

Bible Characters for Your Weekly Bible Study

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For week of February 23 – March 1, 2009

GOLDEN TEXT: *Jesus Is the True Son of God* (I John 5: 20 *we* [to 1st.])

TIME LINE: Written by John from Ephesus to the Churches of Asia Minor, 90-95 AD

"This dualistic contrast is implied in the final affirmation of the knowledge and status of Christians (v.20). They belong to the truth, to God and Christ." (Interpretation Commentary)

Jesus Christ

[Gē'zus] ("the Lord is salvation")

CHRONOLOGY OUTLINE

(Passages in this week's Bible Lesson are highlighted in red)

THE PROPHETIC CHRIST

- The Lord Will Send a Prophet (Deut 18:15-19)
- Prophecy of the Head Stone (Ps 118:22)
- Virgin Birth Prophesied** (Isa 7: 14)
- Prophecy of the Prince of Peace** (Isa 9: 6)
- Prophecy of the Living Stone (Isa 28:16)
- The Coming of Christ (Isa 42:1-9)

THE CHRIST OF OBSCURITY

- Preliminary Events
 - An Angel Appears to Joseph (Matt 1: 18-25)
- Birth Foretold by an Angel
 - The Annunciation to Mary** (Luke 1: 26-38)
- In Infancy
 - Birth of Jesus (Luke 2: 1-7)
 - Visit of the Shepherds (Luke 2: 8-17)
 - Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2: 22-24)
 - Words of Simeon and Anna (Luke 2: 25-38)
 - The Visit of the Wise Men (Matt 2: 1-12)
 - The Flight into Egypt (Matt 2: 13-15)
 - The Return to Nazareth (Matt 2: 19-23)
- His Youth (Luke 2: 40)
 - His Visit to the Temple When Twelve (Luke 2:41-50)
 - Silent Years, No Events Recorded (Luke 2:51,52)

THE MINISTERING CHRIST

- The Year of Inauguration
 - The Ministry of John the Baptist (Luke 3:1-18)
 - Baptism of Jesus (Matt 3:13-17)

The Testimony of John the Baptist (John 1: 19-23)

Five Disciples Enrolled (John 1: 35-49)

Water made wine; his first miracle (John 2: 1-11)

Discourse on the New Birth (John 3:1-21)

Early Judean Ministry (John 3: 22)

The Water of Life (John 4:4-26)

The Revival in Samaria (John 4: 28-42)

Early Galilean Ministry (Mark 1: 14, 15/Luke 4; 14-15)

His discourse at Nazareth (Luke 4: 16-27)

The Year of Popularity

Four disciples called (Matt 4: 18-20)

The Draught of Fishes (Luke 5:4-9)

Later Galilean Ministry (Matt 4: 23-25/Mark 1: 38-39)

The leper healed (Matt 8: 2-4)

The Paralytic Healed (Mark 2: 2-12)

Matthew called (Luke 5: 27, 28)

The Second Passover (John 5: 1)

The Man at the Pool Healed (John 5:2-9)

The Discourse on His Divinity (John 5: 17-47)

Healing the withered hand (Matt 12:9-13)

The Pharisees oppose him (Mark 3: 6)

Many healed near Galilee (Matt 12: 15)

The Twelve Ordained (Matt 10:1-4/Mark 3:13-19/Luke 6:12-16)

Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7; Luke 6: 20-49)

John the Baptist's delegation (Matt 11: 2-6)

John the Baptist Commended (Matt 11: 7-19)

The discourteous Pharisees and the anointing (Luke 7: 36-48)

Parable of the two debtors (Luke 7: 41-43)

The tour in Galilee (Luke 8: 1-3)

The dumb demoniac healed (Matt 12: 22)

Growing opposition (Matt 12: 24,25)

Encouraging words to the disciples (Luke 12: 22-32)

Parable of the Wise Steward (John 12:42-48)

Parable of the Wheat and Tares (Matt 13: 24-30, 36-43)

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt 13: 31, 32)

Parable of the Leaven (Matt 13: 33)

Parable of the Draw-net (Matt 13:47-51)

Gaderene Voyage (Luke 8:22)

Tempest Stilled (Luke 8:23-25)

Gaderene Demoniacs Healed (Luke 8:26-39)

The Year of Opposition

Rejected at Nazareth Again (Matt 13:54-58)

The charge to his disciples (Matt 10: 5-42/Luke 9: 1-6)

A vacation interrupted (Matt 14:14/Mark 6: 30-34)

The five thousand fed (John 6: 5-14)

Discourse on the Bread of Life (John 6: 25-59)

The daughter of the Syrophenician woman healed (Mark 7:25-30)

Peter's confession of Christ (Mark 8: 27-29/Luke 9: 18-21)

Healing of the Demoniac Son (Mark 9: 14-29)

The lesson in humility (Matt 18: 1-3)
Parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt 18: 23-35)
The seventy sent forth (Luke 10: 1-16)
Teaching at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7: 10-53)
The Adulterous Women (John 8: 1-11)
The Discourse on Fatherhood (John 8: 15-58)
The Parable of the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-17)
Feast of Dedication (John 10: 22-40)

The Last Months

Woman healed of her infirmity (Luke 13: 10-13)
Discourse on the second coming (Luke 17:20-37)
Little Children Blessed (Matt 19: 13-15)
The Rich Young Ruler (Matt 19: 16-30)
Healing Two Blind Men (Mark 10:46-52)

THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR (Passion Week)

Tuesday and Wednesday

Woes Pronounced Against the Pharisees (Matt 23)

Thursday

Jesus' parting words (John 14: 1-31)

Parable of the True Vine (John 15:1-11)

The promise of the Holy Spirit (John 16: 7-15)

Good Friday

Jesus before Pilate (Mark 15: 1-5/John 18: 28-38)

Jesus mocked (John 19: 1-3)

Jesus led away to be crucified (John 19: 16-17)

The Crucifixion (Mark 15: 25-28/John 19: 18-24)

Jesus commends his mother to John (John 19: 25-27)

Darkness prevails, Jesus expires (Mark 15: 33-37)

The veil of the Temple rent (Mark 15: 38)

The watch at the sepulcher (Matt 27: 62-66)

THE RISEN SAVIOUR

The coming of the women to the sepulcher to anoint the body (Luke 24: 1, 2)

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16: 9)

Mary Magdalene Tells Peter (Mark 16: 10)

His Appearance to the Disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-35)

His Appearance to the Eleven, Thomas Present (Mark 16: 14-18/John 20:26-29)

His appearance in Galilee (Matt 28: 16-20)

His Appearance at the Time of His Ascension (Mark 16:19,20/Luke 24: 50-53)

THE GLORIFIED SAVIOUR

Work of

Crowning the victors (I Pet 5:4)

Second Coming of

Eternal Glory of

Exalted to be King of Kings (Rev 19: 16)

(Abbreviated)

Jesus was the name of five men in the Bible. Most important was Jesus, the son of Mary, also known as Jesus Christ. "The conquests of Alexander the Great (332-323 BC) had the effect of exposing almost the entire Mediterranean basin to some degree to Greek culture and, more importantly, to the Greek language. Thus, most educated people in the area read Greek, whatever their family

tongue, and were at least partially familiar with Greek thought and customs." (HarperCollins Dictionary) Although Jews shared in this general atmosphere, Aramaic was Jesus' normal language. "Jesus' own proper name is a Greek version of the Hebrew "Joshua," salvation is from Yahweh." (Holmon Dictionary)

"Jesus was the human-divine Son of God born of the Virgin Mary, the great High Priest who intercedes for His people at the right hand of God; founder of the Christian church, and central figure of the human race." (Who Was Who in the Bible) "The genealogy of Jesus appears in both Matthew and Luke, and they differ in one respect: Matthew gives Joseph's genealogy, and Luke gives Mary's even though it indicates Joseph's" (Interpreter's Bible).

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Herod the Great ruled all Palestine under the suzerainty of Rome. Early in his life he was taken to Nazareth, a town of Galilee. "When forty days old He was taken to the temple at Jerusalem; His parents returned to Bethlehem and soon took Him to Egypt to escape Herod's massacre of the infants there." (Baker Encyclopedia) Very little is known about Jesus' early life before the time of John the Baptist....

Jesus' success in healing the sick and raising the dead brought him in conflict with the scribes and teachers of the law. He was barred from preaching in the synagogues, and took his ministry to the hillside and illustrated his main themes by parables. These were simple stories from daily life that would drive home some special point and make it stick in the hearer's understanding. "His use of metaphor and parable is so extensive—more than one-third of his words are in parabolic form—that it is evidently impossible to separate the form from the content of these words." (HarperCollins Dictionary) An inescapable conclusion is that Jesus was influenced by the prophecies of Isaiah 40-66, where the coming of the reign of God is a central theme....

"**Jesus, As He Appears to Christian Scientists,**" Christian Science Journal, Vol.8 (February 1891), p. 463.

Discourse given by the Pastor of the Church of Christ (Scientist), Boston, Mass., Dec. 28, 1890.

--...let us gain a clear view as to what Jesus the man is to us who call ourselves Christian Scientists. Our theme, then, resolves itself into the finding of the Spiritual Jesus, and the discovery of our relation, as Christian Scientists, to him.

--I have recently heard, and with no little amazement, that we do not regard Jesus in a reverent light — do not accord him exalted position in our thought; that while we credit him with being undoubtedly a good man, in advance of his age perhaps, we yet feel that he was in no wise superior to ourselves — in fact that, in point of gifts and acquirements, he was hardly the equal of some men of our own age.

--The charge itself is wholly a false one in support of which there is not a scintilla of evidence.

--Down deep in the heart of every one of us is a full, strong, vital love for the Christ who is and forever will be our princely leader....He is our king and great high priest. Our recognized authority, SCIENCE AND HEALTH, terms him the "Royal Man." It also says of him that he is the "Mediator between humanity and Spirit, the voice of Truth speaking to the human senses through Science; and thus it was that Jesus became the coincidence, the agreement between the divine and the human."

Winstead, Opal, "Son of God," POEM, Christian Science Journal, Vol.63 (April 1945), p. 174.

Behold, as Jesus did, immortal man!
The vision infinite the Christ revealed:

In glory formed—before the world began—
The perfect man the love of God has sealed.
Existing in the All and only, he
Embraces peace and dwells in heavenly good,
Forever sure of Love's infinity
And God's eternal, changeless fatherhood.
As indestructible as Truth he stands,
Inviolable in Principle and Mind;
While all the universe unfolds, expands,
Deep answers deep in common voice and kind.
Above all fear of earthly rule and rod,
Man lives in splendor as the son of God.

SECTION I: The Prophecy of Immanuel (Isa 7: 14 *the*)

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: Written by the prophet Isaiah in the Pre-Exilic period, @700 BC.

“The Greek translation of the Bible, the LXX, chose the Greek word for virgin (*parthenos*) to translate the Hebrew and so provided an opportunity for Matthew's interpretation.” (Eerdmans Commentary) Peake's Commentary says “**a young woman** is correct; ‘virgin’ derives from LXX. An ‘*almāh*’ is a young woman of marriageable age, whether virgin or not.” “Against the Christian understanding of Isaiah 7.14 as a prediction of Christ's virgin birth, the Jew Trypho (second century [AD]) insisted that the Hebrew word means simply ‘young woman,’ that no virgin birth is involved, and that the reference is to the natural birth of Hezekiah.” (Oxford Guide to Ideas & Issues)

With respect to Isaiah v.14, "Since Ahaz refused to choose a sign (vv.11,12), the Lord chose His own sign, whose implementation would occur far beyond Ahaz's lifetime." (MacArthur Commentary)

"a virgin"

"All sexual behavior that did not produce legitimate Israelite offspring to the holy commonwealth was, in varying degrees, censured or controlled, and there was a concomitant double standard with regard to sexual behavior. Premarital virginity, for example, was incumbent only upon females; there is no indication that males were expected to be virgins at marriage, and there is no provision in the Hebrew Bible for lifelong virginity." (Oxford Guide to Ideas & Issues)

Immanuel

[Ī man'yoo uhl] ("God is with us")

"Israelite prophets could give names to individuals in accord with a specific message they were trying to communicate. In the same way that Hosea named his three children to correspond with his message, so Isaiah noted, 'I and the children whom Yahweh has given me are for signs': Shear-jashub, meaning 'a remnant will return'; Maher-shalal-hash-baz, meaning 'swift is the booty, speedy is the prey'; and Immanuel, meaning 'God is with us.'" (Oxford Guide to People & Places)

Gill, William I., "**The Son of the Virgin**," Christian Science Journal, Vol.4 (December 1886), p. 212.

-- "Immaculate Conception," is the finest thought ever entertained by man; the purest ray of Eternal Mind that has ever penetrated the atmosphere of our intellectual and moral world.

--...to degrade the story of Jesus Christ, as some do, is to remove from man the mightiest moral and spiritual leverage he has ever known.

- If Jesus were of unholy conception, as even some carnal priests have insinuated, his story, so conceived, honors animality and sin, instead of holiness and eternal Life.

- If his birth is conceived as of common origin and rank, though legitimate and pure, and then by superstition elevated, or rather, transformed into myth, we can, indeed, make it useful; but it has lost that divine and holy exaltation and sacredness, and all that peculiar power to uplift and sanctify the contemplative reader, imparted by the acceptance of the Gospel narrative.

Price, Mrs. Naomi (CSB, Lecturer, Associate Editor, and President), "[The Sign of Immanuel](#)," Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.79 (6 June 1977), p.1058.

--How can we know when the Messiah, or Christ, has come?

- The Bible promises we will see signs that are undoubted proof of God's presence—signs of healing.

--Christ is the true idea of God, and Jesus typifies this perfect spiritual idea on earth.

- The Master not only spoke of the divine nature of the creator of the universe, who made man in His image, but he lived in accord with it.

---Through his sinless, gracious, loving nature he represented on earth God's ideal reflection as fully as any human being can.

- He set an example for mankind....

--Jesus' whole life was a sign of Immanuel, "God with us"; and so may ours be if we follow his example.

Stark, Jürgen Kurt (CS, Boston, MA), "[Do you believe in the virgin birth?](#)," Christian Science Journal, Vol.105 (December 1987), p. 15. (See VIRGIN)

--For most of us the virgin birth isn't something we think about daily.

- But it must have been important to the Founder of Christian Science, because at the time of the building of the Original Edifice of The Mother Church, the question came up.

---Mrs. Eddy invited several of her students to contribute one thousand dollars to the building fund.

- The money was donated, but when Mrs. Eddy learned that one of the donors did not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus, she sent the thousand dollars back.

--The virgin birth shows us the superiority of Spirit's law over the so-called law of generation, which was set aside.

--Do you believe in the virgin birth? Your increasing spirituality seen in Christly works will best answer this question.

[The Annunciation to Mary](#) (Luke 1: 26-28 *the angel*, 31, 35)

TIME LINE: Preparations for the birth of Jesus, March, 5 AD, in Nazareth

“Luke is emphatic that Mary, though betrothed to Joseph, was a virgin. Betrothed meant the entering into the legal contract of marriage though consummation did not normally occur until the time when, probably around a year later, the bride left her father's house to join her husband's.” (Oxford Commentary)

The "scene [v.26], in which a betrothed virgin is visited by the angel of God and told of her forthcoming pregnancy and of God's empowering protection of her, is the only biblical instance of God's direct interest in such a woman." (Women's Bible Commentary) “The importance of the Virgin

Birth cannot be overstated. A right view of the Incarnation hinges on the truth that Jesus was virgin-born. Both Luke and Matthew expressly state that Mary was a virgin when Jesus was conceived.” (MacArthur Commentary) "Some manuscripts add the phrase, 'Blessed are you among women' (cf. RSV footnote), and this reading has contributed to the formulation of the 'Ave Maria.'" (Interpreter's One-volume Commentary)

With respect to v.28, "local tradition states that Gabriel appeared to her as she was drawing water at the fountain of the Virgin outside Nazareth, where the Church of the Annunciation now stands. But, as the angel 'came in' to her, she must have been in the house, perhaps engaged in prayer, as painters are fond of representing her" (Dummelow Commentary)

"Mary was naturally perplexed by all of this, though she accepted it [vv.29-33]." (King James Bible Commentary)

Gabriel

[Gay'bre-uhl] ("champion [or strong man] of God")

Gabriel is "one of the most prominent of archangels in the post-exilic Jewish literature and in Christian texts, especially extra-canonical literature. He is portrayed as one of the seven archangels in [I] Enoch 20:7; elsewhere he is one of the four angels close to God's throne. This proximity to God results in his distinctive functions." (Oxford Guide to People & Places) As "the messenger of divine comfort, Gabriel is accorded a place in Jewish theology second only to Michael." (Who's Who in the New Testament) "He "appears only in Dan 8:15-26 and 9:21-27, and in the NT, only in Luke 1:11-20,26-38." (HarperCollins Dictionary)

The "champion of God" was used as a proper name to designate the angel who was sent to Daniel to explain the vision of the ram and the he-goat. "He was commissioned again to visit the prophet to give him skill and understanding, and reveal to him the prophecy of the 70 weeks (ch. 9:21-27)." (Westminster Dictionary)

"The gospel according to Luke identifies Gabriel with 'the angel of the Lord' (Luke 1: 11,19,26)" (Anchor Bible Dictionary) "In Luke's birth narrative Gabriel appears again in a revelatory role, announcing to Zachariah and Mary the fulfillment of eschatological hopes in the births of John, the Elijah-like forerunner of the Lord (Luke 1:11-20), and Jesus, the messianic king from the line of David (vv.26-38)." (Eerdmans Dictionary) He describes himself in the words, "*I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God*" (Luke 1: 19).

Joseph, husband of Mary

[Jō'zeph]

David



Jacob (Matt 1:16) or Heli (Luke 3:23) = ?

Joseph = **Mary**

Jesus (firstborn)

James]

Joses] (may not have been Mary's offspring)

Judas]

Simon]

(unspecified number of sisters)

(Abbreviated)

"This Joseph is mentioned only a few times in the NT and almost exclusively in the birth and childhood stories of Matthew and Luke." (Interpreter's Dictionary) "All that is told us of Joseph in the N.T. may be summed up in a few words. He was a just man, and of the house and lineage of David." (Smith's Dictionary)

He was chosen to take charge of Mary by the high priest of the Temple (not as his wedded wife but as a ward entrusted by the Temple officials to his care). "Upon learning of Mary's pregnancy, Joseph, being a righteous man, sought to put her away without public disgrace." (Holman Dictionary) He became betrothed to Mary, and some writings of the 2nd century declare Joseph to have been elderly at that time, but this has no basis in the Gospel accounts. "At the time of the annunciation of the angel Gabriel of the pending birth of a child, he married Mary, and after the birth of Jesus, adopted him as his son." (Who's Who in the NT)

"Joseph is mentioned in Matthew, Luke, and John but does not appear in Mark, except indirectly at 6:3 in a few manuscripts...which read 'the son of a carpenter.'" (Anchor Bible Dictionary) "The infancy narratives in Matt 1-2 [and] Luke 1-2 provide most of the information about this Joseph." (Eerdmans Dictionary) The few references within the Gospels suggest that he was humble, kindly, and generous, and conscientious parent who probably taught Jesus the carpenter's trade.

"The two genealogies of Joseph (Matt 1:2-16; Luke 3:23-38), though discrepant, trace his descent through David....Both present the doctrine of the virgin birth." (Interpreter's Dictionary) "These genealogies imply that Joseph was in some way [Jesus'] father" (Oxford People & Places) "Being a descendant of David, he had to go to Bethlehem, the early home of his ancestors, for enrollment, according to the decree of the emperor Augustus, and was there with Mary when Jesus was born (Luke 2: 4, 16)." (Westminster Dictionary)

Mary

[Mare'ē] (Gk. personal name equivalent to Hebrew Miriam; the name of six women in the New Testament).

(Abbreviated)

"There is no person perhaps in sacred or profane history around whom so many legends have been grouped as the Virgin Mary; and there are few whose authentic history is more concise." (Peloubet's Dictionary) "Her genealogy is given in Luke 3." (Baker Encyclopedia) "She is negatively portrayed in Mark, less so in Matthew, and positively in Luke." (HarperCollins Bible Dictionary)

"All the authentic information about her comes from Scripture." (Westminster Dictionary) "Luke introduces Mary in the middle of his story about Elizabeth and Zechariah." (Women in Scripture) Mary was the child of Jewish parents Joachim and Anna and was born in Jerusalem or Sepphoris in Galilee....

"At the time when she conceived, she was betrothed to Joseph, who is said to have been 'of the house of David' (Luke 1:27 and the genealogies)." (Interpreter's Dictionary) The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary in her mid-teens to say that she had "*found favor with God*" and would give birth to His child in Nazareth of Galilee though she was a virgin. "The angel Gabriel links the experience of Mary to that of Elizabeth." (Women in the NT) By way of encouragement, the angel Gabriel had

announced to Mary the news of her cousin Elizabeth. "Luke relates the story of the visit of the angel to the peasant girl Mary with consummate artistry." (Who Was Who in the NT)

Holy Ghost

"**HOLY GHOST.** Divine Science; the development of eternal Life, Truth, and Love." (S&H 588)

"The word 'ghost' is of Anglo-Saxon origin and means 'spirit' or 'soul.' Ghost, spirit, or soul—whatever it be called—represents something intangible which can be regarded as the essence of life, apart from the material body." (Asimov's Guide to the Bible) HOLY GHOST [is the] KJV designation for the Holy Spirit." (Holman Dictionary)

"HOLY SPIRIT [is the] mysterious third Person of the Trinity through whom God acts, reveals His will, empowers individuals, and discloses His personal presence in the Old and New Testament." (Ibid)

"The N.T. treats of Messianic times and the dispensation of the Spirit, and consequently the Spirit is mentioned much oftener in the N.T. than in the O.T. The doctrine of the Spirit advances beyond the teaching of the O.T. chiefly in becoming more definite in respect to his personality." (Westminster Dictionary) "When John the Baptist burst on the scene proclaiming the advent of the kingdom of God, the spirit-inspired prophetic voice returned after a 400-year absence. Zechariah and Elizabeth, John's parents, were informed that their son will 'be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb' (Luke 1:15). Similarly the angel Gabriel visited Mary with the news that 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest will overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God' (1:35)." (Holman Bible Dictionary)

"Judging by the mere number of our Lord's references to the Holy Spirit, we should be quite unprepared for the extraordinary phenomena disclosed in the remainder of the NT as to His presence and power." (Funk & Wagnalls Dictionary)

Duckett, Evelyn M.S., "Gabriel and Michael," Christian Science Journal, Vol.112 (May 1994), p. 9.

--The qualities associated with Gabriel were ones I seemed to need particularly that morning, and I found my thought going back to them over and over again.

--We read in the Bible that Gabriel gave Daniel skill and understanding.

- It was Gabriel who announced to Mary that she would give birth to Jesus, and this message was accompanied by a gentle "Fear not" and an assurance of the power of God's presence. [Luke 1:26-38]

--Christian Science presents the concept that angels stand for inspirational thoughts from God rather than fanciful winged creatures.

- But this explanation of Biblical symbols takes nothing from the function of bringing reassurance and strength in times of need.

Gooding, Mrs. Jill (CSB; London, ENG), "**Christmas angels**," POEM, Christian Science Journal, Vol.109 (17 December 2007), p. 20.

The Christmas message is angels!
They come to each one who's in need;

They bring the appropriate message
To comfort, companion, and lead....

They spoke to receptive Mary,
Announcing the birth of her babe.
They spoke to the patient Joseph,
And he quietly waited and prayed.
And today these angels still speak to us all,
Telling of God's tender care,
Their song unpolluted, unfettered and free,
A chorus that's heard everywhere.

They lead you to see the Christ presence,
Companion you morning and night....

Walker, Channing, (CS and Contributing Editor; Glendora, CA), "**The quiet role of Joseph**," Christian Science Journal, Vol.120 (January 2002), p. 5.

--Joseph, according to the Bible, wasn't biologically involved in the conception and birth of Jesus.

- So, on the surface, that might stamp him as irrelevant in the birth and life of Joseph.

---But Joseph's example says a lot.

• Joseph's unique circumstances, and his largely unacclaimed response to them, gave him a head start in understanding the birth of Jesus as the advent of the Christ.

---The role he played not only sheltered the birth, but also delivered each member of the holy family—including himself—from a diabolical political regime.

--Often, the male ego is seen as a generator of territoriality or pride.

- But in Joseph's case, the male ego was noticeably absent.

Leishman, Thomas L., "**The Birth and Early Childhood of Jesus**," THE CONTINUITY OF THE BIBLE, Christian Science Journal, Vol.89 (October 1971), p. 535.

--Virtually all of the information about the life and work of Jesus the Messiah must be drawn from the four Gospels.

• The facts given in classical literature (mainly Roman) are limited to brief references to his historical existence, some approximate dates, and his crucifixion.

--Only Luke's Gospel relates the events immediately preceding John's birth.

• And only Luke tells of Mary's visit to Elisabeth after she had received the angelic promise of the birth of Jesus.

---"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," Mary was told, "and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (1:35)."

--Some of the events that follow the birth of Jesus are recorded only in Luke and others only in Matthew.

--...there is much uncertainty concerning the date of Jesus' birth, though many now feel that it was around 6 B.C., certainly before Herod's death in 4 B.C.

Welz, Carl J. (CSB, Associate Editor, and Editor), "**The Place of the Virgin Mary**," EDITORIAL, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.67 (30 January 1965), p. 195.

--"We've got to take seriously the whole idea of the maternal dimension of Christianity." (Dr. Outler)

--There is in the human mind an innate longing for a feminine element in Deity.

--The human craving for a feminine element in Deity is satisfied in Christian Science through one's realizing man's direct relationship to his Father-Mother God.

--The Virgin Mary occupies a vital place in the unfoldment of Truth.

- Her spirituality enabled her to know her direct relationship to God.

---Mrs. Eddy writes on page 29 of Science and Health: "The illumination of Mary's spiritual sense put to silence material law and its order of generation, and brought forth her child by the revelation of Truth, demonstrating God as the Father of men. The Holy Ghost, or divine Spirit, overshadowed the pure sense of the Virgin-mother with the full recognition that being is Spirit."

--An understanding of the place of the mother of Jesus is an indication of our understanding of the continual operation of divine law.

Skeele, F. H., "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost," Christian Science Journal, Vol.24 (November 1906), p. 477.

--Christ Jesus is admitted to be the ideal of Christianity, and if we wish to be like him, and do the works that he did, it behooves us to ascertain how he became filled with the Holy Ghost, the "Spirit of truth."

--It is apparent that this gift of God was not thrust upon him suddenly, nor without co-operation on his part.

- It must have come to him as the result of prayer and of studious, obedient endeavor always to do good, to do the will of the Father.

---The truth as to man's divine origin, whispered into the consciousness of his mother before he was born, accounts for his intense desire for spiritual understanding.

- Mary, his mother, was a student of the sacred writings, and one who thought deeply about spiritual things, — "pondered them in her heart." Her spiritual purity and her receptive mental attitude, together with her prayerful desire (common in a less degree to many Jewish maidens at that time) that the prophecy concerning the motherhood of the coming Messiah might be fulfilled through her, made possible her spiritual conception of God's spiritual idea.

SECTION II: Peter's Confession (Matt 16: 13-16)

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Mark 8: 27-29; Luke 9: 18-21

TIME LINE: The Year of Opposition and Development (Jesus' 3rd year of ministry) near Caesarea-Philippi in the summer of 29 AD.

"*Caesarea Philippi* is a district about twenty-five miles north of Galilee, at the base of Mt. Hermon. It was different from the city of Caesarea built by Herod the Great on the Mediterranean coast." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"[This is] one of the most debated periscopes in [Matthew]. In [Mark] we find the account of how the disciples for the first time recognize Jesus as the Messiah; Peter speaks for them...." (Peake's Commentary) "Verse 20 suggests that it [*Thou art the Christ*] was a conviction which they all now shared." (King James Bible Commentary)

"All Jesus' previous activities in Galilee and the Gospel writers' interpretations of him as teacher, healer, Messiah, and Son of God come to a climax in Jesus' dialogue with his disciples about his identity ([Matt]16:13-20)." (Eerdmans Commentary)

Jesus' "messianic claims had always alluded subtly to OT prophecies [v.17 *flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee*] and been substantiated with miraculous works." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"Unique to Matthew among the canonical Gospels is the mention of the grammatically feminine term *ekklesia*, or 'church.'" (Women's Bible Commentary) "The primary function of this passage is to record the establishment of a new community, one which will acknowledge Jesus' true identity and thereby become the focus of God's activity in history." (Oxford Bible Commentary)

John the Baptist, Elias, and Jeremias

"Jesus' interrogation of his disciples begins with popular views of Jesus as a prophet."
(Eerdmans Bible Commentary)

Matt 16:14 "shows that public opinion placed our Lord on the highest human pedestal by identifying Him with one of the national heroes of the past, i.e., **John the Baptist**. Herod himself was a victim of this particular superstition (see 14:2)...The coming of Elijah (Elias) was prophesied by Malachi (Mal 4:5) and the Jews often linked the name of Jeremiah with the prophet foretold in Deuteronomy 18:15." (King James Bible Commentary)

Simon Peter

[Pee'tuhr] (Gr. *Petros*, a "rock")

(Abbreviated)

The original name of this disciple was Simon. According to the Gospels, Cephas was a Syrian surname given by Jesus to Simon (John 1:42), meaning "rock." The Greeks translated it by *Petros*, and the Latins by *Petrus*; Jesus called him Peter.

Simon Peter was the most prominent of Jesus' twelve apostles. The Bible gives a more complete picture of Peter than any other disciple, except Paul. He is often considered to be a big, blundering fisherman and is attractive for his constant mistakes and forgiveness, his boisterous and impetuous enthusiasm, and for his good intentions and self-confidence that so soon seemed to disappear. He became one of Jesus' closest friends and was the first to recognize Jesus as the Messiah....

"With James and John, Peter formed an inner circle of three, who alone were allowed to accompany Jesus into the house for the raising of Jairus' daughter, to witness the transfiguration, and to share the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Peter was often the spokesman of the twelve and was their natural leader.... He expressed the conviction of the twelve when he made his great confession at Caesarea Philippi: 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' At once Jesus replied, 'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven'..." (Who's Who in the New Testament)....

WAGERS, RALPH E. (CSB, Lecturer, Associate Editor, President, and Normal Class Teacher),
"‘**Eternity awaits our Church Manual**,’" Christian Science Journal, Vol.75 (April 1957), p. 173.

--One must have spiritual discernment if he is to overcome any phase of the seeming influence of evil in his life.

--[Jesus] knew how [a] false sense might obscure the spiritual significance of all he said and did.

- This may have been uppermost in his thought when he asked his disciples (Matt 16:13),

"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"

--The answer he received indicated that the people had no real appreciation of his identity or the nature of his mission.

- He then asked, "But whom say ye that I am?"
 - Simon Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."
- In acknowledging the spiritual fact concerning the Son of man, Peter gave evidence that at least one of Jesus' students possessed the spiritual discernment through which the master's mission could be successfully carried on.

Snyder, Jean M., "[Peter, the Conqueror](#)," *Christian Science Sentinel*, Vol.30 (11 August 1928), p. 985.

--To live courageously one has to understand why he can be courageous.

--When [Peter] was with Jesus and the other disciples, he apparently possessed but little ability to grasp the teachings about the things of Spirit.

- Jesus taught and retaught the unreliability of the evidence of the senses, always lifting thought from material things to things of Spirit.

- The impulsive, vacillating Peter could not continually hold to this.

--Once, however, he glimpsed so much of what Jesus taught that he exclaimed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," thus perceiving the truth of what Jesus stood for, manifested, and demonstrated.

Lucas, Mabel C., "[The Son of God and the Son of Man](#)," *Christian Science Journal*, Vol.36 (October 1918), p. 325.

--An interesting fact gathered from a careful study of the gospels is, that Jesus chronicled with using the phrase the "Son of man" eighty times, while only six times did he use the phrase "Son of God," as applicable to himself.

- It was the voice of God which declared him to be "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," at the time of Jesus' baptism and again on the mount of transfiguration.

- Those who were healed and even the men from the tombs, possessed with devils, so proclaimed him; while the uninspired multitudes and the worldly wise scribes and Pharisees always called him the "son of David."

- They acknowledged only his mortal lineage and were willfully blind to the spirit of Truth which animated him.

- This makes all the more significant Jesus' persistent affirmation regarding himself.

- In this he has given us a wonderful illustration of true humility.

SECTION III: [Jesus Tells the Jews They Are Not His Sheep at the Feast of Dedication; His Sheep Listen To Him](#) (John 10: 24, 25, 27)

TIME LINE: Near the end of the Year of Opposition (Jesus' 3rd year of ministry), Nov-Dec 29 AD.

"For ['How long dost thou make us to doubt?', v.24] we should probably translate, 'How long do you mean to annoy, distract us?'; that is, the question arises from enemies, not from honest seekers after truth." (Peake's Commentary)

Jews

Abbreviated)

"In the NT,...('Jew') is used in contrast to 'Gentiles' (John 2:6; Acts 14:1), to 'Samaritans' (John 4:9), and to 'proselytes' (Acts 2:10; cf. John 4:22). This would indicate that 'Jew' in the NT is applied to one who is Jewish by both nationality and religion." (Interpreters Dictionary) "In the New Testament 'Jew' can designate both Jesus and many of his followers, as well as some of his adversaries." (Oxford Guide to People & Places) The Jewish parties in the New Testament are:

Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Herodians, and the Essenes. The Synoptic Gospels name "Jesus' enemies as scribes and Pharisees, high priests and Sadducees, the Gospel of John simply uses the general term 'Jews.'" (Holman Bible Dictionary)

"There are three names used in the New Testament to designate this people,

- Jews, as regards their nationality, to distinguish them from Gentiles.
- Hebrews, with regard to their language and education, to distinguish them from Hellenists, i.e., Jews who spoke the Greek language.

• Israelites, as respects their sacred privileges as the chosen people of God. "To other races we owe the splendid inheritance of modern civilization and secular culture; but the religious education of mankind has been the gift of the Jew alone." (Easton Dictionary)

Perlita, "[To a Jewess](#)," Christian Science Journal, Vol.17 (March 1900), p. 830.

--Jesus was a Jew, and his mission was first to the Jews, but with the exception of a handful outside the disciples, and afterwards, Paul, they rejected his teachings and crucified him, hoping thereby to avoid the overthrow of their form of religion.

- Jesus' endeavors were directed towards the separation of the chaff from the wheat of Judaism.

---He constantly reiterated: "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil" the Law and the prophets.

• Because he did not proceed to do this in the way the Pharisees had intended he should when he, the Messiah, should come, they despised and rejected him, thus themselves, though unconsciously, helping to fulfil the Scripture which says, "He is despised and rejected of men."

---History repeats itself, however, and to be just to the Jews, I must say that they of those days were no worse than the Pharisaical thought of to-day, which says, "I am better than thou," whether found amongst Jews or others.

Hogrefe, Eva-Maria (CS and Staff Editor), "[Christ](#)," POEM, Christian Science Journal, Vol.114 (July 1996), p. 27.

Jesus instructed
Whereby to heal.
He knew
The Christ,
God's ideal,
Ruled supreme
In him
And revealed
His forever unity with God—
God and His perfect man
As *one* in Love sealed!

"My sheep hear my voice,
and I know them,
and they
follow me." [John 10:27]

Let us pause—be still—and pray
To hear the Christ
Speak....

SECTION IV: Nicodemus Comes to Jesus (John 3: 1, 2)

TIME LINE: The Year of Inauguration (Jesus' 1st year of ministry) in Jerusalem, 28 AD. Written c. 80-90 AD.

Perhaps one of the most appealing aspects of the life of Jesus is that of his personal interviews with different individuals from various strata of society and religious backgrounds. "This scene contrasts Nicodemus' earth-bound understanding with Jesus' wide perspective on God and the Spirit." (Oxford Bible Commentary)

"The ministry at Jerusalem, though disappointing was not fruitless." (Dummelow Commentary) "Having heard that Jesus knows the motives of the kind of person...who has placed faith in him on the basis of 'signs,' the reader is immediately introduced to such a person...Nicodemus. The dialog becomes an illustration of the discussion between those who apparently share the same identity (both are Jewish teachers/leaders) but do not read the 'signs' in the same way." (Eerdmans Commentary)

"In these opening verses [1-2], Nicodemus is introduced as a **man of the Pharisees and a ruler of the Jews.**" (King James Bible Commentary)

"While some have thought that Nicodemus' visit at night [v.2] was somehow figurative of the spiritual darkness of his heart (cf. 1:5; 9:4; 11:10; 13:30) or that he decided to come at this time because he could take more time with Jesus and be unhurried in conversation, perhaps the most logical explanation lies in the fact that, as a ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus was afraid of the implications of associating openly in conversation with Jesus." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

Nicodemus

[Nick oh dee' mus]('conqueror of the people')

Nicodemus was "a Pharisee and a 'ruler of the Jews,' mentioned only by John." (Baker Encyclopedia) He was also a member of the Sanhedrin who probably became a disciple of Jesus. He is first noticed as visiting Jesus by night for the purpose of learning more of his doctrines, which Jesus then unfolded to him, giving prominence to the necessity of being "born again." "Nicodemus' coming at night suggests his timidity and his trek from the darkness of his own sin and ignorance to the light of Jesus (John 3:2)." (Holman Bible Dictionary) "In Nicodemus a noble candor and a simple love of truth shine out in the midst of hesitation and fear of man." (Peloubet's Bible Dictionary)

"Nicodemus was a wealthy, educated, and powerful man—well respected by his people and a descendant of the patriarch Abraham. He was described by Jesus as "the teacher of Israel," implying he was well trained in Old Testament law and tradition. Jesus told Nicodemus that physical generation was not enough, nor could his descent from the line of Abraham enable him to be saved. Only as a person has a spiritual generation—a birth from above—will he be able to see the kingdom of God." (Who Was Who in the Bible)

"The next time Nicodemus appears in the Gospel of John, he shows a cautious, guarded sympathy with Jesus. When the Sanhedrin began to denounce Jesus as a false prophet, Nicodemus counseled the court by saying, 'Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?' (John 7:51)." (Ibid)

“Nicodemus appears a third and final time [with Joseph of Arimathea] in the Gospel of John.” (Ibid) "After Jesus' death, Nicodemus provides an enormous amount of spices for Jesus' burial, thus implying that he was wealthy (John 19:39-40)." (Eerdmans Dictionary)

“Christian tradition has it that Nicodemus was baptized by Peter and John, suffered persecution from hostile Jews, lost his membership in the Sanhedrin, and was forced to leave Jerusalem because of his Christian faith.” (Ibid)

Howard, Lynn H., “**Jesus’ answer to Nicodemus**,” Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.87 (22 July 1985), p. 1224.

--When [Jesus] spoke in the synagogue, the people were amazed at his teaching, "for he taught them as one that had authority." (Mark 1:22)

--Sometimes there were Pharisees in the crowd.

- They were highly educated men, an elite group who taught and interpreted Jewish religious laws.

--Nicodemus, a Pharisee who was also a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish governing council, was impressed by Jesus’ works of healing.

- He came by night to visit Jesus.

---By coming privately at night, he probably hoped the other Pharisees wouldn’t know he was visiting Jesus and therefore wouldn’t condemn his action.

--Jesus was teaching Nicodemus the truth that is the basis of healing—that man's origin is God, infinite Spirit.

WAGERS, RALPH E. (CSB, Lecturer, Associate Editor, President, and Normal Class Teacher), “**Regeneration and Healing Are Inseparable**,” EDITORIAL, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.65 (20 July 1963), p. 1255.

--Confronted with an illness that has not yet yielded to his own efforts or those of a practitioner, should a Christian Scientist let discouragement make his communion with God more and more difficult?

- No! This is the time to realize that a very important part of the healing work in Christian Science is spiritual regeneration.

---This was the point Christ Jesus brought out in the conversation he had with Nicodemus, when the ruler of the Jews stated (John 3:2), "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."

--Jesus replied, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

--When Nicodemus asked how a man can be born when he is old, Jesus answered, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

-Being born of water has to do with purification, while being born of the Spirit has to do with spiritualization of thought.

Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matt 13: 2, 31, 32, 53, 54)

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Mark 4: 31,32; 6:16; Luke 13: 18,19

TIME LINE: Year of Popularity (Jesus' 2nd year of ministry), 28 AD

Matthew 13 is the third of five sermons and contains seven parables, sometimes it is called the “chapter of parables.” “At the beginning of the parables chapter Jesus leaves the house where he was teaching ‘on the same day’ in order to address the crowds (13:1).” (Eerdmans Commentary) "In the

overwhelming press of the crowd at a **house**, Jesus could not be reached by people, so [he] went **into a ship** from which [he] taught the multitude." (King James Bible Commentary)

"Palestinian mustard plants are large shrubs, sometimes up to fifteen feet high, certainly enough for birds to lodge in [v.32]." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

"Jesus...gave [his] disciples a first-hand opportunity to witness the truth of [his] parables in action by teaching at the **synagogue** in [his] home town (Nazareth, not Capernaum)." (King James Bible Commentary)

"multitudes"

"Jesus ascends the mountain in [Matt] 5:1 and descends in 8:1, both times accompanied by crowds. In between he teaches without interruption in such a way as to astound the crowd with his authoritative teaching." (Eerdmans Commentary)

"The separation of the community of Jesus' disciples from 'the crowds' is specifically Matthean context and purpose of the parable collection [Matt 13]." (People's NT Commentary)

Anderson, Loy Elizabeth, "**Christ Jesus and the Multitudes**," Christian Science Journal, Vol.65 (February 1947), p. 68.

--It is recorded in the four Gospels that multitudes gathered together to hear the teaching of Christ Jesus wherever he appeared.

- It is apparent that the multitudes were not being attracted to a magnetic human personality, nor were they drawn by the hope of material benefits promised by a political figure backed by party affiliation.

---For it is stated that they brought with them their sick and afflicted, and that he healed them all.

--The multitude of the Master's time followed him because of the pure Christ, Truth, which was so manifest in his thought and life.

--It is our own individual demonstration of the Christ, Truth, and our continual reflection of divine Love that will attract and heal the multitudes.

Sirota, Martin (CSB, New York, NY), "**A Seed, a Grain, and a Single Moment**," THE POWER OF JESUS' PARABLES, Christian Science Journal, Vol.125 (June 2007), p. 38.

--Word pictures.

- These were the parables that Jesus taught, which made his radical teachings understandable to the average listener—and even palatable to the skeptic and the scoffer.

---Without them, the words wouldn't have carried much weight.

- He was a man who believed in the bottom line—the bottom line being absolute proof of all that he said.

--I have always loved the parable in Matthew where Jesus compared a mustard seed to the kingdom of heaven.

- "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof" (Matt 13:31,32).

---And then he delivered the promise: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matt 17:20).

--What this story tells us is that one clear, faith-filled moment of understanding God's all-power can move what appear to be mountainous problems out of our experience.

SECTION V: Gadarene Voyage, Tempest Stilled, (Luke 8: 22-25)

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Matt 8: 18, 23-27; Mark 4: 35-41

TIME LINE: Near the end of the Year of Popularity (Jesus' 2nd year of ministry), 28 AD

"All three Synoptics tell of Jesus stilling the storm (Mt 8:23-7; Mk 4:35-41)." (Eerdmans Commentary) "Mark and Luke both place the incident after the series of parables which Matthew records in chapter 13. This is at once one of the best-attested miracles, and one of the most incomprehensible to those who desire to limit [Jesus'] miracles to those of healing. It is perhaps possible to regard the cessation of the storm as a fortunate coincidence, but it is certain that Jesus [himself] did not take this view of it." (Dummelow Commentary)

"The narrative of the calming of the sea ([Mark] 4:35-41) is rich in OT allusions; in the OT raging waters are a symbol of chaos and ominous power (Isa. 51:9-10; Ps. 89:8-10)." (HarperCollins Bible Commentary)

In v.39 "it is a pathetic kind of rationalization to explain Jesus' command *Peace! Be still!* as originally directed to the disciples rather than the wind." (Interpreter's One-volume Commentary) "By stilling the storm [Jesus] showed that, behind the inexorable and awful manifestation of nature, storm, pestilence, volcanic eruptions, and sudden death, which seemed to treat man's sufferings with indifference, there is the loving hand of divine providence. In the last resort nature is subject to God's holy and glorious will." (Dummelow Commentary)

"his disciples"

The disciples were from the lower ranks of life, simple and uneducated; some of them were related to Jesus according to the flesh; some had previously been disciples of John the Baptist. Jesus chose them early in his public career. As the messianic proclaimer of the reign of God, Jesus gathered about himself a special circle of twelve disciples, clearly a symbolic representation of the twelve tribes (Matt 19:28) Early in Jesus' ministry he sent them out two and two to preach repentance and to perform miracles in his name. They accompanied him in his journey, saw his wonderful works, heard his discourses addressed to the people, and made inquiries of him on religious matters. They recognized him as the Christ, and described to him supernatural power but in the recognition of the spiritual teaching and mission of Christ they made very slow progress, held back as they were by weakness of apprehension and by natural prejudices.

Haworth-Booth, Ben., "The Wind," POEM, Christian Science Journal, Vol.26 (September 1908), p. 343.

MINE is the music of the woods and waves,
I strike the strings, and give the grand octaves;
 The mighty tones are mine
 Of mountain and of pine,
And loud upon the listless ear of morn
 I wind my wakening horn.

I am the wing-foot wanderer, that brings
A thousand greetings of a thousand things!
 My chariot mists among
 I sing the welkin's song;
And when the moon is on the moaning deep
 I sob the world to sleep.

At my demand the monstrous ocean raves,
And shakes the shore, and rends the rocks and caves;
 The thunder-clouds and I
 Hold earth and sea and sky,
And none can stay my stormy path, until
 One whispers, "Peace, be still."

Davis, Jeffrey Wells, "The calm during the storm," Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.87 (27 May 1985), p. 875.

--Storms that bring rain, wind, or snow are not the only kind of tempest we face.

- Sometimes we have to deal with emotional storms, too.

--Christian Science teaches that God is infinite, supreme good, and that inharmony has no place in His realm.

--Christ Jesus proved that storms have no place in God's universe.

• He saw more clearly than anyone else that man's natural state is peaceful; it cannot be disrupted by either physical forces or emotional stress.

- While he was traveling with his disciples on a ship, a storm of wind came up.

---The frightened disciples asked him to help and he did. The Master "rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." [Mark 4:39]

Gadarene Demoniac Healed (Luke 8: 26-30, 32-35 [to :], 39)

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Matt 8: 28-34; Mark 5: 1-20

TIME LINE: Near the end of the Year of Popularity (Jesus' 2nd year of ministry), 28 AD

"a certain man, which had devils"

"Jesus now arrives 'at the country of the [Gedarenes]' on the other side of the lake from Galilee." (Eerdmans Commentary) This story is told in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Mark omits the contrast between Jesus' teaching and that of the scribes. "Luke does not tell this story as lengthily and dramatically as Mark." (HarperCollins Bible Commentary) Capernaum lay on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee and was the center of much of Jesus' activity. The foundation of an ancient synagogue has been excavated, perhaps on the site of the one visited by Jesus.

The story of the Gadarene demoniac teaches the reader the same basic truth about Jesus as the account of the stilling of the storm. Both the howling wind and the howling demon are subject to the Son of God.

A striking point in this miracle is the testimony of the demon to Christ's Messiahship, which, however, he refused to accept. The demon seeks to gain power over Jesus or at least to neutralize Jesus' advantage by the ancient practice of pronouncing an opponent's name. If the possession was real, the demon's confession of Christ as "*the Holy One of God*" was probably extorted by fear. If the possession was not real, but imagined by the insane man, the confession was probably due to the man's

instinctive sense that a person with supernatural powers was present, ready to heal him. The battle lines are drawn, the man convulses, and the demon is exorcised. All the witnesses are amazed at the power of Jesus' word, and the news spreads rapidly.

Johnson, Flora Belle, "The Demoniac," Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.7 (5 August 1905), p. 785.

--The story of the man who dwelt among the tombs in the land of the Gadarenes, whom no man could tame, reveals the misery, unrest, and oftentimes wildness of the thought which dwells in a belief of life as material, tossed and torn by sin and its effects, -remorse, anguish, and all the train of evils which circle around the dominant thought of a physical self.

- It is limited by circumstances and bound by a sense of fatality which resolves itself into fear and dread of the unknown, and, to its sense, unknowable.

---The possibility of present release from this condition seems almost inconceivable to the human mind, which has submitted to these conditions with a resignation that would be heroic were it not so pitiable and so unnecessary to our enlightened understanding of the true mission of Jesus.

Gutc, Ruth, "A Gadarene testimony," POEM, Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.87 (7 January 1985), p. 12.

Once I dwelt in the tomb of mental darkness
among the rocks of ignorance, fear, and sin—
ranting in despair (but not too loudly)
about the love-stripped, low state I was in;
knowing naught of my true state of being
(that man is God's own dear, beloved child);
unaware that (in reality)
thoughts from Him are pure and meek and mild.
Then, dashing through the wiles of blinded thinking—
striking out at a God I did not know—
I too came face to face with Christly purity
shining forth in the eyes of a God-sent friend.
The impact of that glorious confrontation
brought me quietly to my knees,
and—sitting at the feet of Christly teaching—
I learned of Love's great power and was free....

SECTION VI: The Water of Life, Revival in Samaria (John 4: 5-7, 9-11, 13, 14 [to :], 15-19, 28, 29, 40-42)

TIME LINE: The Year of Inauguration and Beginnings (Jesus' 1st year of ministry) in Sychar, December, 27 AD

"John 4 describes the encounter between Jesus and a Samaritan woman." (Women in Scriptures) "The story of the Samaritan woman reinforces John's main theme that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God." (MacArthur Bible Commentary) The ministry in Samaria [**northern West Bank**] is recorded because it is the author's design to exhibit Christ as the Saviour, not only of Israel, but of the world.

"The scene is set around a well traditionally associated with Jacob (4:5,6), a significant figure in Samaritan theology." (Eerdmans Commentary) "Women generally came in groups to collect water, either earlier or later in the day to avoid the sun's heat." (MacArthur Commentary) By Hebrew time

reckoning, the sixth hour would be noon; at midday Jesus would be weary from walking. This is one of the relatively few places in John's Gospel where Jesus is allowed to show human frailty.

THE CONVERSATION (vv. 7-15)

"The woman comes to draw water (4:7) at a strange time, the height of the day's sun when no one else is around." (Eerdmans Commentary)

"Jesus' request of the woman of Samaria is not surprising by modern standards, given the setting, and the woman's surprise is understandable. There is, of course, no way the woman could have known the particular identity of Jesus as the bringer of salvation. The 'living water' is also running water; John typically plays upon a double meaning in Greek that cannot be duplicated in English. Jesus means 'salvific' or 'living water'; the woman thinks he is speaking of ordinary 'running water' in the well. That Jesus may be a special personage, however, is suggested by her question, which in Greek expects a negative answer: Jesus could not be greater than Jacob. Of course, Jesus is greater. Jesus now gives a more straightforward answer, revealing that the water he gives is of a radically different sort. The woman begins to understand but is apparently still thinking of the quenching of this-worldly thirst (v.15)." (Oxford Commentary)

JESUS REVEALS HIMSELF (vv.16-26)

Jesus suddenly turns the conversation in an unexpected direction (vv.16-18). His command, the woman's answer, and Jesus' rejoinder culminate in a startling revelation about herself, which she can only acknowledge as true (v.19). Understandably, she takes Jesus to be a prophet." (Ibid)

THE WOMAN WITNESSES TO THE SAMARITANS (vv. 27-30)

The woman, leaving her water jar, bears witness to her people, making clear her grounds for thinking Jesus may be the Christ. Because of her testimony, the people of the city now come to see Jesus.

THE SAMARITANS' BELIEF (vv. 31-42)

"This phrase [*Saviour of the world*, v.42] occurs also in 1 John 4:14. The verse constitutes the climax to the story of the woman of Samaria. The Samaritans themselves became another in a series of witnesses in John's Gospel that demonstrated the identity of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God." (MacArthur Bible Commentary)

Although the testimony of the woman brought many to faith, the presence and word of Jesus himself causes more to believe and makes her testimony superfluous. That Jesus preached and made large numbers of converts in Samaria is attested by no other Gospel.

"a woman of Samaria"

"This woman represents all unnamed women who were ministered to by Jesus on his way from Galilee through Samaria and into Jerusalem at various times." (The Women of the Passion)

Samaritans

"The Samaritans are unique among the many religious groups described in the Bible apart from traditional Judaism and Christianity: the others have long passed into oblivion, but the Samaritans still survive in our own day, as a community preserving its ancient rites on its holy site, Mount Gerizim, near the ancient site of Shechem and the modern city of Nablus." (Oxford Guide to People & Places)

McCarty, Jane Partis (CS, Medfield, MA), "[Do the work of an evangelist](#)," *GIVING SCIENCE AND HEALTH, Christian Science Journal*, Vol.117 (April 1999), p. 56.

--What Jesus taught, he proved.

- His life and work were inseparable.

---When he met a woman from Samaria at a well one day, his conversation with her had not a scintilla of proselytizing about it. [See John 4:5-30]

• But in this case as in others, he did not let an opportunity go by when he could lift the thought of the listener above his or her ordinary human experience to a more spiritual outlook.

--In fact, in his conversation with this woman he made an interesting statement that can help the modern-day evangelist: "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

- The impulse to spread the good news of Christ Jesus' mission comes from God Himself.

"[The Caring Christ](#)," *Christian Science Monitor* (24 July 1991), p. 17.

--Can't you just picture this man, Jesus?

- He moves unhurriedly, with grace and certainty, though the crowd presses close around him.

---Suddenly, Luke tells us, he pauses to ask, "Who touched me?"

--Once, John's Gospel records Jesus encountered a Samaritan woman at a well and told her about the water of life that would enable her to never thirst again.

- He wasn't talking simply of water that didn't need to be drawn from a well, however.

---He went beyond a casual or superficial contact with the woman—so much so that she recognized that such prophetic insight could come only from the spiritual nature Jesus embodied.

• And she went into the city to tell others, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

Manning, Henry A., "[Jesus and the Woman of Samaria](#)," *Christian Science Journal*, Vol.16 (June 1898), p. 188.

--As the woman said to [Jesus] in verse eleven, so the doctors of divinity to-day, making common cause with the doctors of medicine, seem to say, "The well of material and medical science is deep, and you have not the skill to draw from it the resources of *material medica*, nor the learning to apply these remedies which our God has provided in nature for all sickness, and pain, for every ill that flesh is heir to."

--And Christian Science answers back in tones confident and clear, "If you but knew the gift of God, and who it is that speaks again in the voice of Truth to this age, you would ask of Him and He would give you that living water, whereof, if a man drink he shall never thirst again,--the purifying, restoring, and sustaining water of Life."

--The so-called Christian world has been dull and slow to understand the full meaning of the Messianic prophecy and mission.

Fulton, Maisie D., "[The Saviour of the World](#)," Christian Science Journal, Vol.70 (August 1952), p. 425.

--Divine Love is the infinite Principle of the universe, the origin and essence of all that really exists, and Love is the healing and saving presence and power of divinity which meets all human needs, never failing.

- At-one-ment with Love as demonstrated by Jesus and inevitably involving, as in his case, transcendent power to bless, is possible for his followers today by reason of the fact that this oneness with Love is the eternal reality of man's being and is therefore sustained by God.

---The revelations of Christian Science make plain these glorious facts, in the light of which the darkness, doubt, or discord of any and every wilderness disappears, never having been known to real consciousness, and the voice of Truth is clearly heard as of old, forever saying of each and all (Matt 3:17), "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

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*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. The Golden Text and the Responsive Reading this week are from the *Good News Translation* of the Bible.

"The **Good News Bible (GNB)** as it is known, or sometimes in the United States as the **Good News Translation (GNT)**, is an English language translation of the Bible by the American Bible Society, first published as the New Testament under the name *Good News for Modern Man* in 1966. It was anglicized into British English by the British and Foreign Bible Society with the use of metric measurements for the Commonwealth market. It was formerly known as **Today's English Version (TEV)**, but in 2001 was renamed the *Good News Translation* because of misconceptions that it was merely a paraphrase and not a genuine translation. In fact, despite the official terminology, it was and is often referred to as the Good News Bible in America as well as elsewhere." (Wikipedia)