



Bible Lens

Bible Lens—November 30–December 6, 2020

Subject: **God the Only Cause and Creator**

From the *Christian Science Sentinel* - November 30, 2020

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

—Genesis 1:1

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

Isaiah 43:19

Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

Behold is an attention-getting word, much like our contemporary exclamations “Look!” or “Listen to this!” Greek and Hebrew words rendered *Behold* or *Lo* in the King James Version appear hundreds of times from Genesis to Revelation, often introducing messages from or about God. The demand for humanity to pay attention to God’s activity is imperative and continuing.

Isaiah 41:18, 19

I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. . . . I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together.

For desert dwellers, water is vital—sought, worked for, and protected. Shade from well-watered trees (illustrated here by species that supply shelter rather than fruit) is greatly valued as well. Understandably, water in the wilderness is a symbol of divine care throughout the Bible.

God’s provision, according to verse 20, is made to ensure that His power is acknowledged. Four charges (see, know, consider, and understand) underscore this intent.

One commentary suggests that high places and valleys “spiritually express that in all circumstances, whether elevated or depressed, God’s people will have refreshment for their souls. . . .”

from Section 1

1 | John 1:1, 3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In using the Greek term *logos* (word), John's Gospel bridges Jewish and Greek religious traditions. Both embraced the Word of God as the dynamic creative force of the world. So the concept of God Himself as the Word served to expand Christian thought while also deepening wider collective understanding.

A scholar summarizes, "All that is created is intimately related to the Word, for it was created, not only through him, but also in him. . . . All creation bears the stamp of God's Word."

Translation

4 | Psalms 52:1

The goodness of God endureth continually.

...

God's faithful love is constant.

—Christian Standard Bible

from Section 2

5 | Isaiah 66:1

Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.

Believed to have been written at the time of the Jerusalem Temple's rebuilding, this declaration reminds listeners that Yahweh's presence isn't dependent on a human structure. While the Temple included a literal seat for God, His nature is recognized as boundless.

Christ Jesus cites this prophecy in his Sermon on the Mount: "Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool" (Matthew 5:34, 35).

Translation

6 | Isaiah 65:18

Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

...

*My people will be happy forever
because of the things I will make.
I will make a Jerusalem that is full of joy.
And I will make her people a delight.*

—International Children’s Bible

Translation

7 | Isaiah 51:11

The redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

• • •

Those who have been ransomed by the LORD will return.

*They will enter Jerusalem singing,
crowned with everlasting joy.*

*Sorrow and mourning will disappear,
and they will be filled with joy and gladness.*

—New Living Translation

from Section 3

8 | Daniel 2:20

Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his.

God’s name represents His character, being, and presence. A scriptural authority writes, “. . . to know the name of God is to know God as he has revealed himself”—and adds that His name “implies the most complete divine self-disclosure.”

9 | Isaiah 40:10

The Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

In the Hebrew Bible, Yahweh’s might is frequently portrayed as His hand or arm. In another instance, Psalms 89:13 proclaims, “Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.” Defeat was sometimes ascribed to His withdrawal of power: “He hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy” (Lamentations 2:3).

Comparable imagery occurs a few times in the New Testament. Luke 1:66 reports the people’s response at the birth of John the Baptist: “The hand of the Lord was with him”—an affirmation also applied to some of the early Christians (see Acts 11:21). Citing Isaiah 53:1, John 12:38 asks, “To whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

9 | Isaiah 40:12

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

A series of rhetorical questions, extending through verse 14, impels the only possible answer: God, who “sitteth upon the circle of the earth” (v. 22). His sovereignty and wisdom contrast decisively with miniscule human capacity: The most impressive natural elements are as items measured in inches or centimeters, ounces or grams.

In the book of Job, God asks: “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?” (38:4, 5). Proverbs poses similar questions: “Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth?” (30:4).

Translation

9 | Isaiah 40:10, 12, 26

Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. . . . Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? . . . Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

. . .

*See, the Lord God comes with strength,
and His power establishes His rule.*

*His reward is with Him,
and His gifts accompany Him. . . .*

*Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand
or marked off the heavens with the span of his hand?*

*Who has gathered the dust of the earth in a measure
or weighed the mountains in a balance
and the hills in the scales? . . .*

*Look up and see:
who created these?*

*He brings out the starry host by number;
He calls all of them by name.*

*Because of His great power and strength,
not one of them is missing.*

—Holman Christian Standard Bible

10 | Joshua 14:10

The Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old.

fourscore: eighty (four times one score, or twenty)

Translation

11 | Psalms 18:2

The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

• • •

*The LORD is my solid rock,
my fortress, my rescuer.
My God is my rock—
I take refuge in him!—
he's my shield,
my salvation's strength,
my place of safety.*

—Common English Bible

from Section 4

12 | Isaiah 57:19

I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord.

Translation

*I'll create praise on their lips:
"Perfect peace to those both far and near."
"I'll heal them," says the Lord.*

—GOD'S WORD Translation

"Fruit of the lips" means thanksgiving or praise, a figure repeated in [Hebrews 13:15](#). God's message of peace is to those "far off" (captives remaining in Babylon) and those "near" (Israelites who have returned to Palestine).

New Testament authors broaden the reach of this passage beyond the Hebrew people. Acts 2:39 has, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." [Ephesians 2:14–17](#) speaks of Jesus, who "came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." The peace of God is perceived to

be universal and inclusive.

13 | I Samuel 25:2, 3

There was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings.

Because of Nabal's offensive treatment (see [vv. 4–12](#)), David is set on violence. He is saved from his angry purpose by Abigail, a deliverance David attributes to God (see [v. 32](#)). Commentators agree that brutal retaliation would have stained David's reputation and threatened his future claim to the kingship.

Abigail is one of only a handful of female protagonists in the Bible. Here she is shown as a model of strength and wisdom, in stark contrast to her boorish husband. Although as a woman she has no standing in dealings between men, Abigail is thoughtful, diplomatic, and eloquent in speaking directly to David—and courageous and decisive in defusing the volatile situation brought about by her husband's incivility.

The case Abigail makes has been described as a preeminent example of well-developed argument in Scripture. And her declaration "The Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house" ([v. 28](#)) has overtones of Nathan's later insight, "The Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house" ([II Samuel 7:11](#)). One source notes that Abigail spans the gulf between the death of Samuel and the arrival of Nathan—the two prophets upon whom David relied.

churlish: rude; mean-spirited

13 | I Samuel 25:23, 24, 28

When Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: . . . I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid.

trespass: unlawful act; wrongdoing

Translation

14 | Psalms 119:160, 165

Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever. . . . Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

. . .

Your words are true from the start.

And all your laws will be fair forever. . . .

Those who love your teachings will find true peace.

Nothing will defeat them.

—International Children's Bible

from Section 5

15 | Psalms 67:1, 2

God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

Verse 1 recalls the well-loved Aaronic blessing given to Moses by God: “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee” (Numbers 6:24, 25). The Psalmist expands the benediction to include all the nations of the world.

“Saving health” is translated from the Hebrew word *yešû‘â*, which is usually rendered *salvation*. Psalms 3:8, for instance, asserts, “Salvation [*yešû‘â*] belongeth unto the Lord.”

Translation

16 | Jeremiah 17:14

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.

...

LORD, heal me, and I will truly be healed.

Save me, and I will truly be saved.

You are the one I praise.

—New Century Version

17 | Ephesians 2:10

We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Translation

... we are God's accomplishment, created in Christ Jesus to do good things. God planned for these good things to be the way that we live our lives.

—Common English Bible

Perhaps uniquely in Scripture, this affirmation depicts every good work as preordained by God. Good works result not from our own efforts but from His work in us—His workmanship. A Bible authority explains, “. . . believers are saved for or unto good works, not by or because of them. Good works are the outcome, not the cause, of salvation.”

18 | Luke 4:38, 39

Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

Luke's language in this account is strong. *Rebuked* (*epitimaō*) is used in stories of the Master calming the storm and casting out demons (see [Matthew 8:26](#); [17:18](#)). This woman's instant healing testifies to Jesus' spiritual authority. Her instant service makes clear her gratitude.

from Section 6

19 | Psalms 118:24

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Like many psalms, this one celebrates Yahweh's acts of help and guidance. The early Christian community enlarged its meaning to include His activity in the advent and ministry of Christ Jesus. Today, "the day which the Lord hath made" signifies to many God's unfolding activity throughout history and into the present.

Martin Luther called Psalm 118 "my chosen psalm," and wrote, "It has saved me from many a pressing danger. . . . It is my friend, dearer to me than all the honors and power of earth."

Translation

20 | Romans 11:36

Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

...

... everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.

—New Living Translation

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

Resources quoted in this issue

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Related healing ideas

In the beginning

In the beginning God beheld

Creation and pronounced it good.

There was no mist to be dispelled,

There was no rift in brotherhood.

All beauty and perfection reigned;
The universe was fresh, unmarred.
Joy and dominion were ordained,
The heavens of His glory starred.

No change has ever taken place.
Man and the universe are fair
Beyond belief in Love's embrace;
Our only need to be aware,
As at the first, of pristine grace.

By Fanny de Groot Hastings
From the January 26, 1952, of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

Correction

Birth is not beginning.
The real kind is revelation:
God unfolding perfect selfhood to you
moment by moment
and making each day your "birth" day
in continual celebration
of beginning-less,
endless,
ageless
you!

By Margaret R. Zuber
From the April 26, 1982, of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

Unbirth from earth

God took
no bone
to form His own
nor mud
of earth
to give it birth.

God brought
to light
His image bright
and holds
in view
the perfect *you*.

By Hilton Bill Farmer

From the November 1978 issue of *The Christian Science Journal*

The “very good” of me

Softly now and with deepest tenderness
I let unfurl in thought
what God beholds of me and truly knows—
the holy beauty of my being.

In breathholding silence
the vision is reached for.
There, in quietude, emerges
this “very good” of me.
Refreshed and reassured, I let it
tumble light-clad into my day.

By Carol Masner

From the August 20, 1979, of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

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ON THE MISSION OF THE *CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SENTINEL*

The sentinel still reminds us of the need to watch. And it still alerts us to the primary thing:
proving in our own lives the power of Christ.

March 1987

