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Thou sendest forth thy spirit,  
they are created: and thou  
renewest the face of the earth.

—Psalms 104:30



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**Bible Lens**

**Spirit**

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# Spirit

## from the Responsive Reading

### Ezekiel 36:16, 27

*The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, ... I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

Prophets regularly used word formulas such as “the word of the Lord came to me” to indicate the divine origin of their promises and warnings. Ezekiel’s words in this verse herald God’s purifying and renewing activity—an action often seen as limited to priests and prophets, now extended to the hearts of all His people. This action, impelling obedience to His law, is done not for their sakes, but for His “holy name’s sake” (v. 22).

### Isaiah 60:19

*The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.*

God’s presence is commonly represented by light in Scripture. Isaiah introduces this verse with the assurance that the sun and moon will no longer be needed—God will be the eternal source of light.

The Psalmist writes that God covers Himself “with light as with a garment” (Psalms 104:2); Ezekiel describes the divine court as “full of the brightness of the Lord’s glory” (Ezekiel 10:4); and the book of Revelation promises God’s servants, “They need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light” (22:5).

### Isaiah 61:1

*The spirit of the Lord God is upon me.*

The Hebrew word *ruah* means wind, breath, or spirit. It is used in reference to God dozens of times in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) to express the divine life-giving power and presence.

Christ Jesus cites Isaiah’s prophecy when he reads aloud in the Nazareth synagogue, saying, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:21).

## from Section 1

### 1 | John 4:24

*God is a Spirit.*

Since the original Greek can be understood to mean either spirit or a spirit, most translations omit the article *a*—making clear that God is Spirit itself rather than a personality. A commentator notes, “Spirit connotes reality, or absolute being.... it is reality as loving, powerful, life-giving.”

Scholars compare this statement to First John’s two definitive declarations about God’s nature: “God is light” and “God is love” (1:5 and 4:8).

### 3 | Isaiah 44:3

*I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.*

The Sinai wilderness, where the children of Israel wandered for forty years, has no rain for several months of the year. The prophetic writer offers the image of abundant

# 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

water as a poignant symbol of renewal and regeneration for the spiritually thirsty.

## Word Study

**Jesurun** (citation 3, Isaiah 44:2) A poetic term of endearment for the nation of Israel, *Jesurun* (meaning “upright one”) refers to the moral character God’s people are expected to embrace.

## from Section 2

### 7 | Psalms 104:18

*The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.*

This mention of two wild animals—the first believed to be an ibex, and the second a rabbit-like animal called a hyrax—is part of this psalm’s 35-verse catalog of creation. Even the most inaccessible places and the smallest of creatures are under God’s care.

## from Section 4

### 13 | Acts 3:2

*A certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple.*

Acts 3:1 identifies the time of this encounter as the ninth hour—between 3 and 4:30 in the afternoon, depending on the length of days at various times of the year. This was the hour of evening worship, one of two times each day set aside not only for prayer but also for sacrifice. The disciples’ offering was spiritual, raising the lame man’s sense of charity from mere monetary assistance to the blessing of healing.

## from Section 5

### 14 | Romans 8:14

*As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

Central to early Christian teaching was the status of believers as children of God. No longer was identity to be determined by human relationships or inheritance. The faithful would partake in the close relation to their creator that Christ Jesus exemplifies as the Son of God. “And if children,” Paul continues in this letter, “then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (v. 17).

### 16 | Acts 10:1, 2

*There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.*

As a respected citizen who practiced almsgiving, prayer, and devotion to the God of Israel, Cornelius fulfilled virtually every expectation of followers of Christ—except the requirement of being Jewish. Peter’s God-inspired change of heart about that necessity not only made Cornelius the first Gentile to be publicly included as a follower of Christ, but also opened the door of Christianity to all believers.

To learn more about the *Christian Science Quarterly* Bible Lessons, go to [biblelesson.com](http://biblelesson.com).

## Resources quoted in this issue

**Cit. 1:** Dodd, Charles Harold. *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. Cambridge, Angleterre: Cambridge University Press, 1953.



# Jesus' answer to Nicodemus

By Lynn H. Howard

From the July 22, 1985, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

Often, the Gospels say, crowds followed Jesus. They listened to his message and witnessed healings.

Nicodemus, a Pharisee who was also a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish governing council, was impressed by Jesus' works of healing. He came by night to visit Jesus.

Speaking respectfully, Nicodemus said he recognized that Jesus was a teacher come from God. The Master answered what may have been that Pharisee's unspoken question and told him that a man had to be "born again" if he wanted to see the kingdom of God.

To Nicodemus, being born again referred to physical rebirth. However, Jesus said: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:5, 6). Wasn't Jesus presenting to Nicodemus a new concept of God and man, which included a spiritual concept of life? This certainly was a radical departure from what people generally believed.

To be born again is to recognize—and to begin to prove—that man originates in Spirit. He is not a physical structure of bones, blood, heart, brain, et cetera, because God is not physical. Man's real identity is spiritual; he expresses such qualities as love, wisdom, purity, justice, and joy.

Mary Baker Eddy writes: "The Scriptures inform us that man is made in the image and likeness of God. Matter is not that likeness. The likeness of Spirit cannot be so unlike Spirit. Man is spiritual and perfect; and because he is spiritual and perfect, he must be so understood in Christian Science" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 475).

Jesus knew that this concept of man's spiritual nature was contrary to the accepted reasoning of most people. To them the physical body was real and substantial, containing life that began at birth. The acceptance of a mortal body as substance, as real life, is the basic error that obscures healing. To Jesus, however, Life was God, timeless Spirit, with no beginning and no end, no cycle of birth, maturity, and death.

Someone may say, "I desire spiritual qualities, but they seem out of reach." However, when one glimpses that identity is actually spiritual and not material, he then realizes that he does include those qualities that belong to Spirit.

So being "born again" is not just a one-time illumination but a daily awakening to what true substance is. We begin to comprehend that man is the son of God, created in the likeness of Spirit, God, not matter. Daily putting into practice the qualities of Spirit, we find purpose and fulfillment. Less and less time is spent in pursuing material things and pleasures as the goal of life. The desire to be good and to have more faith in Spirit increases. As the power of God to heal and save dawns on our thought, we begin to recognize how being born again relates to healing. In referring to the new birth, Mrs. Eddy writes: "This spiritual birth opens to the enraptured understanding a much higher and holier conception of the supremacy of Spirit, and of man as His likeness, whereby man reflects the divine power to heal the sick" (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 17).

To read the entire article, which has been adapted to fit this page, go to [jsh.christianscience.com/jesus-answer-to-nicodemus](http://jsh.christianscience.com/jesus-answer-to-nicodemus).