



Bible Lens

Bible Lens—November 23–29, 2020

Subject: **Ancient and Modern Necromancy, alias Mesmerism and Hypnotism, Denounced**

From the *Christian Science Sentinel* - November 23, 2020

Be still, and know that I am God.

—[Psalms 46:10](#)

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

Psalms 46:1, 2

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

In an ancient view of the universe, mountains anchored the land while holding up the sky. People feared a doomsday scenario—earth threatened by water below and a falling sky above. The Psalmist affirms that God protects His creation in every circumstance.

Psalms 46:10

Be still, and know that I am God.

Some scholars believe this psalm alludes to Assyrian king Sennacherib’s siege of Jerusalem in 701 BC. Assyria had put down rebellions in Babylon and many cities in Palestine, but Jerusalem under King Hezekiah was spared, as God had promised (see [II Kings 19:32–36](#); [II Chronicles 32:21, 22](#)).

Bible authorities note that in this context, “Be still” is more than a command for quietness. It is a call to throw down weapons—to end conflict—with an understanding of God as the real source of security.

Psalms 107:29, 30

He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

haven: place of safety

from Section 1

1 | Psalms 93:3, 4

The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.

Translation

The ocean rises, O LORD.

The ocean rises with a roar.

The ocean rises with its pounding waves.

The LORD above is mighty—

mightier than the sound of raging water,

mightier than the foaming waves of the sea.

—GOD’S WORD Translation

Multiple mentions of floods and waves in these verses emphatically depict nature’s waters as threats. Yet the writer celebrates God’s power over them all. A commentary paraphrases, “Rivers at flood tide, oceans rising in the face of storms, thundering waters, and raging storms cannot shake the everlasting throne.”

Translation

2 | Isaiah 41:10, 15, 16

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. . . . Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

...

... don’t worry, because I am with you.

Don’t be afraid, because I am your God.

I will make you strong and will help you;

I will support you with my right hand that saves you. . . .

*Look, I have made you like a new threshing board
with many sharp teeth.*

*So you will walk on mountains and crush them;
you will make the hills like chaff.
You will throw them into the air, and the wind will carry them away;
a windstorm will scatter them.
Then you will be happy in the LORD;
you will be proud of the Holy One of Israel.*

—New Century Version

Translation

3 | Jeremiah 29:11

I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

...

I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the LORD; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope.

—Common English Bible

from Section 2

6 | Psalms 27:5

In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

Pavilion (Hebrew, *sōk*) and *tabernacle* (*‘ōhel*) together portray a range of refuges, from an animal’s lair or shepherd’s tent to a sacred space of worship. “In short,” one source asserts, “what the psalmist singlemindedly seeks is the experience of God’s presence.”

7 | Job 22:21

Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace.

Translation

“Now yield and submit yourself to Him [agree with God and be conformed to His will] and be at peace . . .”

—Amplified® Bible

Counsel and prophecy about knowing God appear throughout Scripture. For example, [Psalms 46:10](#) (Responsive Reading) charges, “Be still, and know that I am God”; [Jeremiah 24:7](#) promises, “I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord”; [Hosea 6:6](#) confesses, “I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.”

Jesus equates knowledge of God with immortality: “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” ([John 17:3](#)). And Second Peter offers this prayer: “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord” ([1:2](#)).

8 | II Timothy 1:7

God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Translation

God did not give us a spirit that makes us afraid. He gave us a spirit of power and love and self-control.

—International Children’s Bible

Sound mind is translated from the Greek *sōphronismos*, referring to self-control or self-discipline. A related word describes the Gadarene after Jesus heals him—“clothed, and in his right mind [*sōphronō*]” ([Mark 5:15](#)).

Second Timothy is one of three letters known as the Pastoral Epistles. Perhaps sent from Paul to Timothy and Titus, these epistles provide direction for their leadership roles in early Christian churches.

9 | I Peter 5:6, 7

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Translation

... humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God [set aside self-righteous pride], so that He may exalt you [to a place of honor in His service] at the appropriate time, casting all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares about you [with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully].

—Amplified® Bible

Recipients of this letter are Christians whose lives have changed dramatically since their conversion. Previously embraced in the social and cultural activities of their communities, now they are mistreated by Roman authorities as members of an unwelcome sectarian movement. The writer urges humility, assuring his readers that their persecutions, like those of Christ Jesus, will be rewarded (see [1:9](#); [4:13](#)).

Humility and meekness figure prominently in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. This passage has strong parallels to [James 4:10](#): “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

from Section 3

10 | [Psalms 10:4, 8](#)

The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. . . . He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages.

Comparing the wicked to robbers, the author vividly pictures places of ambush—likely outside the security of walled cities or settlements. According to verse 11, these attackers arrogantly assume they are beyond the sight of God (see other instances of this attitude in [Psalms 94:3–7](#); [Isaiah 29:15](#); [Ezekiel 8:12](#)).

Translation

10 | [Psalms 10:4, 8, 11](#)

The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. . . . He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: . . . He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.

. . .

*In all his scheming,
the wicked person arrogantly thinks,
“There’s no accountability, since there’s no God.” . . .
He waits in ambush near settlements; . . .
He says to himself, “God has forgotten;
he hides his face and will never see.”*

—Christian Standard Bible

11 | [II Samuel 15:2, 4, 5](#)

Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? . . . Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice! And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

Absalom was King David’s third son. Scriptural accounts portray him as repeatedly deceitful and treacherous. After his older half-brother Amnon rapes their sister Tamar, he arranges to kill Amnon by tricking his father (see [13:23–29](#)). He is banished for three years, but eventually manages a reconciliation with the king (see [13:33–38](#); [14:25–33](#)).

It is at this time that Absalom stands at the city gate, scheming to win the people's loyalty. Then, obtaining David's permission to travel to Hebron, he organizes a revolt against the king. David and his household are forced to flee Jerusalem, and Absalom brings an army against his father in the wilderness of Gilead.

In spite of his son's betrayal, David commands his soldiers to "deal gently with the young man for my sake" during battle. When Absalom is killed and the rebellion ends, David mourns his son deeply (see [15:7–18](#); [17:26](#); [18:1–18, 33](#)).

obeisance: gesture of deep respect and honor

12 | [Proverbs 1:10, 15, 17](#)

If sinners entice thee, consent thou not. . . . walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path. . . . Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.

Wisdom literature (generally found in Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes) frequently uses imagery to convey its messages (see other examples in [Proverbs 7:4](#); [13:14](#), [25:11](#)). A scholar paraphrases this metaphorical warning, "My son, should your less honorable peers pressure you to do what is wrong, you should be strong enough not to go along. . . . it makes no sense to bait the net and set the trap while the bird is watching."

entice: tempt

consent: agree

in vain: uselessly; unsuccessfully

from Section 4

Translation

14 | [Proverbs 3:5, 24](#)

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. . . .

When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

. . .

Trust in the LORD with all your heart;

do not depend on your own understanding. . . .

You can go to bed without fear;

you will lie down and sleep soundly.

—New Living Translation

from Section 5

Translation

16 | Philippians 4:1, 7

Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. . . . And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

...

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord. I love you and long to see you, dear friends, for you are my joy and the crown I receive for my work. . . . Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

—New Living Translation

18 | Matthew 10:16

I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

In these paired images, only wolves are viewed negatively. Doves and sheep represent innocence. Serpents, often symbols of trickery, are identified here with wisdom—a common analogy in ancient worship traditions.

19 | Luke 21:9

When ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified.

Luke's detailed and stirring catalog of catastrophic events occupies much of chapter 21. Similar depictions appear in Matthew 24 and Mark 13, giving the three chapters the name Synoptic Apocalypse. Though the prophecies are grim, Jesus concludes with the promise of redemption and "the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (v. 27).

One scriptural authority comments, "You aren't without God, ever. You aren't cut off from him, ever. The simplest act of faith puts you in relationship with him. So don't be terrified, for not a hair of your head will perish."

19 | Luke 21:28

When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

redemption: act of saving; salvation

draweth nigh: is coming closer

Translation

19 | Luke 21:8, 9, 25–28

Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: . . . there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for

the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

...

“Be careful! Don’t be fooled. Many people will come using my name. They will say, ‘I am the Christ’ and, ‘The right time has come!’ But don’t follow them. When you hear about wars and riots, don’t be afraid. . . . Amazing things will happen to the sun, moon, and stars. On earth, nations will be afraid because of the roar and fury of the sea. They will not know what to do. People will be so afraid they will faint. They will wonder what is happening to the whole world. Everything in the sky will be changed. Then people will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to happen, don’t fear. Look up and hold your heads high because the time when God will free you is near!”

—International Children’s Bible

from Section 6

20 | Mark 3:7, 10

Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judæa, . . . For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

Throng of people regularly crowded around Jesus. In this instance he has asked the disciples to have a small boat ready in case the press becomes too great, yet he remains to heal them before retiring to a mountain (see [vv. 9, 13](#)).

Plagues, alluding to any illness, is translated from the Greek word *mastix*. It means whip or scourge—an indication that diseases were believed to be sent by God as punishment for sin.

21 | Mark 4:35, 37–39

The same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. . . . And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

In this story, the Master and his disciples are crossing the Sea of Galilee. Located about 700 feet (210 meters) below sea level, this body of water is ringed by hills. The collision of cold mountain air with warmer air in the sea basin sometimes generates hurricane-force winds to this day.

The sea has been known by four different names in the Bible—*Chinnereth*, *Galilee*, *Gennesaret*, and *Tiberias*. *Chinnereth* is a Hebrew Bible name. *Galilee* (its contemporary name) refers to the region surrounding this freshwater lake, the site of much of Jesus’ ministry; *Gennesaret*, to a plain and town northwest of the sea; and *Tiberias*, to the capital of Galilee, built on the western shore in honor of Roman emperor Tiberius.

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

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Related healing ideas

‘Blessed are the peacemakers’

By Harriet Schupp

From the September 2006 issue of *The Christian Science Journal*

A little five-year-old friend told me how he had helped the kids on the playground stop fighting. I told him he was being a peacemaker and that Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” ([Matthew 5:9](#)). He looked up at me with such earnestness, “But I already am a child of God.” I had to think a minute and then I said, “And now you are acting like one.”

Jesus showed how each of us can live as a peacemaker. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave us what are called the Beatitudes, a list of pronouncements about how to live a life of perfect happiness, perfect “blessedness.” In these beloved verses, he included a blessing on peacemakers, and then he explained how to live a life of peace: refuse to be angry; agree with your adversary quickly; turn the other cheek when you are attacked; concede freely; love your enemies (see [Matthew, chap. 5](#)).

In a world where evil seems as real and sometimes even more powerful than good, we might wonder how practical Jesus’ instructions are to our everyday life. But far from making us vulnerable to hatred, revenge, and other destructive emotions, keeping Jesus’ commandments brings us into the presence of the love of God.

Mahatma Gandhi, the great peacemaker, said: “There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.” This statement of active, participatory peacemaking beautifully illustrates Jesus’ instructions to his followers in his Sermon on the Mount. Because to really be a peacemaker, we have to not only talk about peace, we must *live* peace.

Peace comes from God, and because peace is an essential aspect of His character, we, too, as His image, have inherited peace in our own nature. And so we can feel confident in working out from peace—accepting it as already intact and part of our and everyone’s character—and not feel we have to work up to peace. Peace becomes our starting point rather than our goal.

In my own life, when peace has seemed far away and healing much needed, I have found spiritual power in knowing that peace, far from being relative, is a fact of God’s creation and thus universally present. As *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* explains, “Harmony is produced by its Principle, is controlled by it and abides with it” (Mary Baker Eddy, [p. 304](#)). This Principle governing the universe is divine Love. Therefore, Love actually is the only motivator and governor of the universe.

Praying for peace and at the same time thinking that it’s just unrealistic wishful thinking is like the man Jesus referred to in his Sermon on the Mount—the man who foolishly builds his house on the sand, not on a firm foundation. But when we start from the spiritual standpoint that peace is the rule, the absolute fact, eternally established by the Principle of the universe, divine Love—then we are establishing our lives on an unshakable, firm foundation.

No government edict can really enforce true peace. As children of God, when we know that peace exists as a universal law, we will not feel tentative in our work to see peace manifested. And we can feel confident that this law of Love operates in every human heart and circumstance.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit the print *Sentinel*, go to jsh.christianscience.com/blessed-are-the-peacemakers.

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