



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

Is the Universe, Including Man, Evolved by Atomic Force?

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from the **Responsive Reading**

Mark 3:7, 9, 10; 4:35–39

Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea. . . . And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. For he had healed many. . . . And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

In this story, Christ Jesus and his disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee. ("As he was in the ship" probably refers to his entry into the boat in 4:1.) Located 690 feet (210 meters) below sea level, this body of water is ringed by hills. The collision of cold mountain air with warmer air in the sea basin generates hurricane-force winds to this day.

Remains of an ancient fishing boat were discovered at the sea in 1986. Archaeologists date it to the first century AD, making it likely typical of the disciples' boat. It measures 27 feet long by 7.5 feet wide (8.2 by 2.3 meters) and would have had oars, a mast, and a sail. Clearly this small craft wouldn't have afforded much shelter to Jesus, yet his rest is undisturbed—a fact viewed as evidence of his innate trust in God's care.

The Savior's authoritative quieting of the stormy sea is followed by his equally decisive calming of the demon-possessed Gadarene (see 5:1–15).

from **Section 1**

1 | **Exodus 3:14**

God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM.

God's name, though communicated to Moses, was held so sacred in the Jewish faith that a ban arose on speaking it aloud. (Today many Jews replace it with *Hashem*, meaning "the name.") In Scripture His name was represented by the four letters *YHWH*. Scribes later added vowels from the Hebrew word *Adonay* (Lord), leading to the Latin transcription *Jehovah*. Modern scholars use the name *Yahweh*.

One source explains that the verb in this announcement "denotes, not abstract being, but manifestation in a definite character, or name; and its form indicates habitual manifestation in past, present, and future."

3 | **Isaiah 45:5, 6, 12**

I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. . . . I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.

Translation

Only I am the LORD !

There are no other gods.

I have made you strong,

though you don't know me.

Now everyone from east to west

will learn that I am the LORD .

No other gods are real.

.

I created the world

and covered it with people;

I stretched out the sky

and filled it with stars.

—Contemporary English Version

5 | **Job 23:13**

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

Translation

He is of one mind; who can reverse it?

What he desires, he does.

—Common English Bible

from **Section 2**

7 | **II Corinthians 6:2**

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Translation

Listen! This is the hour to receive God's favor; today is the day to be saved!

—Good News Translation

Paul's message of immediacy cites [Isaiah 49:8](#): "Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee." And it echoes the declaration made by both John the Baptist and Jesus, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" ([Matthew 3:2](#); [4:17](#)).

Similar "now" statements are made by other New Testament writers (see examples in [I Peter 2:9, 10](#); [I John 3:2](#); [Revelation 12:10](#), citation 10), overturning the assumption that salvation is a far-off event.

8 | **I Corinthians 3:18**

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

Translation

Stop deceiving yourselves. If you think you are wise by this world’s standards, you need to become a fool to be truly wise.

—New Living Translation

Fool is translated from the Greek adjective *mōros* (origin of the English word *moron*). Though employed by the Master in denunciations of the unwise or faithless (see [Matthew 7:26; 25:1–13](#)), here it has positive connotations, describing those who reject worldly wisdom to follow Christ. Later in this epistle, Paul asserts, “We are fools for Christ’s sake” (4:10).

9 | **[Psalms 46:1, 2, 6, 10](#)**

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. . . . The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. . . . Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

Translation

*God is our mighty fortress,
always ready to help
 in times of trouble.
And so, we won’t be afraid!
Let the earth tremble
and the mountains tumble
 into the deepest sea.*

.

*Nations rage! Kingdoms fall!
But at the voice of God
 the earth itself melts.*

.

*Our God says, “Calm down,
 and learn that I am God!”
All nations on earth*

will honor me.”

—Contemporary English Version

Images of disaster in these verses refer not only to destruction of earthly formations and foundations but also to the upheaval caused by war and violence. Commentaries note that in this context, “Be still” is more than a command for quietness. It is a call to throw down weapons—to end conflict—with an understanding of God as the source of real security.

10 | **Revelation 12:9, 10**

The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. . . . Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.

Great beasts or dragons exemplify evil—and sometimes enemies of Israel—elsewhere in the Bible (see instances in [Isaiah 27:1](#); [51:9](#); [Jeremiah 51:34](#); [Ezekiel 29:3](#); [Daniel 7:7](#)). Here the Revelator envisions the final triumph over evil accompanied by a powerful affirmation of divine dominion.

“Whatever appears to be the earthly situation for God’s people now,” a scholar reflects, “the victory has already been won. . . . What strong consolation this provides . . . !”

from **Section 3**

13 | **Isaiah 35:1, 2**

The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing.

Translation

The dry places will be full of joy.

Flowers will grow there.

Like the first crocus in the spring,

the desert will bloom with flowers.

It will be very glad and shout for joy.

—New International Reader’s Version[™]

Isaiah's prophecy follows a harsh judgment of the nations (see chap. 34) with a promise of redemption and beauty. Early Christians recognized the fulfillment of these and the next verses (portraying widespread healing and a joyous return to Zion) in the advent and ministry of Christ Jesus.

14 | **Song of Solomon 2:1, 11–13**

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. . . . For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.

A poetic paean to spring, this text is commonly considered a celebration of human love. Some Jewish and Christian interpretations, however, see it as an indication of God's love.

Tōr, the Hebrew noun rendered *turtle*, means turtledove (see example in [Leviticus 1:14](#)). A paraphrase has: "Spring flowers are in blossom all over. The whole world's a choir—and singing! Spring warblers are filling the forest with sweet strains."

15 | **Matthew 6:28, 29**

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: . . . Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Translation

Notice how the flowers grow in the field. They never work or spin yarn for clothes. . . . not even Solomon in all his majesty was dressed like one of these flowers.

—GOD'S WORD[®] Translation

from Section 4

17 | **Matthew 17:14–20**

There came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

In Scripture, *generation* can refer to a specific group of people. Scholars are unsure whom Jesus is addressing—solely his disciples or the entire crowd described earlier in verse 14. Whoever his intended audience, the Savior is categorically rebuking a distorted view of his teachings—a view that limits faith in God’s power to heal.

Jesus chooses the mustard seed, with its tiny size and immense potential, to illustrate faith. (Mustard plants can grow six to ten feet or 1.8 to 3 meters in just a few months.) In a parable he depicts this herb as “less than all the seeds that be in the earth: but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs” (Mark 4:31, 32).

from **Section 5**

20 | **Proverbs 3:5–8, 13**

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. . . . Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

Translation

*Trust the LORD with all your heart,
and don't depend on your own understanding.
Remember the LORD in all you do,
and he will give you success.
Don't depend on your own wisdom.
Respect the LORD and refuse to do wrong.
Then your body will be healthy,
and your bones will be strong.*

.

*Happy is the person who finds wisdom,
the one who gets understanding.*

—New Century Version®

21 | **Romans 12:2**

Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Translation

Don't become like the people of this world. Instead, change the way you think. Then you will always be able to determine what God really wants—what is good, pleasing, and perfect.

—GOD'S WORD[®] Translation

22 | Ephesians 4:22–24

Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; . . . Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Translation

You were taught to leave your old self—to stop living the evil way you lived before. . . . you were taught to be made new in your hearts. You were taught to become a new person. That new person is made to be like God—made to be truly good and holy.

—International Children's Bible[®]

23 | Philippians 2:5

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Translation

In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus.

—New Century Version[®]

from Section 6

24 | John 12:44, 46

Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. . . . I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

Translation

. . . Jesus cried out, “He who believes in me is really believing in the One who sent me. . . . I have come as light into the world. I came so that whoever believes in me would not stay in darkness.

—International Children’s Bible®

25 | **John 10:14, 16**

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. . . . And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Translation

I am the good shepherd. As the Father knows me and I know the Father, in the same way I know my sheep and they know me. . . . There are other sheep which belong to me that are not in this sheep pen. I must bring them, too; they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock with one shepherd.

—Good News Translation

26 | **Revelation 11:17**

We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

Twenty-four elders—representing God’s people, according to one commentary—sing this hymn of divine victory. Another source emphasizes its certainty: “. . . there is no more doubt about the future than about the past if God has determined it.”

Read a related article, [“Breaking the shell”](#) by Dorothy A. J. Woodruff.

Resources cited in this issue

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