



Bible Lens

Bible Lens—March 23–29, 2020

Subject: **Reality**

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The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

—[Psalms 145:9](#)

Exploring Bible Verses

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

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from the Golden Text

Psalms 34:8

Taste and see how good the Lord is!

—Common English Bible

Taste (translated from the Hebrew root *tā'ām*) can be used as a metaphor for testing or evaluating, as well as for discretion and judgment. The image of tasting invites the reader to discern by experience—to discover God’s goodness by actively trusting in it. First Peter later alludes to [Psalms 34:8](#) in this phrase: “if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious” ([2:3](#)).

Like many other poems in the Hebrew Bible, this psalm is an acrostic—in this case, with the initial letters of each line arranged alphabetically. Some sources believe that acrostics helped listeners remember texts, and one points out that “the alphabet is a ready metaphor for totality and completeness . . . and thus serves as an excellent frame for praising the qualities of God.”

from Section 1

3 | Psalms 33:4, 6, 9, 11

The word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth.... By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.... For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.... The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Here **truth** is translated from the Hebrew word *'emûnâ*, often rendered **faithfulness** in the King James Bible. Lamentations 3:23 uses it to praise God: "Great is thy faithfulness [*'emûnâ*]. "All his works are done in truth" declares that God's works are steadfast, faithful, and trustworthy.

To the Hebrew people, the divine Word was more than an utterance that represented God's power; the Word itself had power. One commentator explains that "in Jewish thought God's **word** not only **said** things; it **did** things."

Another scholar writes, "The prophetic word of promise which shapes history, the directive word of the covenant which takes possession of men and the creative word of God which determines nature and its order combine to describe the revelation of God in the [Old Testament]."

counsel: direction; purpose; design

Translation

3 | Psalms 33:4–6

For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth. He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.

...

For the word of the Lord holds true,

and we can trust everything he does.

He loves whatever is just and good;

the unfailing love of the Lord fills the earth.

The Lord merely spoke,

and the heavens were created.

He breathed the word,

and all the stars were born.

—New Living Translation

4 | Psalms 104:24

O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

manifold: many and varied

1 | 480:26–29

The Bible declares: “All things were made by Him [the divine Word]; and without Him was not anything made that was made.” This is the eternal verity of divine Science.

verity: true idea

4 | 275:10–12

To grasp the reality and order of being in its Science, you must begin by reckoning God as the divine Principle of all that really is.

reckoning: judging; valuing

5 | 207:27–2

The spiritual reality is the scientific fact in all things. The spiritual fact, repeated in the action of man and the whole universe, is harmonious and is the ideal of Truth. Spiritual facts are not inverted; the opposite discord, which bears no resemblance to spirituality, is not real. The only evidence of this inversion is obtained from suppositional error, which affords no proof of God, Spirit, or of the spiritual creation.

inverted: turned upside down; reversed

6 | 503:28

God, Spirit, dwelling in infinite light and harmony from which emanates the true idea, is never reflected by aught but the good.

emanates: flows; arises; originates

aught: anything

from Section 2

7 | Joshua 24:14

Put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.

Joshua speaks these words—among the last before his death—to a great assembly of Israelites after the crossing into Canaan. “The other side of the flood” describes Mesopotamia, the land of their ancestors, and is often interpreted as “beyond the Euphrates River.” There and in Egypt, as in the Promised Land, idol worship was the norm. In this account, Canaan is called the land of the Amorites after the name of a principal tribe there (see v. 15).

The people’s assurance, “The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey,” is recognized as a binding covenant, “a statute and an ordinance in Shechem” (vv. 24, 25).

8 | Proverbs 16:3

Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.

The word **commit** (Hebrew, *gālal*) means roll or roll away. In this verse, it alludes to transferring a burden or weight to a stronger person or power. Casting every care on God brings fulfillment of our hopes and desires.

Translation

Commit your works to the Lord [submit and trust them to Him], and your plans will succeed [if you respond to His will and guidance].

9 | **Psalms 34:8**

O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Translation

Find out for yourself how good the Lord is.

Happy are those who find safety with him.

—Good News Translation

9 | **186:22–24, 32**

If we concede the same reality to discord as to harmony, discord has as lasting a claim upon us as has harmony...

The human mind has been an idolater from the beginning, having other gods and believing in more than the one Mind.

concede: accept as true

idolater: person who worships something other than God

10 | **182:5–9**

The demands of God appeal to thought only; but the claims of mortality, and what are termed laws of nature, appertain to matter. Which, then, are we to accept as legitimate and capable of producing the highest human good?

appertain: belong; relate

from Section 3

10 | **Deuteronomy 32:3, 4**

Ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

ascribe: identify as having a quality or being a cause; give credit to; assign

iniquity: wickedness; sin

Translation

Give praise to our God!

The rock: his acts are perfection!

No doubt about it: all his ways are right!

He's the faithful God, never deceiving;

altogether righteous and true is he.

—Common English Bible

11 | Isaiah 42:1

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

In Scripture, **servant** often signifies a slave rather than a hired laborer or trusted representative. Symbolically, the term is used to portray humility. Soldiers, for example, frequently referred to themselves as their king's servants. To the Hebrew people, religious service went beyond simple worship to the orientation of one's entire life to God.

Centuries later, the Gospel of Matthew cites this verse to affirm that Christ Jesus is the prophesied Savior (see 12:15–21).

Translation

Here is my servant, the one I support.

He is the one I chose, and I am pleased with him.

I will put my Spirit in him.

And he will bring justice to all nations.

—International Children's Bible

12 | Isaiah 7:15

Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

"Butter and honey"—like the phrase "milk and honey"—alludes to choice foods or abundance. Many translators render **butter** as **curds**, a soft and thickened milk product similar to yogurt. Abraham offered this food to the three visitors who predicted the birth of Isaac, and David fed it to his hungry soldiers in the wilderness (see Genesis 18:8; II Samuel 17:29).

The phrase "that he may know" is commonly interpreted "until he shall know." The child referred to in this Messianic prophecy will be raised on the best food for the young until he reaches the age of maturity and wisdom.

13 | Luke 4:14, 15

Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

According to Luke, Jesus' return to Galilee was not at first contentious. He was "glorified of all," and the crowd "bare him witness, and wondered at [his] gracious words" (v. 22). Apparently they had some knowledge of his works and some degree of willingness to hear the man they had known as a boy. Only after some of his teachings offended his listeners was he violently rejected (see vv. 25–30).

14 | Luke 6:6, 7

It came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

Luke's Gospel is the only one that specifies the man's right hand. This hand was commonly used for work, eating, and gesturing. Forced use of his left hand, which was considered unclean, would have made his disability and his shame public.

The commandment to keep the Sabbath was taken seriously—and literally—by most Jews of the time, and failing to observe it was punishable with death. Rabbinic law did allow for giving help on the Sabbath to someone whose life was in danger. But since a withered hand wasn't deemed life-threatening, and healing was considered work, the Jewish religious leaders try to bring a formal accusation against Jesus. The Master's response easily defeats this effort, and the subsequent healing answers his rhetorical question, "Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?" (v. 9).

16 | 494:25

Which of these two theories concerning man are you ready to accept? One is the mortal testimony, changing, dying, unreal. The other is the eternal and real evidence, bearing Truth's signet, its lap piled high with immortal fruits.

signet: seal of authority

from Section 4

16 | Luke 10:41, 42

Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

This story presents a teaching moment: Even devotion to hospitality, a core element in the spread of the gospel of Christ, shouldn't replace hearing God's Word. But Jesus expresses great care in his reproof, evidenced in his repetition, "Martha, Martha." Jesus is recorded as speaking this way one other time in his ministry. At the last supper he foresees Simon Peter's denial of him, and begins his counsel, "Simon, Simon" (see 22:31).

Mary's position "at Jesus' feet" identifies her as a disciple—an unusual status for a woman, as rabbis did not teach women. Luke, however, notes several female believers (see examples in 8:2, 3; Acts 16:14, 15).

cumbered: worried and distracted; overly busy

careful: anxious; troubled

16 | Luke 10:41, 42

And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Translation

... the Lord said to her, 'My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.

—New Living Translation

17 | Matthew 6:31–33

Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Translation

Don't worry and ask yourselves, "Will we have anything to eat? Will we have anything to drink? Will we have any clothes to wear?" Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these. But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well.

—Contemporary English Version

18 | I Corinthians 2:12, 13

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Philosophy and intellectual reasoning were highly prized in the Greco-Roman world. Paul counsels the Corinthian Christians that “the deep things of God” (v. 10) far surpass human wisdom, and are divinely given. One source says, “The truth about God is revealed not through philosophy but through prophecy, not through rhetoric but by revelation.”

Translation

But God has given us his Spirit. That's why we don't think the same way that the people of this world think. That's also why we can recognize the blessings that God has given us. Every word we speak was taught to us by God's Spirit, not by human wisdom. And this same Spirit helps us teach spiritual things to spiritual people.

—Contemporary English Version

19 | 323:9

Beholding the infinite tasks of truth, we pause,—wait on God. Then we push onward, until boundless thought walks enraptured, and conception unconfined is winged to reach the divine glory.

enraptured: greatly delighted

conception: the forming of an idea

unconfined: not limited or restrained

from Section 5

19 | Philippians 3:13, 14

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

In addressing his fellow Christians at Philippi, Paul freely admits that he has not reached the level of understanding he seeks. But his attention is on a purely spiritual goal, in contrast to merely outward evidences of piety (see [vv. 5, 6](#)).

apprehended: understood

press: move forward decisively

mark: goal

calling: invitation or summons; employment

19 | [Philippians 3:13–15](#)

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

Translation

Brothers and sisters, I can't consider myself a winner yet. This is what I do: I don't look back, I lengthen my stride, and I run straight toward the goal to win the prize that God's heavenly call offers in Christ Jesus. Whoever has a mature faith should think this way. And if you think differently, God will show you how to think.

—GOD's WORD Translation

20 | [Philippians 4:1, 4](#)

My brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.... Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

Paul's relationship with the church at Philippi was apparently a longstanding and happy one. Earlier in this letter he says, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you" and "I have you in my heart" ([1:3, 7](#)). This community of Christians has received him and sent him gifts, and now he shares his loving counsel with them—including the charge to remain joyful in every circumstance.

Commentators point out that the crown referred to in this verse is usually given to a victorious athlete or an honored guest. "It is as if Paul said that the Philippians were the crown of all his toil," writes a scholar. "... it is as if he said that at the final banquet of God they were his festal crown."

20 | [Philippians 4:1, 4, 7, 8](#)

My brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.... Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.... And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Translation

... brothers and sisters, I love you and miss you. You are my joy and my crown. Therefore, dear friends, keep your relationship with the Lord firm!... Always be joyful in the Lord! I'll say it again: Be joyful!... Then God's peace, which goes beyond anything we can imagine, will guard your thoughts and emotions through Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, keep your thoughts on whatever is right or deserves praise: things that are true, honorable, fair, pure, acceptable, or commendable.

24 | 261:4

Hold thought steadfastly to the enduring, the good, and the true, and you will bring these into your experience proportionably to their occupancy of your thoughts.

steadfastly: firmly; without wavering

proportionably: in the degree of; in relation to

occupancy: possessing, holding, or residing in a place

29 | 335:27–28

Reality is spiritual, harmonious, immutable, immortal, divine, eternal.

immutable: unchangeable

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