



Shining a light on the weekly Bible Lessons published in the *Christian Science Quarterly*®

## Truth

January 18–24, 2021

### *from the* **Golden Text**

[John 8:32](#)

*... you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

—New King James Version®

*Make ... free* is translated from the Greek verb *eleutheroō*. Romans 8 renders this word two ways: “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free [*eleutheroō*] from the law of sin and death” (v. 2) and “The creature itself also shall be delivered [*eleutheroō*] from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (v. 21).

### *from the* **Responsive Reading**

[Zechariah 8:7, 8](#)

*Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.*

The name *Zechariah* signifies “Yahweh has remembered,” perhaps referring to God’s honoring of His covenant with the children of Israel. Here the prophet foretells Yahweh’s restoration of His people from exile.

Zechariah's ministry in Jerusalem lasted about two years during the reign of King Darius of Persia (521–486 BC). While some Jews had returned from captivity, the city walls and Temple lay in ruins. One scholar sees this key concept in Zechariah's message: "Spiritual restoration must precede social or political restoration."

### Isaiah 49:9–11

*They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.*

Comparing these descriptive verses to the account of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, a commentator envisions a "journey of the heart back to the Lord." In this divine journey, he continues, "even unmapped places are known to God, and even from them he will gather his pilgrims." Every wilderness experience is transformed by God's all-encompassing protection and care.

**smite:** strike; harm

### Isaiah 65:16

*He who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth.*

As the Hebrew word translated *truth* is *'āmen*, "God of truth" is sometimes rephrased as "God of the Amen." One source interprets this to mean "the God who says 'amen' to all his promises, affirming their reality and his trustworthiness to keep them." Just as the term *amen* affirms the truth of the statement it follows, God is affirmed as the very source of all justice and righteousness.

## from **Section 1**

### 1 | Psalms 100:5

*The Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*

Like many of the psalms, this song encourages gratitude to God. A scriptural authority explains, "This hymn . . . shows that at its best [Old Testament] thanksgiving arises, not from benefits received, but from the character of God."

## Translation

### 2 | Psalms 146:5–8

*Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God: which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever: which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The Lord looseth the prisoners: the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous.*

• • •

*The person whose help is the God of Jacob—*

*the person whose hope rests on the Lord their God—  
is truly happy!*

*God: the maker of heaven and earth,  
the sea, and all that is in them,*

*God: who is faithful forever,  
who gives justice to people who are oppressed,  
who gives bread to people who are starving!*

*The Lord: who frees prisoners.*

*The Lord: who makes the blind see.*

*The Lord: who straightens up those who are bent low.*

*The Lord: who loves the righteous.*

—Common English Bible

### 2 | Psalms 146:5, 7

*Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God: . . . which executeth judgment for the oppressed.*

**executeth:** puts into effect; performs

**oppressed:** people who have been treated cruelly

### 3 | Psalms 119:12

*Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes.*

“Teach me” is a recurring plea in this chapter, appearing nine times. That God will teach His children directly is promised in [Jeremiah 31:33](#): “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.”

The Hebrew word rendered *teach* here is a form of *lāmad*, meaning learn. Isaiah, for instance, says, “When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn [*lāmad*] righteousness” ([Isaiah 26:9](#)).

#### Translation

#### 3 | [Psalms 119:34](#)

*Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.*

• • •

*Help me understand your instruction,  
and I will obey it  
and follow it with all my heart.*

—Christian Standard Bible

### from **Section 2**

#### Translation

#### 4 | [Psalms 89:8, 14](#)

*O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? . . . Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*

• • •

*Lord God All-Powerful, who is like you?*

*Lord, you are powerful and completely trustworthy....*

*Your kingdom is built on what is right and fair.*

*Love and truth are in all you do.*

## 5 | Exodus 18:14, 21

*When Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? . . . Provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.*

Jethro, father of Moses' wife Zipporah, is an important figure in Moses' life. In addition to providing this counsel to Moses, he supports Moses' mission in Egypt (see [4:18](#)). And although serving as priest of the idolatrous Midianites, he recognizes the supremacy of the God of Israel (see [18:10–12](#)).

In ancient societies, a nation's ruler was also its judge and lawgiver. As the Israelite leader, Moses sits as the sole arbiter of complaints and disputes, determining outcomes for each case and—because the people come “to inquire of God” ([v. 15](#))—making clear Yahweh's ordinances and laws.

Jethro perceives that Moses' system of administering justice exhausts not only the leader's strength but also the people's patience as they wait for judgment. Jethro's plan apportions the weightiest issues to Moses and lesser petitions to well-qualified men (see vv. 21, 22). Groupings of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens allude to common military divisions.

A scholar calls Jethro's advice “the first faint step toward a democratic form of government.” As [Deuteronomy 1:13](#) indicates, Moses delegates the choosing of rulers as well: “Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.”

## *from* **Section 3**

## 8 | John 8:39, 40, 44

*If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. . . . Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. . . . Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.*

Jesus is addressing Jews—believed to be Temple rulers—who have identified themselves as Abraham’s descendents (see vv. 33, 39). The Master is unequivocal in distinguishing their origin from his: “Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world” (v. 23). To denounce their relationship to Abraham was to denounce the position they cherished as God’s nation; to classify them as children of the devil was to categorically censure them.

Building on this indictment, Jesus contrasts his voicing of the truth with the devilish lies the Jewish leaders embrace and act on. One source points out: “They lived in a world of lies, distortion, and falseness. In a sense, truth was a foreign language to them; their native language was lies.” In Greek thought, the term rendered *truth* (*alētheia*) signified reality. Jesus goes beyond declaring his enemies to be liars—he exposes their ignorance of spiritual reality.

Bible authorities suggest that Jesus’ mention of “the works of Abraham” may refer to the patriarch’s welcome of two angel visitants (see [Genesis 18:1–8](#))—far from the murderous intentions of Jesus’ enemies toward God’s messenger (see [John 8:37, 40, 59](#)). Unlike the Temple officials, followers of Christ welcome every divine communication and are enabled to detect and reject false messages.

**abode:** stayed; remained

9 | [John 2:20, 21](#)

*Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.*

#### Translation

*... you have an anointing from the Holy One [you have been set apart, specially gifted and prepared by the Holy Spirit], and all of you know [the truth because He teaches us, illuminates our minds, and guards us from error]. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie [nothing false, no deception] is of the truth.*

—Amplified® Bible.

At this time, the early Church had lost members due to false teaching. The writer reminds believers that the unction or anointing of the Holy Spirit brings with it the only knowledge needed—deep spiritual understanding grounded in Christly teaching and practice. Later this letter asserts: “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life” (5:20).

Christ Jesus speaks about his divine anointing when he quotes [Isaiah 61:1](#) in the Nazareth synagogue (see [Luke 4:18](#)). And both Paul and the author of Hebrews confirm God’s anointing of the faithful (see [II Corinthians 1:21](#); [Hebrews 1:9](#)).

#### *from* **Section 4**

11 | [Isaiah 42:1, 3](#)

*Behold my servant, whom I uphold; . . . A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.*

Matthew’s Gospel cites [verses 1–4](#) of this chapter as Messianic prophecy (see [Matthew 12:18–20](#)). The bruised reed and smoking flax—images thought to represent people weak in faith or hope—are seen by some to portray Jesus’ tenderness toward those needing the most encouragement and comfort.

#### Translation

11 | [Isaiah 42:3](#)

*A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.*

• • •

*He will not crush the weakest reed  
or put out a flickering candle.*

*He will bring justice to all who have been wronged.*

—New Living Translation

## 12 | Luke 13:14–17

*The ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.*

Christ Jesus' question echoes the synagogue elder's use of the word *ought*: "There are six days in which men ought to work" (v. 14). Both are speaking strongly about necessity—the elder, about the necessity to observe rules; Jesus, about the greater necessity for release from physical and mental bondage.

Recognizing the woman as a "daughter of Abraham" (the Master's only recorded use of this phrase) is a pointed rebuke to the elder. It overrules the practice of treating with shame the diseased or disabled and contradicts the tradition of denying them this status. Similarly, Jesus applies "son of Abraham" to the despised but regenerated Zacchaeus (see [Luke 19:9](#)).

**indignation:** strong displeasure; anger

**hypocrite:** someone who pretends to be more virtuous or moral than he is

**adversaries:** enemies; opponents

## from Section 5

Translation

13 | II Thessalonians 3:1

*Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.*

• • •

*... brothers and sisters, pray that we spread the Lord's word rapidly and that it will be honored the way it was among you.*

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

*There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one. Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation.*

Being clean or pure was of major theological import for Hebrews. Yahweh’s people were to be free from any impurity—physical, ceremonial, moral, and spiritual. Cleanness was a primary symbol of their holy status as His children; uncleanness pointed to an unholy state of separation from God.

Christian healing demonstrated power over unclean spirits—evil influences or demons believed to inhabit people as mental and physical infirmities. And Jesus redefined purity to his disciples: “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” ([John 15:3](#)).

**sect:** group of people united by specific beliefs

*from* **Section 6**

Translation

15 | [Galatians 5:1, 7](#)

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. . . . Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*

• • •

*So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don’t get tied up again in slavery to the law. . . . You were running the race so well. Who has held you back from following the truth?*

—New Living Translation

*Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*

“Paul was fond of using athletic imagery to describe the Christian life,” a commentator notes. “To him life is a race, demanding adherence to rules and discipline if the race is to be completed successfully and a prize obtained.” To the Corinthians, the apostle writes: “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” ([I Corinthians 9:24](#)).

Now Paul questions an apparent obstacle to the Galatians’ initial zeal for Christlike living, perhaps implying that it is by their own consent that they have been pulled off course. Another scholar remarks, “It is not enough that we profess Christianity, but we must run well, by living up to that profession.”

## Related healing ideas

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SHORT VERSION

