



Bible Lens

Bible Lens—November 9–15, 2020

Subject: **Mortals and Immortals**

From the *Christian Science Sentinel* - November 9, 2020

Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

—[Ephesians 4:23](#)

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

from the Responsive Reading

I Peter 1:3, 4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

In early Hebrew tradition, *inheritance* often denoted the land promised to Israel by Yahweh. New Testament writing greatly expands the concept beyond the limits of national identity and physical location. Here the author defines Christly inheritance as indestructible, pure, and perpetual—like the “treasures in heaven” Jesus describes ([Matthew 6:20](#)).

incorruptible: indestructible; not subject to decay

undefiled: pure

I Peter 1:13, 15

Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ... as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.

To gird one’s loins is to prepare for work or battle. In antiquity, long, loose garments were tucked into a belt or sash, making it easier to move quickly and to hold tools or weapons. A scholar explains, “... in Christian living there must be no frazzled ends, no fuzzy thinking—Christians must gird up their minds. A modern metaphor might be: ‘Roll up your sleeves.’”

Called (Greek, *kaleō*) signifies a summons or invitation. As used in this verse, it means humanity’s summons to faith and salvation in Christ—a recurring idea in the New Testament (see examples in [Romans 8:28, 30](#); [Galatians 5:13](#); [Philippians 3:14](#)).

from Section 1

Translation

1 | [Isaiah 42:5, 6](#)

Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.

...

God, the LORD, said these things.

He created the skies and stretched them out.

He spread out the earth and everything on it.

He gives life to all people on earth,

to everyone who walks on the earth.

The LORD says, “I, the LORD, called you to do right,

and I will hold your hand

and protect you.

You will be the sign of my agreement with the people,

a light to shine for all people.”

—New Century Version

1 | [Isaiah 42:6](#)

I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.

Until this point in Hebrew Scripture, Gentiles are generally mentioned as adversaries or nations to be conquered, but prophecies in the book of Isaiah include more positive references (see also [49:6](#); [60:3](#)).

After the birth of Jesus, the devout Jew Simeon blesses God in similar terms: “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all the people, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel” ([Luke 2:30–32](#)).

Through the ministries of Peter, Paul, and others, Gentiles were welcomed as valued members of Christian churches.

Translation

2 | [Ephesians 4:7, 13, 17, 18, 22–24](#)

Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. . . . Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: . . . This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: . . . That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

• • •

. . . he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. . . . until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. . . . With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. . . . throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

—New Living Translation

2 | Ephesians 4:7, 13

Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. . . . Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

While recognizing grace as an individual gift, this passage focuses on the need to go further than individual Christian practice. Like Paul, who employs the image of body parts working together (see [1 Corinthians 12:12–27](#)), the writer urges harmony among the faithful—and presents it not just as a welcome alternative to strife but as an indicator of spiritual maturity.

2 | Ephesians 4:17, 18

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.

vanity: emptiness

alienated: completely separated or turned away

2 | Ephesians 4:22–24

Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Scottish theologian James Moffatt offers, “. . . you must lay aside the old nature which belonged to your former course of life, that nature which crumbles to ruin under the passions of moral deceit, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, putting on the new nature, that divine pattern which has been created in the upright and pious character of the Truth.”

from Section 2

3 | Peter 2:9

Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Translation

... you are a chosen people, royal priests, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. You were chosen to tell about the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

—New Century Version

Here Hebrew Bible texts are cited to portray the Christian community (see [Isaiah 43:21](#); [Psalms 135:4](#); [Exodus 19:6](#)). *Peculiar* (Greek, *peripoiēsis*) depicts a people uniquely belonging to God as a treasured possession.

5 | Luke 5:4–6

When [Jesus] had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

Two overflowing catches of fish are recorded in the New Testament. In this account, the huge haul causes the net to break; later, at the end of Jesus' career, the net holds firm (see [John 21:6, 11](#)).

Of the 12 disciples, several were fishermen. Fishing became a familiar metaphor for following Jesus, first used in the invitation to join him: "Henceforth thou shalt catch men" ([Luke 5:10](#); see also [Matthew 4:19](#); [Mark 1:17](#)). In the ensuing years, the fish symbol was embraced to signal commitment to Christian doctrine. During times of persecution this symbol was a secret way to identify genuine believers. And early Christians privately shared a saying created from letters of the Greek word for fish (*ikhthys*): "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior."

from Section 3

7 | Matthew 14:22, 23

Straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray.

John's Gospel hints at the context for Jesus' decision to send the disciples away. Following the feeding of five thousand with a small amount of bread and fish, the crowd apparently moves to crown him king (see [6:15](#)). The Master quells their action by distancing himself and his disciples from them.

constrained: strongly urged; compelled

7 | Matthew 14:24, 29, 30

But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. . . . And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

contrary: unfavorable; against or opposed to

boisterous: loud and violent

from Section 4

8 | Matthew 16:13–15

When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

Jewish tradition held that Elijah or another prophet would return before the Messiah's arrival. Malachi, for instance, prophesied, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" ([Malachi 4:5](#)). And John the Baptist was asked, "Art thou Elias?" ([John 1:21](#)).

Simon's answer to Jesus' second question is momentous. It reveals his spiritual perception of Christ, leads to his new name (Peter, from the Greek *petros*, meaning rock), and provides a compelling picture of the church against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail" (see [Matthew 16:17, 18](#)).

from Section 5

10 | Matthew 17:14–17

There came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

In ancient times, people with afflictions similar to this one were thought to be affected by the phases of the moon (Latin, *luna*)—thus the terms *moonstruck* and *lunatic*. This disease, now believed to be epilepsy, is attributed to a "spirit" in [Luke 9:39](#) and to a "dumb spirit" in [Mark 9:17](#).

sore vexed: deeply suffering

perverse: stubbornly wrong

suffer: tolerate; put up with

10 | Matthew 17:20

Jesus said unto them, . . . verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

Translation

“... truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

—Christian Standard Bible

Christ Jesus chooses the mustard seed to portray faith because of its tiny size and great potential. In the Gospel of Mark, he describes it as “less than all the seeds that be in the earth: but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs” (4:31, 32). Mustard plants can grow to 15 feet high in just a few months.

from Section 6

Translation

11 | Romans 6:4, 13

Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. . . . Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

...

. . . just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory and power of the Father, we too might walk habitually in newness of life [abandoning our old ways]. . . . offer yourselves to God [in a decisive act] as those alive [raised] from the dead [to a new life], and your members [all of your abilities—sanctified, set apart] as instruments of righteousness [yielded] to God.

—Amplified® Bible

11 | Romans 6:13

Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

In this chapter Paul is urging his readers to turn away from worldliness. One commentary interprets his message this way: “The Christian is not meant to luxuriate in an experience however wonderful; he is meant to go out and live a certain kind of life in the teeth of the world’s attacks and problems. . . . Christianity can never be only an experience of the inner being; it must be a life in the market-place.”

12 | Acts 9:39

When [Peter] was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

Besides widows, Dorcas’ mourners may have included other single women—those divorced or unmarried but living outside their father’s protection. Whether or not Dorcas had been married, she was clearly associated with a community of women who lacked male support.

Identification of Dorcas as a disciple (v. 36) points to her standing as equivalent to that of respected Christian men. Her value is also evidenced by the dispatching of two men to Peter with an urgent request for help.

Translation

13 | I Timothy 1:17

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.

...

Honor and glory to the King that rules forever! He cannot be destroyed and cannot be seen. Honor and glory forever and ever to the only God. . . .

—International Children’s Bible

To learn more about the *Christian Science Quarterly* Bible Lessons, go to <https://quarterly.christianscience.com>.

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Related healing ideas

The joy of being immortal

By Naomi Price

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Eventually it will be proved that everyone is immortal. Paul says, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" ([1 Corinthians 15:53](#)).

But it is not everyone who looks upon this prospect with pleasure. Some people argue: If every human being is immortal (deathless), clearly the world would long since have been unable to accommodate the population. Others wonder: Moses would still be on earth, so would Julius Caesar, Abraham Lincoln, and Joan of Arc. How would this affect the world?

Most people fear death and do all in their power to avoid it. Yet, for many, the prospect of living forever in the flesh is depressing. But when Christ Jesus said, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death" ([John 8:51](#)), it was looked upon as good news for mankind. It is still a promise that Christians cherish, so surely it must mean more than that physical life is indestructible.

The Master himself overcame physical death and showed himself as a fleshly person in the resurrection. But he demonstrated the full meaning of immortality when he vanished from human sight in the ascension, for, in fact, immortality is not material life going on and on forever, but a state of perfect, spiritual being without beginning or end, birth or death, and without any material form and substance.

Christian Science shows that man in his real nature is neither a sinful, finite, physical being existent in matter and liable to be extinguished by death, nor is he an immortal being who is temporarily resident in a mortal body, later to be released from it through the decomposition of that physical body. The real man is created by divine Spirit and is, therefore, entirely and eternally spiritual. His true identity is the representation of divine Love, God, and includes no element of corruption or mortality to be put off.

Immortality, then, is ineffable joy. Man, as an immortal being, is spiritually lovely, an inhabitant of perfect Mind, the expression of Life and Love. His destiny is to develop throughout eternity the boundless, spiritual good that God is manifesting in him. As Mary Baker Eddy declares in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, "God expresses in man the infinite idea forever developing itself, broadening and rising higher and higher from a boundless basis" ([p. 258](#)).

The Bible speaks of “Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (II Timothy 1:10). He did this for us.

Jesus’ gospel releases mankind from mortality. Anyone who accepts his teaching of man’s original purity as the sinless offspring of God, and lives it, immediately begins to put off “the old man”—the theory of existence as the outcome of sense rather than of Soul—and puts on “the new man” —God’s spiritual idea (see Ephesians 4:22–24).

To be immortal is to be not only deathless but wholly spiritual, carefree, vital, reflecting the limitless qualities of divine Life and Love. It is a state of Mind that ensures deep-settled peace and satisfaction. It is greatly to be desired, and it is natural to us all.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit the print Sentinel, go to jsh.christianscience.com/the-joy-of-being-immortal.

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