



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

Doctrines of Atonement

October 13–19, 2025

From the **Golden Text**

Psalms 65:2, 3

O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. . . . As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.

Kāpar, the Hebrew verb translated *purge . . . away*, is rendered *make an atonement* in many early scriptural texts (see, for example, [Exodus 32:30](#); [Leviticus 16:16](#), Responsive Reading). [Ezekiel 45:17](#) and [Daniel 9:24](#) translate *kāpar* as *make reconciliation*.

From the **Responsive Reading**

Leviticus 16:2, 3, 16

The Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; . . . Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. . . . And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins.

As the first Hebrew priest, Aaron was given detailed instructions for making sacrifices, instructions that became the pattern for priestly offerings from that time on. The high priest could enter “the holy place” only one day a year, known to Jews as the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. This sacred sanctuary, hidden behind a substantial and richly decorated veil, housed the ark of the covenant and represented God’s presence among His people. (The mercy seat was the gold lid of the ark.)

Sacrificial offerings of animals were used in rites of purification—rites intended as outward expressions of inward recommitment to God’s covenant with Israel. Blood symbolized yielding of life in atonement for wrongdoing that violated that covenant.

Hebrews 10:1, 4

The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. . . . For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

A strong distinction is made here between the repeated formulaic practice of animal sacrifice and the singular sacrifice of Christ Jesus. One commentary notes “an undeniable movement from the material realm with its outer rites and its animal sacrifices to the spiritual realm with its direct access to God, its purified conscience, its requirement of hope and faith and loyalty.”

From Section 1**1 | I John 4:9**

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Translation

God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him.

—New Living Translation

3 | John 3:34, 35

He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

Translation

God sent him, and he tells the things that God says. God gives him the Spirit fully. The Father loves the Son and has given him power over everything.

—International Children’s Bible®

In these verses, John the Baptist is replying to his disciples. Jealous for their own mentor, they have evidently taken exception to Jesus' popularity (see vv. 25, 26). John corrects them unequivocally, testifying to Jesus' unique status—especially his immeasurable God-given power and love.

Measure, from the Greek term *metron*, implies a specific quantity—symbolically, a limited portion. “Unto him” was later added to the original text, which makes a broader statement about God's bestowals.

From Section 2

5 | Ephesians 4:4–7, 13

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. . . . Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Translation

There is one body and one Spirit, and God called you to have one hope. There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. There is one God and Father of everything. He rules everything and is everywhere and is in everything. Christ gave each one of us the special gift of grace, showing how generous he is. . . . This work must continue until we are all joined together in the same faith and in the same knowledge of the Son of God. We must become like a mature person, growing until we become like Christ and have his perfection.

—New Century Version®

Addressing the vital need for unity, this passage presents the writer's rationale with seven “one” phrases. A scholar points out: “All seven express the reality that there is only one gospel and that to believe that gospel is to enter into the unity it creates. Christianity is a shared faith.”

God's call is a common Hebrew Bible concept. [Hosea 11:1](#) records, “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” Individuals were called as well—for instance, Abram (see [Genesis 12:1–3](#)), Moses (see [Exodus, chap. 3](#)), and Gideon (see [Judges 6:11–24](#)). And in the New Testament, invitations to follow Christ were considered calls. As the disciples and Paul were directly called by Christ Jesus, so all believers are “partakers of the heavenly calling” ([Hebrews 3:1](#)).

From Section 3

7 | Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

In the classical world, many thinkers embraced the assumption of Stoicism that self-sufficiency enabled one to withstand or endure outside pressures. And since a well-known school of Stoicism was located in Paul’s hometown of Tarsus, he would likely have been familiar with its tenets. Yet in this letter, Paul emphatically rejects human philosophy and shows God and His Christ to be the source of all ability.

The apostle certainly demonstrated Christly authority over “all things.” [Acts 19:11](#) reports that God worked “special miracles” through Paul. And he summarizes his extensive physical challenges, including stoning, beatings, shipwreck, hunger, and thirst (see [II Corinthians 11:24–28](#)). His outlook, however, is one of spiritual confidence and gratitude (see also [I Corinthians 15:57](#); [II Corinthians 2:14](#)).

9 | [Daniel 10:2, 8, 10, 18, 19](#)

In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. . . . I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. . . . And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. . . . Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, and said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

Chapters 7–12 of this book describe visions Daniel has while exiled in Babylon. Now he receives a divine visitor (thought to be Gabriel, the angel that had appeared to him twice before; see [8:15, 16](#); [9:21](#)). Though the angel’s longer message is about changes in earthly kingdoms, his introductory words are meant to comfort and empower Daniel.

“Fear not” is a compelling theme in the Bible. From Abraham to John of Patmos, God expresses tender encouragement to His children, especially during danger and tribulation. The charge not to be afraid echoes in the words of Hebrew patriarchs, prophets, and military leaders over the centuries, and is fundamental to Jesus’ teachings.

From **Section 4**

11 | [John 10:10](#)

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Translation

My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

—New Living Translation

12 | Deuteronomy 30:19, 20

Choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days.

Translation

Choose life so that you and your descendants will live. Love the LORD your God, obey him, and be loyal to him. This will be your way of life, and it will mean a long life for you.

—GOD’S WORD[®] Translation

13 | Romans 6:4

Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Translation

Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory and power of the Father, we too might walk habitually in newness of life [abandoning our old ways].

—Amplified[®] Bible (AMP)

From Section 5**14 | I Timothy 1:15**

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Translation

What I say is true, and you should fully accept it: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

—International Children’s Bible[®]

15 | **Matthew 7:1–5, 28**

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. . . . And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.

Jesus' admonition not to judge refers to criticism and condemnation rather than to logic and reasoning. Like his previous counsel "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (5:7), this charge links behavior toward others with thoughts or motives. And he teaches, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (6:12). Later, Paul writes, "Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself" (Romans 2:1).

Contrasting a mote and a beam (perhaps from Jesus' experience as a carpenter) is an example of hyperbole common to him. A mote was the smallest piece of wood—a splinter or chip. A beam was a length of timber large enough for use in the roof of a house. With similar exaggeration, the Master calls out some Jewish officials "which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel" and suggests that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (23:24; 19:24).

16 | **Romans 12:3**

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Translation

For by the grace [of God] given to me I say to everyone of you not to think more highly of himself [and of his importance and ability] than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has apportioned to each a degree of faith [and a purpose designed for service].

—Amplified[®] Bible (AMP)

From Section 617 | **Galatians 4:4, 5**

When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Translation

When the right time finally came, God sent his own Son. He came as the son of a human mother and lived under the Jewish Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might become God's children.

—Good News Translation

18 | **Matthew 12:1–3, 5, 9–14**

Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. But he said unto them, . . . Have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? . . . And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: and, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other. Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

Interpretation of the Sabbath requirement to refrain from working varied in daily practice. Most Jews cared for their animals on the Sabbath. And some schools of belief permitted prayer for the sick on this holy day. So while these laws were central to Jewish life, reactions to Jesus were based less on his specific acts than on his perceived threat to the Mosaic law in general.

In these two accounts, shucking grain and healing were both considered labor—and became a pretext for Jesus' enemies to bring accusations against him. (At this early point in his ministry he withdraws to safety; see vv. 15, 16.)

From **Section 7**

20 | **Acts 5:12**

By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.

At this time Christian works were largely a public phenomenon. Although often victimized, the apostles and other adherents continued to gather openly—a commitment that ensured the spread of the gospel and growth of the Church. In this instance, a meeting takes place in the same outer court of the Temple cited in [John 10:23–30](#) (citation 4).

Wonders and signs accomplished by the apostles signaled their spiritual authority to continue in the Savior's footsteps. Some sources view their success in healing as an answer to the prayer of Peter and John: "Now, Lord, . . . grant unto thy

servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus” (Acts 4:29, 30).

Read a related article, “[None shall pluck you from out my hand](#)” by Gladys C. Girard

Resources cited in this issue

RR: Buttrick, George Arthur, Nolan B. Harmon, et al., eds. *The Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 11, *Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Pastoral Epistles, Philemon, Hebrews*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1951–57.

Cit. 5: Wilkins, Michael J. *NIV Application Commentary: From Biblical Text . . . to Contemporary Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Copyright

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.

Scriptural quotations marked New Century Version® are taken from the New Century Version®. Copyright © 2005 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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 Amplified® Bible (AMP) are taken from the Amplified® Bible (AMP), Copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. lockman.org

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.

© 2025 The Christian Science Publishing Society. The design of the Cross and Crown is a trademark owned by the Christian Science Board of Directors and is used by permission. 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.