



Ye shall seek me, and find
me, when ye shall search
for me with all your heart.

—Jeremiah 29:13



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

God

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from the Golden Text

I Chronicles 22:19

Set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God.

King David is speaking to Solomon and other leaders of Israel near the end of David's life. His charge to rely on God follows a summary of the preparations he has made for a huge undertaking—building a temple to God.

To ancient peoples, the heart was deemed the source of not only the feelings, but also the intellect and will. A commentary summarizes biblical usage: “In brief, the heart is the repository and directive center of thought, will, feeling, and conscience.”

from the Responsive Reading

Jeremiah 9:23, 24

Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me.

Jeremiah's call to acknowledge God's glory is cited by Paul centuries later: “According as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (I Corinthians 1:31). And throughout Christ Jesus' ministry, glorifying God is the people's spontaneous response to his healing works (see Matthew 15:31, for example).

from Section 1

2 | Job 23:3

Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!

Uncertainty about God's presence was not uncommon among the Israelites in times of trouble—during the Exodus, for instance (see Exodus 17:1–7). Yet Hebrew texts continually celebrate His nearness (see examples in Deuteronomy 4:7; Psalms 34:18, 139:1–13, 145:18). And a hallmark of New Testament teachings is the recognition of Emmanuel, “God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

from Section 2

7 | II Chronicles 15:1, 2

The spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; the Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you.

Azariah was a lesser-known prophet during the early years of King Asa's reign. His name, meaning “Yahweh has helped” in Hebrew, is shared by a number of Old Testament figures.

Asa, third king of Judah, and King Solomon's great-grandson, ruled circa 913–873 BC. His reign was largely peaceful and prosperous, and he destroyed many places of pagan worship and sacrifice.

Apparently some idol worship continued in the land, however. So God sends Azariah

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to Asa, warning that Israel has long been “without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law” (v. 3). One source notes, “The priests’ teaching role was vital to the moral and spiritual quality of national life... but when it was neglected, the truth about God declined and the fabric of covenant society was undermined.”

Humbly heeding the prophet’s warning, Asa abolishes all worship of idols and calls the people to return to consistent worship of the one God. When they seek Him wholeheartedly, “he was found of them: and the Lord gave them rest round about” (v. 15).

from Section 4

14 | Matthew 15:22

Behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto [Jesus], saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

Christ Jesus’ interchange with the Canaanite woman takes place near the end of his healing career. The account falls between two stories of great plenty—his feeding of the five thousand (see 14:15–21) and then of the four thousand (see 15:32–38). Mention of crumbs (15:27) presents a stark contrast to the multitudes’ food. But the woman is sure that even the smallest iota of truth will bring healing.

The Greek term for *dog* in verse 27 is *kunarion*—meaning a household pet, not one of the stray or wild dogs that ran in scavenging packs. As today, small pet dogs were sometimes fed from the communal table.

Several parallels exist between this account and that of the centurion’s servant (see

8:5–13). Both petitioners are Gentiles who approach Jesus with respect for his spiritual authority, out of love for another person, and with the expectation of healing. Both speak at some length with the Master, and both receive his assurance of healing before they see proof of it.

from Section 5

15 | Jeremiah 29:13, 14

Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord.

Here Jeremiah encourages his exiled people in Babylon. A researcher describes this time as one of opportunity: “The period of waiting and surviving in a grim and threatening world of exile were to be years of spiritual discipline and an opportunity for repentance. When the time of discipline had been accomplished Israel could truly seek God ‘with a whole heart’; only then could a return to the homeland become a genuine possibility, because only then would it become spiritually meaningful.”

To learn more about the *Christian Science Quarterly* Bible Lessons, go to biblelesson.com.

Resources quoted in this issue

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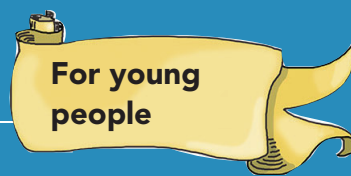
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Looking for God in all the right places

By Olga Cossi

From the July 31, 2000, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*



It's probably safe to say that at one time or another, nearly everyone feels the need to search for God. But where to look? How high up? How deep down? In my own search, I dig into the Bible on a daily basis. By "dig" I mean that I explore it deeply; I try to understand its spiritual message as I read.

One day I thought, "Too bad God's kingdom doesn't have a postal, or ZIP, code. If it did, it would be much easier to find." Suddenly, the answer came: "But in a way, the kingdom of God *does* have a ZIP Code." The Scriptures don't refer to it as such, but they do give us specific direction as to where to find God. In the Gospel of Luke, Christ Jesus says, "The kingdom of God is within you" (17:21).

It surprised me that I had never thought of this as a type of destination or address—and, in particular, as *my* address. After all, he didn't just say that the kingdom of God is either "with" or "in" me, but *within* me.

My next question was, "How do I search within myself to find this kingdom?" It would be helpful if I had a good, strong searchlight. How about the light of Truth itself? I started looking for a basic truth—a central theme in the Bible—that would throw light on this divine kingdom's exact location.

I've learned that one of the central truths of the Bible is the oneness and allness of God. This concept runs throughout the Scriptures, and is found in these words: "I am the Lord and there is none else." Starting with Deuteronomy, this simple yet profound truth is repeated ten times in the Old Testament, almost word for word (see, for example, chapter 4). In Isaiah, it's repeated six times in one chapter (see chapter 45).

I put this truth alongside Jesus' comment about the kingdom of God and came up with this conclusion: There is one God, who is All, and His kingdom is within me.

Now, when I search for God, I no longer look outside myself. Instead, I search within my own thinking. And rather than use my physical senses, I rely on my spiritual sense to reveal God's nature and kingdom to me. I look beyond my innermost beliefs, hopes, and fears, to discover God's presence right here with me, strengthening me and lifting me out of mistaken notions.

Such searching brings results. They are not always exactly what I expect, but they are encouraging. I am finding a sense of direction, healing, and answers to puzzling problems. I'm also finding courage and faith to continue seeking, no matter what. And I'm finding a feeling of home.

Perhaps this is enough for now. But my search will continue. I keep finding important guideposts in the Bible, such as Psalm 46. It offers a bundle of encouragement and a detailed roadmap for my search. Verse 10 contains this especially clear pointer: "Be still, and know that I am God." That stillness always leads me back to the kingdom of God within.

From the writings of Mary Baker Eddy

Our Master said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." ... Because God is ever present, no boundary of time can separate us from Him and the heaven of His presence; and because God is Life, all Life is eternal.

Unity of Good, p. 37