

Bible Characters for Your Weekly Bible Study

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For week of June 23 - 29, 2008

GOLDEN TEXT: Observing God's Laws and Principles (Ps 119: 33 [to:],34)

TIME LINE AND AUTHOR: "This psalm, the most comprehensive of all the psalms, is a particularly artificial product of religious poetry." (The Psalms) It was probably written by David in the 7th century BC.

"If there is an underlying theme to this psalm, sure this is it [vv.33-40]. The psalmist is convinced that if the Lord will but teach him His law *I shall observe it with my whole heart* [v.34]." (King James Bible Commentary)

Eddy, Rev. Mary Baker (Discoverer and Founder), "**Christian Science**," EDITORIAL, Christian Science Journal, Vol.1 (February 1884), p. 2.

--The standard of Metaphysical Healing is traduced, by thinking to put into the old garment of drugging the new cloth of Metaphysics, or by trying to twist the fatal magnetic force of mortal mind into a more fashionable cut, and call that metaphysics.

- Substituting good words for a good life, fair seeming for straight-forward character, is a poor shift for the weak and worldly, who think the standard of Christian Science too high for them.

---What think you of the scientist in mathematics, who finds fault with the exactness of the rule because he will not work hard enough to practise it?

- The perfection of the rule of Christian Science is what makes its utility.

---But having a standard, if some fall short, others will approach it, and they are those only who will adhere to it.

Denham, Marjorie Nell, "**Teach Me**," POEM, Christian Science Journal, Vol.54 (December 1936), p. 503.

Teach me the meaning of life, dear Lord;
Teach me to do my part.
Show me the reason for work, dear Lord;
Give me a loving heart.
I want to be faithful to You, dear Lord;
Open my eyes to see
That though the way is rough and steep,
Man is upright, pure, and free.
Give me the joy You have promised me,
That the tears that slowly fall
Shall only serve to cleanse my soul,
And fit me to hear Your call.

Then teach me to love my fellow men,
That I may lift them up,
And feed to them the bread of Life,
Give them the crystal cup....

SECTION II: The Paralytic Healed and His Sins Forgiven (Matt 9: 2-8)

PARALLEL GOSPELS: Mark 2: 1-12; Luke 5: 18-26

TIME LINE: The Year of Popularity and Fundamental Principles (Jesus' 2nd year of ministry), 28 AD at Capernaum.

"a man sick of the palsy"

This story is told in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In Matthew and Mark it is called "The Sick of the Palsy;" in Luke it is called "The Paralytic." "This conflict episode is the first of five conflict episodes (2:1-2; 13-17, 18-22, 23-28; 3:1-6)." (MacArthur Commentary)

"Jesus had been traveling throughout Galilee, preaching and teaching, and people keep coming to him to be healed and cured." (On Your Mark) His "entry into Capernaum was unknown by the public," but when "someone discovered his presence, the news spread like wildfire." (King James Commentary) "As Jesus arrives at Capernaum, some people carry to him a man who was unable to walk, presumably near the shore in the hope that Jesus will heal him ([Matt] 9:2-8)." (Eerdmans Commentary) "Brought to Jesus on a bed, the man's paralysis was severe." (MacArthur Commentary)

"The peculiarity of this miracle is that it was worked to prove a doctrine, and that in the face of opposition. There were present certain scribes and Pharisees, some of whom had doubtless come from Jerusalem expressly to oppose Jesus. Jesus at once threw them a challenge by saying to the man, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.' The scribes understood this to mean that He claimed to forgive sins as only God can do. Instead of repudiating this suggestion, as a mere man would have done, Jesus accepted it, and proceeded to prove His claim by a miracle." (Dummelow Commentary) "In response to the scribes' and Pharisees' questioning, Jesus claims that 'the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins' (5:24)." (Eerdmans Commentary)

"[Luke] alone mentions the glorifying of God by the paralytic [v.25], and the fear of the bystanders." (Peake's Commentary) "The audience was stunned again when Jesus healed the man of his paralysis [Matt 9:8]; and *they marveled*, (lit., they were afraid)." (King James Bible Commentary)

Scribes

(Abbreviated)

"Scribes were distinguished professional people throughout the ancient world. Although they were called scribes because they could read and write, they were not only copyists." (Oxford Guide to People & Places) They were "capable of reading and writing, usually with competence in some areas such as law, economics, or the like." (HarperCollins Dictionary) "More specifically the scribes, or *Sopherim*, were those who copied, taught, and explained the law." (Peloubet's Dictionary)

"More than in any other source the scribes are seen as a unified group in the NT, but this view may not be historically accurate." (Anchor Bible Dictionary) It is evident that in New Testament times the scribes belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, who supplemented the ancient written law by their traditions (Matt 23), thereby obscuring it and rendering it of none effect. The titles "scribes" and

"lawyers" (q.v.) are in the Gospels interchangeable (Matt 22:35; Mark 12:28; Luke 20:39, etc.). They were in the time of Jesus the public teachers of the people, and frequently came into collision with him. They afterwards showed themselves greatly hostile to the apostles (Acts 4:5; 6:12).

"**Invitation to Healing**," Christian Science Monitor (25 October 1991), p. 21.

--People brought...the man [sick of the palsy] to the Master and the first thing Jesus said to him was "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

--I thought this was wonderful.

- It didn't take a complete inventory of the man's history in order for Jesus to acknowledge God's power and presence, and to give the man reason to be joyful.

---Some who were present didn't think that Jesus should be forgiving sins.

- But Jesus said that they were thinking evil and that there wasn't much difference between saying "Thy sins be forgiven thee" and saying "Arise and walk."

--The man was healed—he simply got up and walked.

- In this way Jesus proved definitively that he was obeying God in the works he did.

Bunting, Ellen Wiles, "**And the Multitudes Glorified God**," Christian Science Sentinel, Vol.48 (13 April 1946), p. 623.

--When Jesus spoke the word and healed "all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people," the multitudes "marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men" (Matt 9:8).

- They glorified God!

---What a beautiful tribute to Jesus' spirituality, to his selfless love!

- No pride, no greed for personal power or dominion, governed his actions.

---He did God's work aright, and he showed mankind how to follow his example.

- To do God's work aright, all sense of personal pride or personal glory must be absent.

---In deep humility and love we work for God.

- In quiet places, in patient obedience, we seek Him out, and learn how to show forth His praise so that the multitudes will glorify God.

--How sorely needed is the quality of selfless service which Jesus rendered without surcease throughout his entire ministry!

Tomlinson, Rev. Irving C. (CSD, Mrs. Eddy's Household, Lecturer, CoP, 1st Reader, President, Bible Lesson Committee, and Normal Class Teacher), "**Christian Science: the Religion of the Bible. The Gospel of Helpfulness**," Christian Science Journal, Vol.18 (September 1900), p. 327.

---...when the Pharisee, or publican, or prodigal came to him for help he did not question the all-sufficiency of the power of God to bring the needed help, and by his prayer the sinful were released from bondage and made free.

- When the sick were brought to him for relief, he turned not away from the one divine power, and through this power the sick were made whole.

---It is recorded that a helpless paralytic was brought to Jesus for healing by his believing friends.

- We know not how many years all who had seen him had confused the true man with his deformed body.

---For the first time there was one who beheld his true identity as the image of God.

• Seeing this likeness to the perfect model, the Master said, "Be of good cheer," and knowing the infinite power and goodness of God, Jesus said with confidence to the man who lay there a cripple, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house."

SECTION V: Philip's Request and Jesus' Answer About the Comforter (John 14: 8,9 [to :],12,16,17,25-27)

TIME LINE: Thursday of Passion Week, 30 AD at Jerusalem

"Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Philip asked to have a physical sight of God. Perhaps Philip was thinking back to the day when Moses asked God to show him his glory (Ex 33:12-23). Even then, God said to Moses, "Thou canst not see my face." However, Philip may have thought that since Jesus uniquely knew God as Father so intimately, surely he could give them a physical sight of God.

In verse 12, "Jesus did not mean greater works in power, but in extent. They would become gospel witnesses to all the world through the power of the indwelling and infilling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) and would bring many people to salvation because of the Comforter dwelling in them." (MacArthur Commentary)

"The last section of this speech deals with the benefits of Jesus' departure and the consequent arrival of the Spirit. There is a reminder of the short space of time which is left (14:25), but reassurance that the coming Paraclete [Comforter] will take on the role of 'teacher' and 'prompter' (v.26)." (Eerdmans Commentary)

Philip the Apostle

[Fill'ip] (Gr. "lover of horses")

There are eight Philips mentioned in the Apocrypha and the New Testament. The one referred to in this week's lesson is Philip who was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, "from the town of Bethsaida in Galilee, the home also of Andrew and Peter." (Harper's Bible Dictionary) "In the Synoptic gospels Philip is mentioned only in the lists of the apostles (Mark 3:18; Matt 10:3; Luke 6:14; cf. Acts 1:3). (Interpreter's Dictionary)

John's Gospel contains most of the references to Philip. "According to the Gospel of John, Philip met Jesus beyond the Jordan River during John the Baptist's ministry." (Who Was Who in the Bible) When called by Jesus, Philip sought out a skeptical Nathaniel, who also responded to Jesus' messianic identity. "It seems from the story of the feeding of the five thousand that Philip was responsible for the provisioning of the party of disciples, or for their picnic rations." (Who's Who in the New Testament) Before Jesus fed the five thousand, he tested Philip by asking him how so many people could possibly be fed. Philip's pragmatism is perhaps suggested in his response: he observed that it would take a large amount of money to feed so many. Later, it was Philip whom Greeks approached with their request to meet Jesus. How much can be made of Philip's association with Gentiles in this episode is not clear.

"During Jesus' final visit to Jerusalem before the crucifixion, some Greeks had come up for the Passover. They approached Philip with the request, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip told Andrew and together they went to tell Jesus. Perhaps Philip again invited his enquirers to 'Come and see.'" (Ibid)

"Again, at the Last Supper, Philip's words to Jesus are recorded in the Fourth Gospel." (Ibid) In John 14, it is Philip who said to Jesus, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Philip appeared with the other apostles in Jerusalem after Jesus' ascension. Later tradition surrounding his activities is legendary and uncertain. "According to tradition he preached in Phrygia and died at Hierapolis." (Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible)

The Gnostic Gospel of Philip is attributed to Philip

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." (Holman Dictionary) "Johannine theology is rich in its doctrine of the Spirit." (Ibid)

"**Can religion and science be reconciled?**" Christian Science Monitor (10 June 1987), p. 21.

--The war between science and religion has been a long and often bitter one.

- In recent history, religion has generally been on the defensive, and it can be argued that to the degree religion has tried to fight science and science's own turf, religion has been the loser.

--Because of this, many thinkers have come to the conclusion that the whole war was a mistake anyway.

--In order to distinguish the transcendent laws of Spirit from the temporal laws of the sensory world of matter, [Mrs. Eddy] capitalized the word *science* to indicate their identity.

- In this divine Science she saw fulfillment of Jesus' promise of the Comforter that would "teach (us) all things," the "Spirit of truth" that would "guide (us) into all truth." (John 14:26;16:13)

Hebenstreit, Mrs. Jean Stark (CSB; Director; Lecturer; Trustee, CSPS; President; and Normal Class Teacher), "**Radical reliance on God and His Laws,**" CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PRACTICE, Christian Science Journal, Vol.117 (January 1999), p. 13.

--[Jesus] explained, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." [John 14:12]

--In his healing mission he placed complete reliance on his Father, God, always going to Him in prayer, not compromising in any way with material therapeutics.

--...we see what we believe.

- Whatever is held in consciousness sooner or later takes form in experience.
- In every instance Jesus relied totally, not partially, on God.
- In the Christian Science textbook, the words *radical reliance* are used in the explanation of how Jesus' method of healing is put into practice.
- ...authenticated instances of healing by radical reliance on Truth are in direct application of the method of primitive Christianity.

WAGERS, RALPH E. (CSB, Lecturer, Associate Editor, President, and Normal Class Teacher), "[Divine Science, the Holy Ghost](#)," EDITORIAL, [Christian Science Sentinel](#) (7 January 1961), p. 17.

- The peoples of the world are separated more by language than by space.
- ...the need is not so much for a common tongue as for an agreement in thought on what constitutes the basic realities of being.
- Christian Science is divine Science applied to the needs of mankind.
- It is impossible to separate what we are from what we think, because in Science we are identified by consciousness, not by physique.
- ...we experience Love by loving as well as by being loved.
 - We are dependable as we express Truth; we are alive as we express Life.
- Ideologies, customs, traditions, need not separate people and will not separate them when the spiritual realities of being are universally recognized and accepted.
 - The Holy Ghost, divine Science, which demonstrates man's unity with God, the divine source of our being, draws us closer to God and also to each other.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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