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Prepare ye the way of the
Lord, make straight in the
desert a highway for our God.

—Isaiah 40:3



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

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

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

from the Golden Text

Matthew 19:26

With God all things are possible.

Christ Jesus' definitive declaration reprises Scripture. God asks Abraham, "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14). Jeremiah asserts, "There is nothing too hard for thee" (Jeremiah 32:17). And the angel Gabriel assures Jesus' mother, Mary, "With God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37, citation 7).

from the Responsive Reading

Isaiah 40:3

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

In ancient times, roads were often little more than rough tracks. Before kings or conquerors arrived, workers were sent to straighten, widen, and smooth out surfaces. To some sources, the highway metaphor portrays a message of hope to Israelites in exile—the promise of not only a return to their homeland, but also a "straight highway" for their journey through the desert.

Widely seen as Messianic prophecy, verses 3–5 are cited by John the Baptist in announcing the arrival of the promised Christ (see Luke 3:1–6).

from Section 1

1 | Zechariah 4:6

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

This verse is part of an angel's message to the prophet Zechariah—intended for Zerubbabel, tribal head of Judah during the final years of the Babylonian captivity.

After returning to Jerusalem, Zerubbabel was greatly instrumental in the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem—a daunting task that had been interrupted for 17 years by enemy opposition. The angel's words would have provided the encouragement that God is the supreme and only power.

from Section 2

7 | Luke 1:26, 27

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.

Accounts of the birth of Jesus appear in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Both record an angel visiting one of the parents, both reveal the baby's name, and both specify Bethlehem as the birth place. Mention of the star and wise men, as well as Herod's threat and the flight to Egypt after Jesus' birth, appear only in Matthew. Luke alone recounts John the Baptist's birth story and Mary's visit to Elisabeth, Caesar's taxation as the reason for the trip to Bethlehem, and the shepherds in the field outside the city.

Together, the two narratives present a full picture of "the dearest memories in human history—the earthly advent and nativity of our Lord and Master" (Mary Baker Eddy, *The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 256).

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

7 | Luke 1:28, 31

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.... And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

“Thou that art highly favoured” was an extraordinary greeting to a woman, especially one likely in her teens and from a modest village—three characteristics that denoted low social standing. Yet Mary displays courage in questioning the angel messenger, and humble composure in accepting her divinely appointed role (see vv. 34, 38).

The name *Jesus*, the Greek form of the Hebrew name *Yeshua* or *Joshua*, means “He shall save.” The Hebrew people expected that the long-awaited Messiah would save them from their enemies. In the New Testament, God’s angel defines the child’s divine mission to Joseph in terms of salvation: “He shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). John the Baptist confirms this mission upon seeing the adult Jesus: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

from Section 3

9 | Luke 2:8, 10, 11

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.... And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

In the angel’s announcement to the shepherds, three titles define Jesus: *Saviour*, *Christ*, and *Lord*. Each one was used to refer to the Master during and after the years of his earthly ministry (see examples in Titus 1:4; Matthew 16:16; Mark 10:51).

from Section 4

12 | Matthew 2:13

Behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Commentators note parallels between the escape to Egypt here and the pivotal events of early Hebrew history (see also Matthew 2:15). One writes, “The flight into Egypt recalls the protection of the infant Moses from the plot of a wicked tyrant; the massacre of the innocents recalls the slaying of the Hebrew children by Pharaoh; the return from Egypt is explicitly linked to Israel’s Exodus from Egypt.”

In the New Testament story, Egypt becomes a place of refuge. By this time, the country included a sizable Jewish community. Although the exact destination of Joseph’s family isn’t known, they doubtless found safety in Egypt. And the gifts of the Magi (see Matthew 2:11) would likely have provided funds for their journey and lodging.

Resources quoted in this issue

Cit. 12: Mays, James L., Joseph Blenkinsopp, et al., eds. *Harper’s Bible Commentary*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.

Maintaining the manger attitude

By Marian C. English

From the December 9, 1985, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

Bethlehem was bustling. In this ordinarily sleepy little town, travelers registering for the tax were crowding the inn until there was no room for more. But there remained a quiet place for one small family. “And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn” (Luke 2:7).

In the flurry of holiday festivities, one may be tempted to allow his mental atmosphere to become as crowded as that beehive of a Bethlehem inn. Thoughts may swarm with one taxing demand elbowing another—special events crowding out sleepy routine, anxious moments consumed in the irrelevant tradition of spending until spent. Or perhaps walls of loneliness and partitions of purposelessness would separate one from the calmness of holy, uplifting joy.

Such turbulence is the opposite of the quiet dominion Christ Jesus came to express. His unequaled example of peace and healing amid worldly turmoil shows the true sense of the Christmas season, and how important it is to let no amount of material commotion crowd this true sense out. Christian Science reveals that although Jesus’ nativity was a one-time event, the Christ is ever present, always unfolding man’s spiritual nature. In *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, the Christian Science textbook, Mary Baker Eddy states, “Christ is the true idea voicing good, the divine message from God to men speaking to the human consciousness” (p. 332).

The Christ message finds a welcoming berth in the receptive human consciousness, that consciousness which is not too busy with materialism. Regardless of outward circumstances, the spiritually receptive

thought holds an unhurried expectancy and finds the strength to refuse consent to demands whose friction would push aside spiritual, God-derived qualities. Patience, free from the pressure of stress; contentment, rejoicing in abundance without excess; purity, recognizing and welcoming its own; love, willing to share its radiant warmth unselfishly—these are some of the characteristics of spiritual stillness. They constitute the gentle mental atmosphere in which the Christ finds room to appear, bringing with it the tenderness and newness of spiritual healing.

Insisting on an undisturbed attitude in the midst of holiday festivities, Mrs. Eddy said, “I love to observe Christmas in quietude, humility, benevolence, charity, letting good will towards man, eloquent silence, prayer, and praise express my conception of Truth’s appearing” (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 262).

God’s great love tenderly awakens in each quiet manger of receptive thought the newborn hope of peace and good will. The beckoning starlight—the compelling signal of Christ’s coming—is not merely a promise of some vague future time when tumult is at last stilled in the hearts of mankind. It is here and now, shining in the yearning heart with each fresh appearing of Christ, the divine message of healing and hope. Then into that consciousness faithfully maintaining the manger attitude of quiet and fearless trust, the Christ makes its sweet healing appearance again and again, every day all year.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to jsh.christianscience.com/maintaining-the-manger-attitude.