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The spirit of God hath made  
me, and the breath of the  
Almighty hath given me life.

—Job 33:4



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**Bible Lens**

**Man**

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# Man

## from the Responsive Reading

### John 3:1, 2

*There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night.*

Why did Nicodemus visit Jesus after dark? Some sources suggest he was fearful of being seen with Jesus; others, that he was looking for uninterrupted time to talk with him. Whatever his motivation, this Jewish elder was courageous and sincere enough to seek instruction from a man shunned by other Pharisees.

Nicodemus appears in only two other biblical accounts—both also in the Gospel of John and in support of Christ Jesus. He deters his fellow rulers from arresting Jesus and, after the crucifixion, joins Joseph of Arimathea in preparing the Master's body for burial (see 7:50, 51 and 19:39, 40).

Over the arc of these three stories is seen a man's growth from timid searching to measured defense—and finally, to an open demonstration of faith and love. One scholar describes the scriptural record of Nicodemus as “a beautiful illustration of the working of the Spirit, of how belief in the Son of Man is in truth a new birth, and the entrance into eternal life.”

## from Section 1

### 1 | Psalms 8:4

*What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

To be mindful (Hebrew, *zākar*) indicates attention—a concept also shown in biblical references to remembering (see examples in Exodus 20:8 and Psalms 25:6). *Visiting* (Hebrew, *pāqad*) alludes here to caring for or overseeing (see another instance in Jeremiah 29:10). Together, these two concepts underscore God's love for His creation.

## from Section 2

### 4 | Job 14:1

*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*

“Born of a woman,” sometimes viewed as a negative comment on women, is simply a description of the fleshly origin of mortals. The Hebrew word translated *trouble* in this verse (*rogez*)—referring to fear, rage, and agitation—is compared to the restlessness of an animal or the noise of thunder.

In contrast with Job's feeling “of few days, and full of trouble,” he ultimately finds full restoration and lives to be “old and full of days” (42:17).

## from Section 3

### 11 | Genesis 32:24, 25

*Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.*

Jacob's struggle takes place during his journey back to Canaan after twenty years in



# 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

Mesopotamia. On the outward trip he was a fugitive, traveling alone and without possessions. But he encountered God at Bethel, and received a divine promise of land and descendants—as well as God’s pledge, “I ... will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land” (28:15).

Now, Jacob has great possessions and a large family. Yet he sends his entourage ahead and is once again alone in the desert. In this second spiritual crisis, he is ready to come to terms with the wrongs he has committed—and to embrace a higher nature.

A researcher notes, “The thigh is the pillar of a man’s strength, and its joint with the hip the seat of physical force for the wrestler.” Jacob’s perseverance through this intense interchange is rewarded with a complete transformation of character, symbolized by his new name of *Israel*.

## from Section 4

### 15 | John 8:42

*I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.*

Jesus’ spiritual source is a recurring theme in the Gospel of John. Some people had argued that he could not be Christ because his origin in Nazareth was known: “We know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.”

#### Resources quoted in this issue

**RR:** Orr, James, ed. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Chicago: Howard-Severance, 1915. Also available at [studylight.org/encyclopedias](http://studylight.org/encyclopedias).

**Cit. 11:** Barnes, Albert. *Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Whole Bible*. New York, 1834–85. Also available at [biblehub.com/commentaries](http://biblehub.com/commentaries).

In response, Jesus declares, “Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true.... I am from him, and he hath sent me” (7:27–29). In his final, comforting talk with his disciples, the Master reiterates, “I came forth from the Father” (16:28, citation 16).

### About the Pharisees

A powerful group of Jewish leaders active from circa 150 BC to circa AD 135, Pharisees were strict observers of Mosaic law. Central to their beliefs were the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the expectation of rewards or punishment after death. Because conformity to the Torah was of paramount importance to them, outward behavior—especially the focus on ritual purity—took precedence over inner feelings or desires.

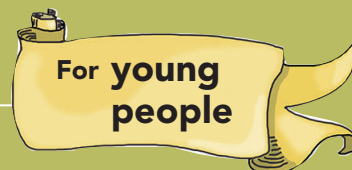
The term *Pharisee* may come from the Hebrew verb *pāraśh*, implying separation—a possible reference to their practice of avoiding anyone considered unclean. It was this legalistic interpretation of law and absence of compassion for the human condition that brought the Pharisees in conflict with early Christians. The Gospels describe the Pharisees in strongly negative terms, from their argumentative responses to Christ Jesus to their active attempts to entrap and destroy him. In a lengthy denunciation recorded in Matthew 23:1–33, Jesus repeatedly labels them “blind guides” and “hypocrites.”

A few Pharisees were friendly to Jesus and his followers, however: Nicodemus, Gamaliel, and an anonymous group that warned the Master of danger (see John 3:1–13 and 19:39; Acts 5:34–39; Luke 13:31). And the Apostle Paul had been a Pharisee—something he continued to refer to even after he became a follower of Christ (see Acts 23:6 and 26:4–5; Philippians 3:5).

# The same old me?

By Alice Amyx Hugo

From the January 2, 1978, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*



**D**o you ever get tired of the same old things? Like the same bunch hanging around after school every day? Or do you feel you have to have something new? A new dress or T-shirt?

Sometimes when you get something new it gives you a lift for a day or two. Then suddenly you might think, How did that help? I'm the same old me again.

This "old me" has to be put off before you can make fresh discoveries about your only real self. The Bible urges us to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24).

The new man, you'll find out, is the true man, your spiritual selfhood. It's the image and expression of God because He made you.

It's this spiritual selfhood that Christ Jesus referred to when he told Nicodemus that he must be born again. That must have sounded like a big order for Nicodemus. He didn't see how, from a biological sense, an old person could go back through the same material conditions and be born again.

But Jesus explained, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:6, 7).

The flesh, or matter, isn't your actual substance. You are born again when you begin to rid yourself of every limiting, material belief that contradicts God, good. In this way you begin to understand the real, spiritual you, His expression.

As you study your true being in divine Science, you'll make marvelous discoveries about yourself as a child of divine Love. Love shines and glows. It never dulls. So

your life will take on more sparkle, and you'll bring light into other people's lives.

Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, writes, "Let us feel the divine energy of Spirit, bringing us into newness of life and recognizing no mortal nor material power as able to destroy" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 249).

With this spiritual perspective of yourself and your friends you'll see each one is an individual spiritual being with a unique purpose to glorify God, divine Love. You'll begin to learn that it's not new friends or new clothes that make you happy, although you'll be supplied with these as you need them. The spiritual ideas that unfold to you from the source of your being, divine Love, bring a happiness that grows and blesses others besides yourself.

As you learn the spiritual facts about yourself as a child of God, you won't think of yourself as "the same old me." You'll see the "new me" every day.

## From the writings of Mary Baker Eddy

The new birth is not the work of a moment. It begins with moments, and goes on with years; moments of surrender to God, of childlike trust and joyful adoption of good; moments of self-abnegation, self-consecration, heaven-born hope, and spiritual love....

What a faith-lighted thought is this! that mortals can lay off the "old man," until man is found to be the image of the infinite good that we name God, and the fulness of the stature of man in Christ appears.

*Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896, p. 15*