



I will sing of the mercies
of the Lord for ever.

—Psalms 89:1



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

Truth

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from Section 1

5 | Genesis 3:24

And [the Lord God] placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

One commentary compares the barriers at the entry of Eden to the limited access in the Jerusalem Temple's inner sacred space. At Christ Jesus' crucifixion, the veil covering the entrance to that space was torn (see Luke 23:45)—symbolizing the fact that God and man are never separated.

That Yahweh leaves the tree of life standing has been viewed as a ray of hope for humanity—a hope that is deepened in the promise given in Revelation 2:7: “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (citation 25).

from Section 3

12 | I Samuel 5:2

When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

After twice defeating the Israelites in battle, the Philistines took possession of their ark—their symbol of God's presence (see 4:1–11). Its loss was devastating to the Hebrew people, who had made the unprecedented decision to bring the ark into battle to ensure victory. One mourner said, “The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken” (v. 22).

The capture of the ark undoubtedly represents a great victory for the Philistines. But its possession does not bring the glory they expect. Their attempt to show their own god's superiority to the God of Israel is decisively countered by divine means (see 5:2–7).

People have speculated that Dagon, the Philistine god, was depicted with the body of a fish and the head and hands of a man. Twice its statue is overturned, the second time laid before the ark with its head and hands cut off. (Because these pieces lay across the threshold of the room, Philistine priests refrained from stepping there—a practice that apparently became permanent, see v. 5).

This isn't the end of the story. When the Philistines subsequently parade the ark in Gath and Ekron, those cities undergo great destruction (see vv. 8–12). After seven months, the ark—with added offerings of gold—is sent back to Israel (see chapter 6).

from Section 4

15 | Matthew 8:14, 15

When Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

An account of this healing also appears in the Gospels of Mark (see 1:29–31) and Luke (see 4:38, 39). Though there are small differences, all three end with the words “ministered unto them.” The Greek verb *diakoneō*, from which the English word *dea-*

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

con is derived, means to wait upon as a host or a servant. This woman’s ability to assume her Sabbath duties as a hostess without delay shows clearly the immediacy and completeness of her healing.

18 | John 16:13

When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.

In the Bible, the phrase “Spirit of truth” is unique to John’s Gospel, although it is also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. A scholar notes that part of the office of this spirit is “to bring truth home to the hearts of men, to carry it from the material to the moral sphere, to make it something more than a collection of signs seen or heard—a living power in living men.”

Another source explains this verse in terms of revelation: “No man has fully worked out all the significance of [Jesus’] teaching for life and for belief, for the individual and for the world, for society and for the nation. Revelation is a continual opening out of [this] meaning.”

from Section 5

21 | Matthew 10:42

Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

“Little ones” doesn’t refer to children but to Christ’s followers. “Even a simple deed of kindness performed for the benefit of one of his disciples will be noted by God and rewarded,” writes one researcher.

23 | Luke 23:3

Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.

“King of the Jews” was a title recorded only one time prior to this—in the account of the respectful wise men searching for the Christ child (see Matthew 2:2). Now, near the end of Jesus’ career, it becomes one of mockery.

Although Pilate’s question may have sprung from curiosity, his soldiers make a crown of thorns and contemptuously hail Jesus, “King of the Jews” (see John 19:2, 3). And Pilate insists on placing this title on the cross, an ironic decision considering that Jews had accused Jesus of falsely naming himself king. In fact, the chief priests request of Pilate, “Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews”—a request Pilate denies (see vv. 19–22).

Jesus’ response to Pilate, “Thou sayest it,” is interpreted either as agreement or as a refusal to answer. The Gospel of John, however, records the Master’s explanation: “My kingdom is not of this world.” He continues, “To this end was I born ... that I should bear witness unto the truth.” Centuries later, Pilate’s response still resounds: “What is truth?” (18:36–38).

Resources quoted in this issue

Cit. 5: Attridge, Harold W., ed. *The HarperCollins Study Bible*. Rev. ed. New York: HarperCollins, 2006.

Cit. 18: Ellicott, Charles John, ed. *A Bible Commentary for English Readers by Various Writers*. London: Cassell, 1897–1905. Also available at studylight.org/commentaries; Barclay, William. *The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John*, Vol. 2. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew, 1955. Revised and updated by Saint Andrew, 2001. Reprinted as *The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John*, Vol. 2. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001–04.

Cit. 21: Laymon, Charles M. *The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1971.

I no longer wonder, What is truth?

By Edna V. Locke

From the August 23, 1999, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

For many years, I sat in church on Sunday mornings looking at these words from Jesus—“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32)—pondering what they could mean. I certainly wanted to know the truth, and I certainly wanted to be free, but somehow I couldn’t quite get a clear picture of what this truth is.

After many years of half-heartedly searching for truth and waiting more or less for it to appear miraculously, I finally started an in-depth study of Christian Science. When I discovered that *Truth* is a synonym for God, it really intensified my yearning to know the answer to the puzzle “What is truth?”

One day while studying the Bible, I read Jesus’ prayer “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). What a marvelous feeling to think of Jesus’ praying to the Father for those who try to follow him, for me! I was so overwhelmed that I immediately made a vow that I would strive very hard to be worthy of this prayer, so I doubled my study time and prayed for enlightenment.

Yet it seemed the more I studied, the more I wondered about Truth. But one beautiful truth that came to me one day as I was praying was that God is the only creator, and man is created in His image and likeness (see Genesis 1:27). This fact seemed to be the most important truth in my life at the time.

Another day, I read these words by Mary Baker Eddy: “Truth is God’s remedy for error of every kind, and Truth destroys only what is untrue” (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, pp. 142–143). Since God is “of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst

not look on iniquity” (Habakkuk 1:13), Truth destroys evil by making one see the unreality of it.

With this new enlightenment, the “hopeless situation” of my almost fifty-year addiction to tobacco didn’t seem hopeless anymore. Over the years, I had tried practically every method I’d ever heard of to break this addiction, to no avail. Now, with the help of a Christian Science practitioner, I set to work to realize the allness of God and the nothingness of evil. I lived daily with this promise in the Bible: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” And then—what was really impressive—the next verse says, “Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry” (I Corinthians 10:13, 14). What a wonderful promise this is!

Last summer, I smoked my last cigarette. I can’t say I’m never tempted, but I know I’m not going to smoke again. I’m free.

This past Sunday as I sat there, again looking at those beautiful words on the wall, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,” I had such a profound knowledge of what God is and what God does for man. An overwhelming feeling of gratitude to God filled my heart as I realized that “What is Truth?” is no longer an unanswered question for me.

To read the entire article, which has been adapted to fit this page, go to **jsh.christianscience.com/I-no-longer-wonder-what-is-truth**.