



## BIBLE LENS

JANUARY 6, 2025 ISSUE

Shining a light on the weekly Bible Lessons published in the [Christian Science Quarterly®](#)

# Sacrament

January 6–12, 2025

## from the **Golden Text**

Leviticus 27:28

*Every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord.*

Holiness is a recurring theme in Leviticus. (The term *holy* appears there more than in any other biblical book.) God's people are to be holy (a mandate repeated in [19:2](#); [20:7](#), [26](#))—to honor their pure, Godlike identity.

One source calls Leviticus “a narrative pause in the story of our ancestors as they are on their way, having been saved out of Egypt, to settle in the land of Canaan.” He continues, “It is a kind of extended time-out for instruction, a detailed and meticulous preparation for living ‘holy’ in a culture that doesn’t have the faintest idea of what ‘holy’ is.”

While the particulars of daily life have changed from the societal customs outlined in Leviticus, commentators note that its essential message still applies: Devote your entire life to God.

## from the **Responsive Reading**

Colossians 3:12, 16, 17

*As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. . . . Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

—NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®

Paul evidently never visited the Greek city of Colossae, and his authorship of this letter is uncertain. Many scholars, however, think the epistle was drafted by him out of deep concern and love for a group of believers he hadn't met. This patient counsel, similar to that of [I Corinthians 13:4–7](#), follows warnings about unacceptable behavior (see [Colossians 3:5–9](#)).

## Mark 12:41–44

*Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”*

—NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®

Coins feature in several teachings or events in Christ Jesus’ ministry. Just prior to this, when Jewish officials try to entrap him about paying tribute money, he points to Caesar’s inscription on a penny (see vv. 13–17). In [Matthew 17:24–27](#) he directs Peter to find a coin in a fish’s mouth. And in [Luke 15:8–10](#) he offers the parable of a lost coin to illustrate God’s joy over the repentant sinner.

Here the widow’s tiny amount conveys the meaning of real sacrifice—not measured in monetary value but in the cost to the one sacrificing. Heartfelt giving, he stresses, holds nothing back. His earlier words to his disciples brought this lesson home: “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” ([Mark 8:34](#)).

## from **Section 1**

### 2 | [Isaiah 30:2, 29](#)

*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. . . . Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel.*

#### **Translation**

*Whether you turn to the right or to the left, you will hear a voice saying, “This is the road! Now follow it.” . . . The LORD’s people will sing as they do when they celebrate a religious festival at night. The LORD is Israel’s mighty rock, and his people will be as happy as they are when they follow the sound of flutes to the mountain where he is worshiped.*

—Contemporary English Version

## from **Section 2**

### 4 | [Matthew 4:18–20](#)

*Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.*

Men who became eminent Hebrew leaders were commonly called to God’s service from their everyday work. Moses, David, and Amos, for instance, were shepherds, and Elisha was plowing his field when Elijah summoned him (see [Exodus](#), chap. 3; [I Samuel 16:11–13](#); [Amos 7:15](#); [I Kings 19:19–21](#)). Most rabbis, though, did not call students but were sought out by prospective learners. Jesus reverses this practice, inviting disciples directly and teaching multitudes outside the educational structure of the synagogue (see, for example, [Mark 2:13](#); [4:1, 2](#)).

Fishermen occupied a lowly position in antiquity. Yet, a scholar reflects: “. . . God’s empire welcomes them with a new focus (follow me) and mission (fish for people). The story models Jesus’ call, their instant response, and the communal nature of discipleship as a new household based not on genes but on doing God’s will. . . . In his call they encounter God’s rule, presence, salvation.”

## from **Section 3**

### 6 | [Hebrews 3:1](#)

*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.*

#### **Translation**

*Brothers and sisters, you are holy partners in a heavenly calling. So look carefully at Jesus, the apostle and chief priest about whom we make our declaration of faith.*

—GOD’S WORD<sup>®</sup> Translation

Apostle and High Priest are significant titles. *Apostle* (used of Christ Jesus only here) means one who is sent—an apt description of the Savior, and one he makes clear in his ministry (see [John 4:34](#); [6:38](#); [7:28, 29](#); [8:16](#)). *High priest*—usually referring to the sole person allowed into God’s presence in the Temple—appears repeatedly in the book of Hebrews as a title for Jesus (see another instance in [7:24–28](#)). A source suggests, “Jesus as the one sent by God represents God to humanity; Jesus as high priest represents humanity to God.”

*Katanoēō*, the Greek verb rendered *consider*, describes profound reflection. Sometimes translated *behold* (see example in [Acts 7:31](#)), it goes beyond merely looking at a thing or concept to seeking its deepest sense. Jesus employs it in turning his listeners’ attention to ravens and wildflowers as evidence of God’s love (see [Luke 12:24, 27](#)).

### 8 | [II Corinthians 9:8](#)

*God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.*

## Translation

*God is able to shower all kinds of blessings on you. So in all things and at all times you will have everything you need. You will do more and more good works.*

—New International Reader’s Version™

## from Section 4

### 9 | Luke 7:37, 38, 44–47

*A woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. . . . And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.*

Although the Pharisee in this account respects Jesus enough to invite him to dinner, he soon reconsiders this esteem. Jewish officers held themselves apart from wrongdoers, so this Pharisee disapproves when the Master allows a notorious sinner to touch him (see v. 39). Jesus’ parable condemns his callous attitude, showing that loving engagement with sinners and forgiveness of their misdeeds bring healing.

Kiss has different shades of meaning in this text. In verse 38, it is translated from the Greek verb *kataphileō*, indicating tender, fervent kisses. This word describes the kiss given by the prodigal son’s father (see Luke 15:20). In Jesus’ declaration, “Thou gavest me no kiss” (7:45), the term *philema* signifies a kiss of greeting. In stark contrast to the woman’s wholehearted affection, the Pharisee withheld even this small courtesy.

### 10 | I Corinthians 3:16, 17

*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.*

## Translation

*Don't you yourselves know that you are God's sanctuary and that the Spirit of God lives in you? . . . God's sanctuary is holy, and that is what you are.*

—Holman Christian Standard Bible®

## from Section 5

### 12 | Luke 22:1, 2, 14, 15, 19, 20, 27

*Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; . . . And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: . . . And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. . . . I am among you as he that serveth.*

At this meal Jesus observes Hebrew custom. Bread and wine were integral to the Passover celebration; a sacrificial lamb (also traditional to the feast) prefigured Jesus in his crucifixion.

After the Master's ascension, breaking bread became a precious symbol for his followers. The two disciples who saw Jesus as they journeyed to Emmaus, for instance, reported that "he was known of them in breaking of bread" (24:35). To Christians, this simple act served to commemorate Jesus' last meal before the crucifixion as well as to forge bonds of fellowship (see examples in Acts 2:46; 20:7).

Jesus' assertion "I am among you as he that serveth" is his response to an argument among his closest friends about "which of them should be accounted the greatest" (Luke 22:24). He had already answered a similar dispute, stating "He that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (9:46, 48). Yet the disciples clearly need reminding of his—and their—primary role of service.

### 13 | Acts 2:22–24, 32

*Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. . . . This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*

## Translation

*“Listen to these words, fellow Israelites! Jesus of Nazareth was a man whose divine authority was clearly proven to you by all the miracles and wonders which God performed through him. You yourselves know this, for it happened here among you. In accordance with his own plan God had already decided that Jesus would be handed over to you; and you killed him by letting sinful men crucify him. But God raised him from death, setting him free from its power, because it was impossible that death should hold him prisoner. . . . God has raised this very Jesus from death, and we are all witnesses to this fact.”*

—Good News Translation

In this passage, Peter is speaking on the Day of Pentecost. His recounting of the facts of Jesus’ career is distinctly God-centered. “Approved of God” carries the sense that Jesus’ divine origin and mission are endorsed by God. And as “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” emphasizes, God is the power behind his healings, passion events, and resurrection.

Jesus’ rising from the grave is pivotal to his disciples’ evangelism. Without it, their message would have been empty—especially to Jews, to whom the idea of a crucified Messiah was unthinkable. A risen Savior furnishes indisputable proof of all that he claimed for himself, including his status as the Son of God.

*Witness* is translated from the Greek noun *martys*, signifying one who offers testimony of the things he has seen and provides confirmation of his faith. While the term is the source of the English word *martyr*, it did not originally refer to someone who suffered and died for his beliefs.

## 14 | I Peter 1:13, 15

*Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; . . . As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.*

### Translation

*So prepare your minds for action, be completely sober [in spirit—steadfast, self-disciplined, spiritually and morally alert], fix your hope completely on the grace [of God] that is coming to you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

*. . . like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves in all your conduct [be set apart from the world by your godly character and moral courage]; . . .*

—Amplified<sup>®</sup> Bible (AMP)

## 15 | Romans 12:1

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

### Translation

*... so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.*

—New Living Translation

Traditional sacrifice, whether Hebrew, Greek, or Roman, often involved killing an animal as a gift to a deity. In calling for a living sacrifice, Paul is demanding something deeper. Instead of bringing an animal to be slaughtered—or giving up a valued possession—the faithful are to dedicate their lives to the constant, active service of God.

One commentary remarks that the Greek noun translated *service* (*latreia*) evolved in meaning from paid labor to the worship of God everywhere: “We might say: ‘I am going to church to worship God,’ but we should also be able to say: ‘I am going to the factory, the shop, the office, the school, the garage, the mine, the shipyard, the field, the cowshed, the garden, to worship God.’ ”

### from Section 6

## 17 | I Thessalonians 3:11, 13

*Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. . . . To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.*

“Direct our way unto you” refers to Paul’s desire to revisit the Christian community at Thessalonica. No record exists of his having been able to return there.

*Parousia*, the Greek term rendered *coming*, signifies presence, indicating a state rather than an event. In usage, however, *parousia* was interpreted as an arrival—frequently, as in this verse, a second advent of Christ Jesus on earth. This still-expected reappearing is known as the Parousia today.

### from Section 7

## 18 | Romans 5:5

*The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

## Translation

... we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

—New Living Translation

## 19 | Colossians 3:16, 17

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

## Translation

*Let the teaching of Christ live in you richly. Use all wisdom to teach and strengthen each other. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Everything you say and everything you do should all be done for Jesus your Lord. And in all you do, give thanks to God the Father through Jesus.*

—International Children's Bible®

---

Read a related article, "[Sacrament](https://jsh.christianscience.com/Sacrament)" by Mary Trammell, at [jsh.christianscience.com/Sacrament](https://jsh.christianscience.com/Sacrament)

---

## Resources cited in this issue

**GT:** Peterson, E. H. *Symphony of Salvation: A 60-Day Devotional Journey Through the Books of the Bible*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 2021.

**RR:** NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

**Cit. 4:** Harrelson, Walter J., ed. *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003.

**Cit. 6:** Macdonald, William. *Believer's Bible Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2016.

**Cit. 15:** Barclay, William. *The New Daily Study Bible: The Letter to the Romans*. Louisville, KY:



## **COPYRIGHT**

Scriptural quotations marked Contemporary English Version are taken from the Contemporary English Version, copyright © 1991, 1992, 1995 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.

Scriptural quotations marked GOD’S WORD® Translation are taken from GOD’S WORD®. © 1995, 2003, 2013, 2014, 2019, 2020 by God’s Word to the Nations Mission Society. Used by permission.

Scriptural quotations marked New International Reader’s Version™ are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Reader’s Version™, NIRV™. Copyright © 1995, 1996, 1998, 2014 by Biblica, Inc. Used with permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scriptural quotations marked Holman Christian Standard Bible® are taken from the Holman Christian Standard Bible®, copyright © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission.

Scriptural quotations marked Good News Translation are taken from the Good News Translation in Today’s English Version—Second Edition, copyright © 1992 by American Bible Society. Used by permission.

Scriptural quotations marked Amplified® Bible (AMP) are taken from the Amplified® Bible (AMP), Copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. [lockman.org](http://lockman.org)

Scriptural quotations marked New Living Translation are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scriptural quotations marked International Children’s Bible® are taken from the International Children’s Bible®. Copyright © 1986, 1988, 1999 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Bible Lens and Christian Science Quarterly are trademarks owned by The Christian Science Publishing Society. Unless otherwise indicated, all scriptural quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.