



## BIBLE LENS

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

# Soul

February 10–16, 2025

## from the **Golden Text**

Psalms 19:7, 8

*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.*

In its largest sense, the law stands for all divinely revealed doctrine and counsel. One source notes: “The law is no mass of lifeless ordinances, but a living expression of the totality of God’s will. To obey it is to have one’s life renewed.”

## from the **Responsive Reading**

Luke 12:16–21

*[Jesus] spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*

With this parable Christ Jesus is answering a request to mediate an inheritance dispute (see vv. 13–15). His lesson is unmistakable, as summed up in verse 34: “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

God’s designation “Thou fool” has led some to call this tale “the parable of the rich fool.” In the story, there is no indication that the rich man cheated, stole, or mistreated anyone. His error is in thinking only of wealth and ease—and only for himself.

## from **Section 1**

1 | Micah 6:6, 8

*Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? . . . He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

## Translation

*What offering should I bring  
when I bow down to worship  
the LORD God Most High?*

. . . . .

*The LORD God has told us  
what is right  
and what he demands:  
“See that justice is done,  
let mercy be your first concern,  
and humbly obey your God.”*

—Contemporary English Version

## 2 | Mark 12:29–31

*The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

“Which is the first commandment of all?” (v. 28) was vigorously argued among Jewish scholars, especially as over six hundred regulations of varying importance made up their law. Jesus’ response cites the most cherished of Hebrew prayers, known as the Shema, and a verse from a collection of laws given to Moses by God (see [Deuteronomy 6:4, 5](#), citation 21; [Leviticus 19:18](#)).

## 3 | James 2:8, 19

*If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: . . . Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well.*

In an indictment of favoritism in the church (see [vv. 1–7](#)), this writer quotes [Leviticus 19:18](#) (see citation 2 note). “Royal” law is defined as the law of God’s kingdom—the spiritual mandate to love others, underscored by Jesus, and later by Paul (see [Mark 12:29–31](#); [Romans 13:8](#); [Galatians 5:14](#)).

A commentary points out that *neighbor* “must include all who enter our space, not only those whom we find attractive or even valuable to us, but above all those whom we find alien. . . . For [the author of James], both ‘faith’ and ‘love’ have a

strong and compelling moral urgency; faith in God and love for God cannot be separated from the way the neighbor is treated.”

#### 4 | Philippians 2:2, 5

*Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. . . . Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*

#### Translation

*. . . agree with one another. Have the same love. Be one in spirit and in the way you think and act. By doing this, you will make my joy complete. . . . As you deal with one another, you should think and act as Jesus did.*

—New International Reader’s Version<sup>TM</sup>

Named for Philip II (father of Alexander the Great), Philippi was located in the ancient Greek territory of Macedonia. By Paul’s time Macedonia had been brought under Roman rule. After Paul was directed in a vision to travel there, Philippi became the initial site of his European mission (see [Acts 16:9–12](#)). Since few Jews lived in the city, it’s likely that the Philippian Christians came almost entirely from among the Gentile population.

Although under house arrest in Rome, Paul is nevertheless able to minister to churches through his epistles. In this letter, the apostle is appealing to the Philippians to be a unified body rather than a collection of believers focused solely on individual progress. They are to be one in Christ—and to live this spirit of fellowship in their relationships.

#### from **Section 2**

#### 6 | Leviticus 26:3, 11–13

*If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; . . . I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.*

## Translation

*Follow my rules. Be careful to obey my commands. . . . I will live among you. I will not turn away from you. I will walk among you. I will be your God. And you will be my people. I am the LORD your God. I brought you out of Egypt. I did not want you to be slaves in Egypt anymore. I threw off your heavy load. I helped you walk with your heads held high.*

—New International Reader’s Version<sup>TM</sup>

## 7 | Joshua 1:7

*Be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.*

## Translation

*. . . be determined, be confident; and make sure that you obey the whole Law that my servant Moses gave you. Do not neglect any part of it and you will succeed wherever you go.*

—Good News Translation

The demand to be strong and courageous is voiced first by Moses (see [Deuteronomy 31:6, 23](#)). Now God speaks this encouragement to Joshua three times (see also [Joshua 1:6, 9](#)).

Joshua’s oversight of the Hebrews as they entered Canaan bore clear similarities to Moses’ experience. Both were divinely appointed. Both men urged the people to obey God’s instructions and to remain united as God’s chosen nation. And just as Moses brought the Israelites through the Red Sea on dry land, Joshua guided them through the parted waters of the Jordan River (see chap. 3).

*Prosper* is translated from the Hebrew term *śākal*, relating to wisdom and understanding as well as success. Psalms 101:2 has, “I will behave myself wisely [*śākal*] in a perfect way.” [Jeremiah 3:15](#) prophesies, “I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding [*śākal*].”

## 8 | I Corinthians 8:5, 6

*Though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him.*

## Translation

*Many things in heaven and on earth are called gods and lords, but none of them really are gods or lords. We have only one God, and he is the Father. He created everything, and we live for him.*

—Contemporary English Version

In his parenthetical phrase, Paul doesn't admit the existence of deities other than God but acknowledges that belief in them is widespread. He may also be referring to rulers who had proclaimed themselves to be gods. His message would have resonated with Christians of Jewish background, who spurned not only worship of pagan idols but also the deification of the Roman emperor. Here he emphatically restates the monotheism underlying the Master's teachings.

## 9 | Job 23:13

*He is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.*

## Translation

*He never changes. No one can oppose him  
or stop him from doing what he wants to do.*

—Good News Translation

## from Section 3

## 11 | Psalms 24:3–5

*Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

## Translation

*Who may go up on the mountain of the Lord?  
Who may stand in his holy temple?  
Only those with clean hands and pure hearts.  
They must not have worshiped idols.*

*They must not have made promises in the name of a false god.  
It is they who will receive a blessing from the Lord.  
The God who saves them will declare them right.*

—International Children’s Bible®

## 12 | I Thessalonians 5:23

*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

### Translation

*Now may God himself, the God of peace, make you pure, belonging only to him. May your whole self—spirit, soul, and body—be kept safe and without fault when our Lord Jesus Christ comes.*

—New Century Version®

## 13 | Luke 17:12–19

*As [Jesus] entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.*

Fear of contagion led to isolating those with skin diseases, requiring them to stay away from people not similarly afflicted and to announce their presence by crying out, “Unclean” (see [Leviticus 13:45, 46](#)). Though one of these men was a Samaritan (deemed enemies of Jews), the group’s common condition overcame sectarian hostility and caused them to band together.

Luke’s mention of a Samaritan as the only leprous person to express gratitude is noteworthy. Samaritans are also positively portrayed in the Savior’s parable about the good neighbor, in the story of the woman who recognized Jesus as the Messiah, and in the account of Philip preaching in Samaria (see [Luke 10:30–35](#), citation 18; [John 4:5–30](#); [Acts 8:5–8](#)).

from **Section 4**

## 15 | James 3:14, 16–18

*If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. . . . 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

*. . . if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. . . . 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

## 16 | Jeremiah 32:38, 41

*They shall be my people, and I will be their God: . . . Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.*

### Translation

*They will be my people, and I will be their God. . . . I will find joy doing good for them and will faithfully and wholeheartedly replant them in this land.*

—New Living Translation

Jeremiah's oracle doesn't refer solely to the Jews' reinstatement of their homeland after the Babylonian captivity. A scholar explains: ". . . the prophets looked forward to more than just a physical return of the people. . . . The covenant bond between God and his people will be renewed, and they will walk in righteousness."

## from Section 5

## 18 | Luke 10:29–37

*[A lawyer], willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went*

*down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.*

Jesus has just replied to this lawyer’s citing of the commandments to love God and your neighbor as the path to eternal life (see vv. 25–28, citation 17). Because neighbors were typically assumed to be those sharing common blood or religious beliefs, the lawyer probably supposes that this understanding will be confirmed. The Master, however, redefines the debate. In his parable, the despised Samaritan isn’t the person in need, but the caring neighbor—and “Who is my neighbour?” is answered with guidance about how true neighbors act.

“The story must have been a shocking one to its first audience,” remarks a source, “shattering their categories of who are and who are not the people of God. In its present usage in Luke, the story offers an example of acting in love which is without preference or partiality and which expects nothing in return.”

## *from* **Section 6**

### 22 | Psalms 84:11

*The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

#### **Translation**

*The LORD God is like a sun and shield;  
the LORD gives us kindness and honor.  
He does not hold back anything good  
from those whose lives are innocent.*

—New Century Version®



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