau, at cssentinel.com/sound-mind.

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