



Bible Lens

Bible Lens—January 11–17, 2021

Subject: **Life**

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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 Golden Text

Psalms 96:1

O sing unto the Lord a new song.

“Any fresh experience of God,” a commentator affirms, “might offer an occasion for the composition of a ‘new song.’” Because man’s eternal relationship to God is never stale—and God’s love is continuously renewed (see [Lamentations 3:22, 23](#))—new expressions of praise flow naturally from His creation.

Mention of a new song occurs five more times in Psalms (see another example in 40:3, Responsive Reading) as well as in [Isaiah 42:10](#) and [Revelation 5:9; 14:3](#).

from Section 1

Translation

1 | Psalms 27:1

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life.

...

The Lord is my light and the one who saves me.

So why should I fear anyone?

The Lord protects my life.

—New Century Version

3 | Isaiah 52:9

Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

waste: empty; deserted; lacking growth and development

4 | Isaiah 38:18, 19

The grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: . . . The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day.

King Hezekiah is praising God for the healing of an illness he had not expected to survive. Isaiah was the prophet who brought Hezekiah news of his impending death, and who recorded the king's cry for healing and his subsequent cure (see II Kings 20:1–3; Isaiah 38:1–3).

Repetition of “the living” emphasizes Hezekiah’s message: Only those delivered from death are able to sing their thanks. One Bible authority explains: “*Praise . . . is the mark of the saved. They are the truly living.*”

Translation

4 | Isaiah 38:18–20

The grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth. The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord.

. . .

*. . . the dead cannot praise you;
they cannot raise their voices in praise.
Those who go down to the grave
can no longer hope in your faithfulness.
Only the living can praise you as I do today.
Each generation tells of your faithfulness to the next.
Think of it—the Lord is ready to heal me!
I will sing his praises with instruments
every day of my life
in the Temple of the Lord.*

—New Living Translation

6 | Deuteronomy 30:19, 20

I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days.

cleave unto: stick firmly and closely to

from Section 2

8 | 1 Kings 17:1–4, 6

Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. . . . And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

Elijah is identified as a resident of Tishbe, a town thought to have been near the Jordan River. The drought he announces—Yahweh’s judgment against Israel’s Baal worship under King Ahab—encompasses all kinds of precipitation. Dew was the only source of moisture in summer; rain usually fell only from fall through spring. Three seasons without water would devastate crops and lead to famine.

After predicting the drought, Elijah flees into the wilderness—likely beyond Ahab’s jurisdiction. There ravens are designated by God to bring him food twice a day, and water is supplied by a brook (probably a wadi, a stream bed carrying water only during the rainy season). When the brook dries up, Elijah is sent to visit a widow in Zarephath—and God provides abundantly for both of them (see vv. 6–16).

get . . . hence: go away from here

flesh: meat

9 | Luke 12:24

Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

Where Matthew’s account refers more generically to the “fowls of the air” (6:26), Luke specifies ravens. Because they were deemed among the least valuable of birds—and classed in the Torah as ritually unclean (see Leviticus 11:13, 15)—their inclusion underscores God’s all-embracing care.

10 | Deuteronomy 8:3

Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

Translation

. . . a person does not live only by eating bread. But a person lives by everything the Lord says.

—International Children’s Bible

Spoken here by Moses in his comprehensive summary of God's provisions and requirements, these words are later cited by Christ Jesus in answering the first of three temptations of the devil (see [Matthew 4:4](#); [Luke 4:4](#)).

from Section 3

11 | [Luke 4:14](#)

Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

fame: widespread knowledge

12 | [Luke 8:4–8](#)

When much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold.

Soil in Palestine could be rocky, and often needed to be plowed before seeding took place. Whether seed was scattered before or after plowing, some grains inevitably ended up in soil that could not sustain them.

The hundredfold yield of the seed sown in good soil would have been seen as remarkable, if not miraculous. Most yields averaged about ten times the weight of the original seeds, though [Genesis 26:12](#) records a hundredfold harvest for Isaac.

Interpretations of this parable vary, but Jesus himself expounds its meaning to his disciples (see [vv. 9–15](#)). One scholar suggests this paraphrase: "God is the Sower. He sows his seed, which is his Word." He continues, "... the seed [is] thrown into every person's life, into every situation, into every heart, into every nook and cranny of the universe."

parable: story used to teach a moral or spiritual lesson

Translation

13 | [Galatians 6:7, 8](#)

Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

...

People harvest only what they plant. If they plant to satisfy their sinful selves, their sinful selves will bring them ruin. But if they plant to please the Spirit, they will receive eternal life from the Spirit.

—New Century Version

14 | [II Corinthians 5:16, 17](#)

Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Translation

So then, from this point on we won't recognize people by human standards. Even though we used to know Christ by human standards, that isn't how we know him now. So then, if anyone is in Christ, that person is part of the new creation. The old things have gone away, and look, new things have arrived!

—Common English Bible

Paul's reasoning builds on his own experience of spiritual transformation, a paradigm shift that raised his material view of Jesus to an understanding of him as the risen Messiah. In the same way, believers are made new "in Christ"—a renewal of spirit that entirely eradicates old, mortal ways of thinking.

The apostle's words recall [Isaiah 43:18, 19](#): "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth."

from Section 4

15 | [Psalms 56:4](#)

In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

"The point," writes one source, "is that, regardless of outward circumstances, the psalmist has been transformed by trust. While current or future opposition may cause fear, the psalmist will always be able to say, 'I will not be afraid' ([vv. 4, 11](#)). This ability is not an act of human bravery or courage but a result of the conviction that the life God offers is beyond the reach of human threat."

Translation

15 | [Psalms 56:4, 13](#)

In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. . . . For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

...

*In God, whose word I praise—
in God I trust and am not afraid.*

What can mere mortals do to me?

For you have delivered me from death

*and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God
in the light of life.*

18 | Colossians 3:1, 9, 10

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. . . . Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

Christ Jesus is described as “on the right hand of God” at the ascension (see [Mark 16:19](#)) to depict the Master’s exalted state—and is later alluded to the same way by Stephen (see [Acts 7:55](#)) and in [Romans 8:34](#), [Hebrews 10:12](#), and [First Peter 3:22](#).

In this and the next chapter of Colossians, the author lays out what it means to be risen, or resurrected, with Christ. Living this life assumes a Christly standard of thought and behavior now—letting go of old habits, mistaken values, and wrongdoing, and putting on the spirituality of mature Christians.

from Section 5

20 | Matthew 5:6

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

In the King James Bible, “Blessed are” introduces nine verses from Christ Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount—verses called the Beatitudes, from the Latin word *beatitudo*. While the term *beatitudo* doesn’t appear in the English Bible, its meaning—perfect blessedness or happiness—represents the promises in these teachings.

righteousness: purity of heart; justice

21 | John 4:11

The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

whence: where

22 | Jude 1:21

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Translation

Guard and keep yourselves in the love of God; expect and patiently wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah)—[which will bring you] unto life eternal.

Only one chapter long, this epistle identifies the writer as “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James” (v.1). Commentaries debate its authorship, however. Some accept that it was written by Judas, who along with James (by this time a church leader), was a brother of Jesus (see [Matthew 13:55](#)). A majority believe it to be from an anonymous author using a pseudonym.

What is agreed on is the intent of the letter—to warn the emerging Christian Church of false teachers, not from outside but from within its own ranks (see v.4). The Contemporary English Version interprets verse 21 this way: “. . . keep in step with God’s love, as you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to show how kind he is by giving you eternal life.”

Translation

23 | [Romans 6:4](#)

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.

. . .

As Christ was brought back from death to life by the glorious power of the Father, so we, too, should live a new kind of life.

—GOD’S WORD Translation

from Section 6

24 | [Psalms 18:32](#)

It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.

girdeth: equips; clothes; encircles

25 | [Psalms 133:3](#)

The Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Here God is portrayed as setting His plans in order, ordaining “life for evermore” for His people. Although Zion is the focus in verse 3, scholars point out that this blessing isn’t exclusive. One notes, “. . . it is clear that the ultimate goodness that God intends is the gathering of God’s larger family, the whole people of God.”

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

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proving in our own lives the power of Christ.

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