



All the earth shall be filled  
with the glory of the Lord.

—Numbers 14:21



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**Bible Lens**

**God**

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## from the Golden Text

### Isaiah 40:18

*Who compares with God?*

*Is anything like him?*

—Contemporary English Version

Isaiah 40 introduces a multi-chapter denunciation of idolatry. It may seem baffling that the Israelites are tempted away from worship of Yahweh after He had freed them from bondage and established them in the Promised Land. But their devotion to Him is repeatedly tested by widespread worship of pagan deities around them—and Hebrew prophets repeatedly remind them of their covenant with God (see examples in Isaiah 54:10 and Ezekiel 16:60).

## from the Responsive Reading

### Acts 17:22, 23

*Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.”*

—New King James Version

*Areopagus* (also called “Mars’ hill” in the King James Version) is the name for both a specific hilltop in Athens and a judicial council that met there. Given its centuries-old tradition as the site of judgment, it was a natural place for Paul to be brought to explain the new doctrine of Christianity (see

vv. 18–21). A commentary notes, “No place in Athens was so suitable for a discourse upon the mysteries of religion.”

The tribunal itself dated back over six centuries, enforcing laws, holding trials, and supervising the moral conduct and education of the populace—and it’s identified by some sources as the council that sentenced Socrates to death in 399 BC. In Paul’s case, the motive of his listeners appears to be genuine interest in his teachings rather than condemnation: “Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean” (v. 20).

## from Section 1

### 2 | I John 4:13

*Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

While God had promised, “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28), most Jews of this time saw this as a future event. For early Christians, by contrast, the empowering force of God’s presence was normal and celebrated—as seen by dozens of New Testament references to the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, including Christ Jesus’ promise of a “Comforter ...; even the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16, 17).

“It is the work of the Spirit,” writes a scriptural authority, “that makes us aware of God’s presence; and it is the work of the Spirit that gives us the certainty that we are truly at peace with God.”

# 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

## from Section 2

### 7 | II Samuel 24:2

*The king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people.*

Joab, King David’s nephew, was a formidable warrior who served David loyally for most of his life. But he was often brutal, as shown by his slaughter of Abner and Absalom (see II Samuel 3:27; 18:14). Yet in this instance, his counsel is apparently wiser than his uncle’s plans: “Why doth the lord my king delight in this thing?” (24:3).

Scholars puzzle over the reason David’s census is considered sinful. Moses had counted the people at God’s command (see Numbers 1:1–3). But David’s motives seem to have been ambition and pride, and he humbly repents of his action (see II Samuel 24:10).

## from Section 3

### 12 | Daniel 3:4, 5

*To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear ... all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up.*

Hebrew captives in Babylon faced a dilemma that would not have troubled Nebuchadnezzar’s other subjects. Babylonians worshiped multiple gods, so honoring the king’s golden image did not threaten their polytheism. But for the Israelites, worship of any but the one God was sacrilege. The three young Hebrew men were willing to be

punished rather than bow to a pagan image (see vv. 16–18).

## from Section 4

### 14 | John 1:18

*No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

Centuries earlier God had told Moses, “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Exodus 33:20). Although the Hebrew people were not to look upon God, they did claim a covenant relationship with Him—a relationship that included some perception of His nature. Jeremiah prophesied, “They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord” (Jeremiah 31:34).

Now John the Baptist announces that God’s Son is “declaring” God—providing a new understanding of Him. *Exēgeomai* (the Greek word translated *declared*) is the root of the English term *exegesis*, an explanation or interpretation. Being “in the bosom of the Father”—in spiritual unity with God—Christ makes God knowable to humanity. One scholar writes that in Christ “the distant, unknowable, invisible, unreachable God has come to men and women.”

#### Resources quoted in this issue

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**Cit. 2:** Barclay, William. *The Daily Study Bible: The Letters of John and Jude*. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew, 1955. Revised and updated by Saint Andrew, 2001. Reprinted as *The New Daily Study Bible: The Letters of John and Jude*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001–04.

**Cit. 14:** Barclay, William. *The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John*, Vol. 1. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew, 1955. Revised and updated by Saint Andrew, 2001. Reprinted as *The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John*, Vol. 1. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001–04.



# On a quest to know God

By Emily Byquist

From the September 19, 2005, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

**D**uring my teen years I had a deep yearning to know God. It was the 1960s, a time of great turbulence during which we questioned and challenged the status quo of everything—politically, morally, and socially.

By early August, in 1969, the now-famous Woodstock music festival was approaching, a weekend of concerts in Upstate New York. Before I went, I made the decision that I didn't want to do any more drugs—which is humorous, in hindsight, given what took place there. While I yearned to do good and make the right choices, human reasoning as to why I shouldn't take drugs was insufficient for me to make any lasting change.

Shortly after my friends and I arrived, I separated myself from them and went to a hill. I sat and looked at my surroundings—the grandeur and beauty of nature, the sun glistening on the rolling hills. And, at that moment, I saw that there was an infinite Spirit behind what I was seeing—that God was not in nature, but behind this grandeur was an intelligence that was pure Spirit.

When I caught this spiritual glimpse, I was clearheaded, I was articulate, I was myself. A spiritual sense of life had come to me with such clarity that I never took drugs again.

In that moment, I remember thinking with such simplicity, “What human parent would hide themselves from their child? So, one of two things is going to happen: If I searched for God with all my heart, and God existed, He would already be revealing Himself to me and I would find Him. And if I searched with all my heart and couldn't find Him—what a relief, because I would finally know for sure that there was no such

thing as God.” I knew nothing about Christian Science at this time.

A day or two after I returned home from the festival, a friend, who was also not a Christian Scientist, invited me to go to a Christian Science lecture. I can't recall what the lecturer said, but during the lecture, I knew I had found the truth.

That Sunday I went to a Christian Science Sunday School and enrolled myself. I walked in barefoot from a weekend in the park, in a skirt that I'd bought at an antique store, pinned on the side. I was in my late teens, and it was the beginning of my journey to know God.

A week or two after I began studying Christian Science, I was healed of a problem I'd had for a few years. I came home from high school one day with menstrual cramps, something that had plagued me every month. I lay down, and I began to think calmly and logically about how God knew me, and about how this was therefore the only way I could know myself.

The good news that Christian Science brought me was that not only was God knowable Love and Life and Truth, but that I was the child of perfect Love and Life and Truth. And not just me—all were included. As I pondered this, the pain and discomfort left, and I was healed instantaneously. There was never again a recurrence of cramps.

As the prophet Jeremiah so beautifully wrote, “Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” (29:13).

To read the entire article, which has been adapted to fit this page, go to [jsh.christianscience.com/on-a-quest-to-know-god](http://jsh.christianscience.com/on-a-quest-to-know-god).