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Blow ye the trumpet in
Zion, and sound an alarm
in my holy mountain.

—Joel 2:1



Bible Lens

Unreality

March 27–
April 2, 2017

Unreality

from the Golden Text

Psalms 119:37

*Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity;
and quicken thou me in thy way.*

Twentieth-century Bible scholar R. K. Harrison translates the first phrase of this verse, “Avert my eyes from unreality.” The Hebrew word for *vanity* or *vain* (*shav*) alludes to falsity and uselessness. It is the term used in the Commandment, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain” (Exodus 20:7).

Quicken (Hebrew, *chayah*) relates to life—to giving life, keeping alive, and restoring to life. Deuteronomy 8:3 records Moses’ reference to living, later quoted by Jesus (see Matthew 4:4): “Man doth not live [*chayah*] by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.”

from the Responsive Reading

Joel 1:12

The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men.

By naming virtually every prized fruit tree in this picture of loss, Joel portrays the complete desolation of those who turn from God. But the people’s return will be rewarded. After listing many beautiful images of restoration (see 2:21–26), he prophesies, “My people shall never be ashamed” (2:27).

Many translations have *surely* or *indeed* where the KJV has *because*. The New English Translation says, “Indeed, the joy of the people has dried up!”

from Section 1

2 | Jeremiah 23:32

Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all.

• • •

I am against these false prophets. Their imaginary dreams are flagrant lies that lead my people into sin. I did not send or appoint them, and they have no message at all for my people.

—New Living Translation

Jeremiah is voicing God’s denunciation of prophets who speak without spiritual authority, and mislead His people. *Lightness*, a translation of the Hebrew word *pachazuwth*, signifies frivolity and recklessness.

Jesus warns against false prophets in his Sermon on the Mount: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15).

4 | I John 4:1

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

An exploration of Bible citations from the *Christian Science Quarterly*® Bible Lessons

“... a lesson on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends.” —Mary Baker Eddy

First John repeats the phrase “of God” throughout verses 1–7. The Greek word for *of* (*ek*) denotes origin. The writer counsels testing what is said to ensure it isn’t just *about* God, but *from* God. *Try* (Greek, *dokimazō*) alludes to examining or approving something to be genuine.

from Section 2

6 | II Kings 4:8

Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread.

Shunem was a village of the tribe of Issachar, situated in the Jezreel valley in Galilee. The Shunammite woman would have had to travel about twenty miles to reach Elisha at Mount Carmel after her son’s death (see verses 24, 25).

“A great woman” refers to a woman of rank or riches. The term *great* is applied to men of wealth in First Samuel 25:2 and Second Samuel 19:32.

From the writings of Mary Baker Eddy

Health is the consciousness of the unreality of pain and disease; or, rather, the absolute consciousness of harmony and of nothing else.

Rudimental Divine Science, p. 11

Resources quoted in this issue

Golden Text: Vaughan, Curtis, ed. *The Word: The Bible from 26 Translations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985.

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About the book of Jeremiah

One of the major prophetic writings of ancient Israel, the book of Jeremiah stands with Isaiah and Ezekiel—and some include Daniel—as the most comprehensive messages of “men of God” to His people. The Major Prophets account for nearly a quarter of the contents of the Old Testament.

The prophet Jeremiah lived in the second half of the seventh and first part of the sixth centuries BC, a bleak time in Hebrew history. During his lifetime, the Assyrian Empire fell to Babylon, which then conquered Judah. Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Jewish elite of the city were exiled to Babylon.

Jeremiah was from a priestly family and received his call to prophecy when he was about twenty years old. He voiced God’s Word for some forty years, under Judean kings Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah. Sometimes considered the author of the book of Lamentations, he is called the “weeping prophet” because of his distress over the people’s worship of other gods, his unsparing rebukes of their behavior, and his own persecutions and suffering.

At the same time, the language of Jeremiah—attributed by some to his scribe Baruch—is richly poetic and expressive of the prophet’s deep love for God and the people. Perhaps his most significant prophecy describes a “new covenant,” one which would be written in the heart (see Jeremiah 31:31–34). It includes the promise, “They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them.” This new covenant—translated as *new testament* in the King James Bible—would be proclaimed centuries later by Christ Jesus at the last supper (see Luke 22:20) and by the writer of Hebrews (see 8:8).

Prophetic insight heals

By Jeanne Steely Laitner

From the November 21, 1983, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

A succession of great prophets appears in the Bible. Individuals such as Elijah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah prophetically saw through what the material senses present, to eternal spiritual facts. Such prophetic insight comforted and healed individuals and helped uplift the Hebrew nation.

The Random House Dictionary defines the word *prophet* as “a person who speaks for God ... or by divine inspiration.” Mary Baker Eddy defines the word scientifically in the *Glossary of Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: “A spiritual seer; disappearance of material sense before the conscious facts of spiritual Truth” (p. 593).

Each of us can exercise God’s gift of prophecy, the ability to see spiritually, to speak with holy authority, to be divinely inspired. What happens when one exercises his native capacity of spiritual seeing? Discordant material sense testimony yields to spiritual fact, and healing results.

Gaining prophetic insight, spiritual vision, requires earnest study and prayer, a willingness to seek constantly to understand more of God and of man’s relationship to Him. God is perfect Truth; hence everything He knows is true, is spiritual fact. Whatever He does not know is illusion, sense testimony, mortal mind belief.

Christ Jesus magnificently exercised prophetic insight when he saw the man of God’s creating so clearly that sin, disease, and death were immediately destroyed. *Science and Health* describes Jesus’ healing work in these words: “Jesus beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals. In this perfect man the Saviour saw God’s own likeness, and this correct view of man healed the sick” (pp. 476–477).

Prophetic insight brings healing by enabling one to see what God has created, to perceive what He knows as the only reality. And God knows only good.

Elisha, one of the early prophets of Israel, exercised his spiritual insight to bring about some wonderful healings. His clear vision of man’s unity with God, with divine Life, raised the Shunammite’s son from death. The Shunammite was likewise using her gift of prophecy when she replied to Elisha’s servant, who was asking about her son, “It is well” (II Kings 4:26). Was she not looking beyond what her eyes told her to the child’s true being as God’s offspring? The words “It is well” when voiced casually may mean little. But when based upon a spiritual conviction of God’s presence and power, they become the scientific law to a discordant situation.

Each individual, regardless of what difficulty is confronting him, has the ability to turn to God, to prayerfully realize what God knows that is applicable to the situation, and thus find the right solution.

However bleak the outlook for individuals or nations, true prophets exercise their spiritual vision to see through seeming discord. Christian Science, “the ‘still, small voice’ of Truth” (*Science and Health*, p. 323), enables us all to be prophets and pray scientifically to see what is real. Our discernment of spiritual facts brings healing for ourselves and progress for the whole world.

This article has been shortened to fit this page.

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