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Truth shall spring out of the
earth; and righteousness shall
look down from heaven.

—Psalms 85:11



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

Truth

**January 21–27,
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Truth

from Section 2

7 | Isaiah 33:22

The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us.

As expressed here, the biblical ideal of government is God's reign encompassing all three branches—the judicial, legislative, and executive. Accordingly, His divine covenant with Israel is characterized by the rule of law (see examples in Exodus, chaps. 21–23).

9 | Numbers 27:6, 7

The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren.

Moses' divinely directed and precedent-setting decision in favor of the five daughters of Zelophehad occurred during the distribution of land following the conquest of Canaan. The sisters later appear again before the high priest—and Moses' successor, Joshua—to remind them of the commandment that they receive inheritance status with the male heirs of the family (see Joshua 17:1–6).

This dispensation, one of the first recorded incidents of the new generation of Israelites, also guaranteed that their father's name would be preserved.

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from Section 3

14 | Ezekiel 21:26, 27

Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: ... I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is.

Ezekiel addresses his warning to a “wicked prince of Israel” (v. 25)—probably King Zedekiah—at the time of the Babylonian invasion. He warns of a radical overturning of the social order, symbolized by the removal of the diadem or miter of the priesthood and the crown of the king.

Overturn (Hebrew, *avvah*) alludes to ruin, and is repeated to stress the totality of destruction to come. “He ... whose right it is” is traditionally seen as a Messianic reference.

from Section 4

16 | Jeremiah 23:5

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Like Isaiah's prophecy, “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots” (Isaiah 11:1), Jeremiah's oracle is interpreted as foretelling a Savior to come.

The “branch” image appears again in Jeremiah 33:15, as well as twice in Zechariah (see 3:8 and 6:12). In the New Testament, a similar metaphor occurs in these words of Jesus: “I am the root and the offspring

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

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of David, and the bright and morning star” (Revelation 22:16).

18 | Luke 13:15

The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

In calling the synagogue ruler a hypocrite—a rebuke of Jewish elders recorded well over a dozen times in the Gospel of Matthew—Jesus points to the pretense of a stage actor (the original meaning of the Greek word *hypokritēs*).

from Section 5

20 | Matthew 5:10

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Verses beginning with “Blessed are” in the Sermon on the Mount have been called the Beatitudes, from the Latin word *beatitudo*. Its meaning—perfect blessedness or happiness—describes the promises in these teachings of Jesus.

The last beatitude is the only one Jesus amplifies. And while the others highlight specific qualities, this one addresses the persecution his followers are likely to experience for exemplifying these Christly qualities. The Master makes clear that to follow him is to incur the world’s hatred—but that the reward is citizenship in God’s kingdom.

22 | Matthew 27:1, 2

All the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Pilate, Roman ruler over Judea AD 26–36, is remembered almost solely for his role in the crucifixion of Jesus. Responsible for maintaining law and order, he gives audience to Jesus’ Jewish accusers about serious offenses—that Jesus calls himself a king and prevents others from showing allegiance to Caesar (see Luke 23:2). The synagogue officials understand that crimes against the Hebrew religion are not considered capital offenses (see John 18:31) and that only Rome can sentence a man to death—thus their craftily framed charges that Jesus has broken Roman law.

Although Pilate deems the accused innocent (see Luke 23:14 and John 19:6), he ultimately capitulates to Jesus’ enemies in the face of crowd violence, washing his hands to proclaim his faultlessness in the decision (see Matthew 27:24).

Over the centuries, Pilate’s actions have been viewed as weak and cowardly. Some sources, though, see them as a subtle exercise of power over the Hebrew elders, requiring pointed subservience to Roman authority before granting their request. Whatever his motivation, he unwittingly sets in motion events that ultimately lead to Jesus’ resurrection and ascension.

Resources quoted in this issue

About Amos: Singer, Isidore, et al., eds. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. 12 vols. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1901–06. Also available at jewishencyclopedia.com.

Note: This Bible Lens has additional content on the back page. >

Related healing ideas

ABOUT AMOS— THE MAN AND THE BOOK

(Golden Text, Amos 5:16, 24)

Though originally a shepherd from the southern kingdom of Judah, Amos was called to prophesy circa 760 BC in the northern kingdom of Israel. There he found egregious social injustice, including the oppression of the poor by the wealthy. Amos tells them that all their acts of worship—their burnt offerings and even their songs of praise—are as nothing in the absence of the abundant justice and righteousness expected from God's people.

While likely edited multiple times, the book of Amos is believed to include some of the earliest scriptural writing—and perhaps the first prophetic message to be written down, rather than simply spoken. According to one source, Amos initiated the practice of establishing his credentials by describing his prophetic call—a tradition that enabled true prophets of God to distinguish themselves from “professional” prophets, who spoke without divine authority.

Among many allusions to Amos in the New Testament, Stephen quotes the book in his stirring defense before the Hebrew elders, and James cites it in support of Gentile Christians (see Acts 7:42, 43 and 15:13–19).

Unwavering truth

Marked
indelibly
with lines
so straight
and signs so bright
for
our obedience,

The Christ-appointed
narrow way
allows no
room
for us to stray
on either side
of
constancy.

By Fred Challinor
From the January 14, 1980, issue of the
Christian Science Sentinel

Breakthrough

Pinpricks of light
gleam bright
in blackened sky.

So Truth,
in anguish-ridden night,
outshines the lie.

By Sara May Helder
From the August 16, 1982, issue of the
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