

## **Bible Characters for Your Weekly Bible Study**

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**For week of February 8 - 14, 2010**

**Correll, William Milford** (CSB and Editor), “**A fresh sense of Soul**, ” EDITORIAL, Christian Science Journal, Vol.98 (May 1980), p. 253.

--One of the signs of our times is jaded materialism.

--We can wake up to the fact that material sense does not provide joy, inspiration, vitality, newness of life.

--Soul is sometimes interpreted as an indwelling spirit, something that dwells in the material body somewhere.

- And then from this standpoint individuals interpret soul through the material senses.

---To realize the resources of Soul, one must turn away from material sense to spiritual sense.

--From [a] higher point of view that God is the Soul of man, we begin to appreciate man's distinctness as a spiritual idea, the individual reflection of the divine Mind.

• This is the counter fact relating to narcissism or self-love. It turns thought away from the body to spiritual identification.

**GOLDEN TEXT:** God is sovereign (Ps 135: 6)

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: A historical, didactic psalm providing instruction about the only true God, and the false gods of humanity. “The composer and occasion of Psalm 135 are unknown but likely post-exilic [late sixth or early fifth century BC].” (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

A “reason why the Lord should be praised is that He is ‘great’ ....In contrast with the gods [of idolatry] the Lord is the almighty One who is in full control of the entire cosmos (v.6).” (Eerdmans Commentary)

**Jones, Linden E.**, “**The Absolute Sovereignty of God**,” Christian Science Journal, Vol.70 (May 1952), p. 251.

--The absolute sovereignty of God is no mere theory or nicely coined phrase.

- The central truth of the Bible is demonstrable spiritual fact.

---As our beloved Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, writes in the textbook, “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures” (p. 109): “*Christian Science reveals incontrovertibly that Mind is All-in-all, that the only realities are the divine Mind and idea. This great fact is not, however, seen to be supported by sensible evidence, until its divine Principle is demonstrated by healing the sick and thus proved absolute and divine. This proof once seen, no other conclusion can be reached.*”

--Challenging statement this, requiring as it does far more than a formal profession of faith in Deity.

• Instead, it demands of Christian Scientists the concrete evidences of spiritual healing in support of their claim to an adequate understanding of the divine Principle of this Science—one infinite God without rival, opposite, or equal.

**Slaughter, Cora**, "**God's will: 'in earth as it is in heaven'**," Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.91 (30 January 1989), p. 18.

- Christlike prayer reveals that our comings and goings do not take place outside of God's jurisdiction.
  - We can prove that they are sustained by His law of good and harmony, which regulates even the minutest details of daily experience.
- The ideal place to be is where we already are, our eternal dwelling--our permanent niche--in divine Mind as God's, Mind's, beloved spiritual idea.
- ...the man of Spirit's creating is not at the mercy of a material environment and its so-called forces.
- Our God-given dominion is more than equal to overcoming apprehension stemming from suggestions of instability, danger, a lack of control.
- Safety and security, understood spiritually, are impervious to chance, risk, reversals, interference.

**SECTION I: Isaiah reveals the one true God** (Isa 43: 1 *now*, 6 *bring*, 7, 10 [to 2<sup>nd</sup> ];12, 21)  
TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: Written by Isaiah 700-681 BC..

"The only explanation for the ongoing existence [v.1 *created thee...formed thee*] of the nation of Israel is God's sovereign grace, which brought her into existence from nothing (cf. Deut 7:6-11) and sustains her." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"Israel's God repeatedly predicted the future accurately, thus enabling Israel to witness [v.10] to His truthful accuracy (v.13), and the reality that He was the only eternal, living God." (Ibid)

"In the messianic age, Israel will finally give the Lord the credit [*show forth my praise*, v.21] that is due Him (contrast Jer 13:11)." (Ibid)

**Corbett, James Robert** (CS, Richmond, VA), "**The right to be redeemed!**," Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.87 (4 February 1985), p. 177.

- ...salvation calls for more than a merely human desire to be good, to be well, or to be excused from an imperfect past.
- ...a divine demand for radical spiritual reformation by courageously confronting and overcoming evil and the sinful beliefs that appear to block the influx of holiness and health.
- Acknowledging the utter falsity of sin and sickness is a crucial step in the true redemptive process.
  - But not the only one.
    - To be rid of moral or physical suffering requires the admission that one has been indulging in the belief of sin and sickness as real and must of necessity repent of it delusory experience.
- Like...Biblical spiritual achievers...we all can seek and attain redemption, even though our past may regrettably include serious mistakes.

**Hogrefe, Eva-Maria** (CS and Staff Editor, Boston, MA), "**Certainty of purpose**," FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.97 (25 September 1995), p. 18.

- Wouldn't you be eager to learn more about God if you found that a spiritual understanding of Him reveals His plan for you?
  - As God is infinite, ever-present good, His design for you is inexhaustibly good.
    - Cherishing your relation to God brings His purpose for you to light as certainly as it gives clear direction to thought and action.
- In the Scriptures we read that man is made in God's image and likeness.
  - God's daughters and sons, then, are the very expression of God, of good.

---They're His blessed, spiritual offspring.

- As such they glorify Him and are in harmony with His design. In the book of Isaiah, God declares, "...bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him" (43:6,7).

**SECTION II: Paul addresses Israel's indiscretions of the past, and warns against idolatry** (I Cor 10: 1-7 *brethren* [to :], 14)

**TIME LINE AND AUTHOR:** Written by Paul in the first half of 55 AD from Ephesus during his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey.

"In chap. 10 Paul reflects extensively on the dangers of idolatry—the wrongful attribution of ultimate status to something or someone not ultimate." (Theological Bible Commentary)

In verses 1-3 *all* Israelites who passed through the Red Sea with Moses were "baptized" in it and ate the same spiritual meat, but *many* never attained the blessings God had for them (in the land of Canaan) in this life.

**Donaldson, Reita N.**, "**Baptized of God**," Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.91 (3 July 1989), p. 18.

--As Mrs. Eddy observes, "*Our baptism is a purification from all error.*" [S&H p.35]

--What, exactly, does Christian Science offer in the way of baptism?

- Not a one-time ritual with water but individual sanctification through prayer, repentance, and reformation.

---This spiritual baptism is a purification of thought that goes on throughout one's life.

--Our spiritual baptism brings forth [our] God-given perfection.

- We are not struggling to be something we're not.

--But the power of God, Spirit, works in us to reveal our upright, spiritual nature.

- Almighty God upholds our efforts to see the light of Christ and to be what God made us to be: perfect.

**Buskirk, Hon. Clarence A.** (CS and Lecturer), "**Flee from idolatry**," Christian Science Journal, Vol.33 (February 1916), p. 628.

--Mrs. Eddy says: "*The divine Principle of the universe must interpret the universe. God is the divine Principle of all that represents Him and of all that really exists*" (Science and Health, p. 272). This leads us to consider Paul's statement that "*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" Habakkuk says of God, "*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.*" Christian Science rephrases the prophet's statement in the declaration that "*to Truth there is no error,—all is Truth*" (Science and Health, p. 475).

--If the teachings of Christian Science were more generally understood and practised there would be no spectacles of conscienceless greed desperately evading law and transgressing every higher sentiment of humanity and every rule of right and honesty and justice; no sordid and besotted slaves of pride, vanity, luxury, and show, for every one of whom there are thousands of wrecked and discouraged strugglers and thousands of homes where hopeless women and children are constantly facing the wolves of poverty. In fact there would be none of the heartrending sights and sounds which from some view-points make this earth seem a veritable purgatory,—all of these would be known no more if mankind could learn to have no other gods before the one and only true God and to obey the commandment, "*Flee from idolatry.*"

**SECTION IV: John sends his disciples to Jesus that they might be convinced that he is the Messiah**

(Matt 11: 2-5)

PARALLEL GOSPEL: Luke 7: 18-23

TIME LINE: The Year of Popularity and Fundamental Principles (Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> year of ministry), 28 AD.

"John the Baptizer's inquiry concerning Jesus' identity (11:2-3) raises the question of the Messiah and uses the word 'Messiah/Christ' as an explicit title for the first time since the story of the Magi (2:4)." (Eerdmans Commentary)

"John, knowing that his end was near, and that many of his disciples were jealous of the success of the new teacher, and disbelieved [his] claims, sent certain of them to Jesus, that by seeing [his] works and hearing [his] words they might be convinced of [his] Messiahship." (Dummelow Commentary)

**John the Baptist**

**(Abbreviated)**

"We have only fragmentary and imperfect accounts of John the Baptist in the Gospels." (Baker Encyclopedia) John the Baptist was the cousin and "forerunner of Jesus; a moral reformer, and preacher of Messianic hope." (Who Was Who in the Bible) He is "an important figure in each of the four New Testament Gospels." (HarperCollins Dictionary) "Luke adds that both John and Jesus were announced, set apart, and named by the angel Gabriel even before their birth." (Who Was Who in the Bible) John is identified with the beginning of Jesus' ministry. "Reference to John is the first point of convergence among the canonical Gospels, all of which gave a somewhat similar account of his person, preaching, and activity, though varying in detail." (HarperCollins Dictionary)....

John's baptism was a washing, symbolizing moral regeneration, administered to each candidate only once. He had a burning awareness of one who was to come after him. "At the height of his popularity he baptized Jesus, and proclaimed him the Messiah. Then, his mission accomplished, he passes off the stage." (Halley's Bible Handbook)

"Although the Gospels make John's ministry clearly preparatory and subsidiary to that of Jesus, historically there can be little doubt that at first they were parallel and separate ministries with much in common in their social and moral teachings." (All the People in the Bible) John was a forerunner of Jesus, not only in his ministry and message, but also in his death....

**Mason, Frank E.**, (CSB and Asst Pastor), "**John the Baptist**," BIBLE LESSONS, Christian Science Journal (October 1888), p. 361.

--John, like Elijah of old, was fearless and faithful in calling his countrymen to repentance.

--John called his hearers' attention to the coming kingdom.

--...not long after...John was imprisoned by Herod Antipas, in the Castle Machærus, because John had censured him publicly for marrying his sister-in-law, Herodias, the faithless wife of Herod Philip.

• At her solicitation, in reward for a dance by her daughter, her husband ordered John's execution. (Matt 14: 1-12/Luke 3:19)

---It was during this imprisonment that John sent messengers to Jesus, to ask if he were certainly the Messiah. (Matt 11: 1-19)

• After this leader's death John's disciples formed themselves into a sect, under the name of the Christians of St. John.

**Buck, Kate W.,** “**What Are We Looking For?**,” Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.31 (5 January 1929), p. 364.

--In the eleventh chapter of Matthew is found the loving testimony of Jesus concerning John the Baptist, evidently in reproof of misjudgment directed toward John by those who failed to comprehend his mission.

- The Master asked, “*What went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment?*”

---He then pointed out, with clearness and forcefulness, that the way of ease and luxury is found in king’s houses, and that John, though roughly clothed and treading a way that seemed toilsome and difficult, was a great prophet, as well as the true and chosen messenger sent to prepare the way of the Christ, Truth.

--God demands complete abandonment of everything contrary to the one law of ever active good.

- When an honest effort is made to submit all our desires to God, we find that divine Love is a universal solvent of everything unlike itself.

### **SECTION VI: Paul speaks of his post-conversion activities** (Gal 1: 1, 15-17 *when*, 21-24)

**TIME LINE AND AUTHOR:** "Galatians is one of thirteen inspired letters [Paul] addressed to Gentile congregations or his fellow workers." (MacArthur Bible Commentary) Written shortly after the Jerusalem Council mentioned in Acts 15 @ 49 AD.

“The term ‘Galatia’ denotes a region of Asia Minor [**Turkey**], rather than a particular city, so it is not entirely clear who the addressees of the Letter to the Galatians were.” (Theological Bible Commentary)

“The prescript of the letter, usually a place simply to state the letter’s author and addressees, becomes Paul’s opening salvo in his argument: he is literally, ‘Paul [an] Apostle,’ then immediately he defends his claim to apostolic status as being not of or by human action, but directly by God (1:1).” (Ibid)

### **Paul**

[Pawl]

#### **(Abbreviated)**

After Jesus himself, Paul is the most important figure in the history of Christianity. Although a Jew, in Tarsus [**south central Turkey**], an important city of Cilicia, Paul, whose original name was Saul, was born a Roman citizen. He was a tentmaker. All the influences about him from the beginning—Jewish, Greek, Roman—contributed, apart from any consciousness or intention on his part to fit him for the work of his life....

“Paul’s writings are not literary epistles, but occasional letters, written to particular churches about particular problems.” (Harper’s Dictionary) “Those who accept the pastoral Epistles (I and II Timothy, Titus) as genuine believe Paul was released from his first imprisonment in Rome (II Tim 4:16-17) and made another journey in the East. During this hypothetical journey, he is supposed to have visited such places as Troas (2 Tim 4:13), Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3), Miletis (2 Tim 4:20), and Crete (Titus 1:5).” (Ibid)

“The letters certainly give us an insight into Paul’s character. He was a formidable opponent (Galatians), but he also had a remarkable capacity for deep concern and true friendship.” (Oxford Guide to People & Places)....

**Leishman, Thomas L.**, “**Paul’s Letters to the Galatians and To the Romans**,” Christian Science Journal, Vol.59 (January 1942), p. 585.

--Shortly after Paul passed through Galatia on his way to Europe, in the pursuance of his second missionary journey, his Jewish opponents took advantage of his absence to undermine his work among the Galatians, casting doubts upon the validity of his apostleship, and demanding the strictest observance of Jewish rites.

- On returning to Antioch, in Syria, the apostle learned of this sedition, and in the course of the letter which he wrote to deal with the situation, he asked, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you...?” (Gal. 3:1).

--In the opening chapters he stresses the genuineness of his apostleship, and then proceeds to explain that men are justified, or obtain righteousness, not through the external observances stressed by the Judaic party, but by faith in Christ Jesus.

**Sprague, Frank H.**, “**Flesh and Blood**,” Christian Science Journal, Vol.30 (June 1912), p. 139.

--Physiology, anatomy, material hygiene, pathology, psychology, pertaining as they all do to the fleshly type of man, are incapable of shedding light on the problem of being, which must be solved in order to release consciousness from the false beliefs which propagate discord.

- “*The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death,*” declared the apostle Paul.

--Again, if the creature of flesh and blood were man, the immortality of the individual would be out of the question, since the fleshly consciousness knows itself only in connection with the functioning of a fleshly brain.

- The basis of immortality is discovered only through realizing man's spirituality, which cannot be touched by the dissolution of the fleshly organism, any more than an individual is affected by the burning of a dummy or effigy purporting to represent him.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

The Bibliography is provided only in the notes of the first Sunday of the month.

\*The weekly Bible Lessons are made up of selections from the King James Version of the Bible and the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science.